

## COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON THE LESSONS FOR NOVEMBER 8, 2020

### **Amos 5:18-24**

- Though Amos comes from the southern kingdom of Judah, his words are directed to the northern kingdom of Israel. The book is one of the earliest prophetic books written. Amos speaks these words shortly before the Assyrians invaded Israel and took them into exile in 732 BC. Often we think of Israel as plagued by idolatry before the Assyrian invasion, but Amos presents a different picture. Here they are a very religious people. The problem is that their religiosity does not translate into faithful living. God does not call as much for piety and worship as God calls for justice and righteousness. Where do these words challenge us today?

### **Psalms 70**

- This simple psalm offers a plea for deliverance, especially in light of those who would dismiss the faithful one. When have you needed such a plea? Where did you find your deliverance?

### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

- Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is perhaps the earliest of all the New Testament writings. The first part of the letter praises the faithfulness of the community. Beginning with these verses, we discover the main purpose of Paul's writing: they are concerned that people are dying in the community when they expected the return of Jesus first. Paul reassures them that the coming of the Lord will be unexpected. Paul also reassures them that Jesus will bring with him all the faithful, whether dead or alive. Note that Paul's concept of what happens when we die differs from our own. We are used to thinking that we will go immediately to heaven. Paul believes that we do not have that reunion until the end of time. How do we reconcile these two beliefs? Or do we?
- Paul believed that Jesus would return right away, so how do we understand these verses now that it is two thousand years later?

### **Matthew 25:1-13**

- In Matthew 25, we have a series of three parables that will conclude the sayings of Jesus before his arrest and death. He begins with the parable of the ten bridesmaids, with five prepared and five unprepared. What does it mean to be prepared? What does it mean to keep awake and be ready?