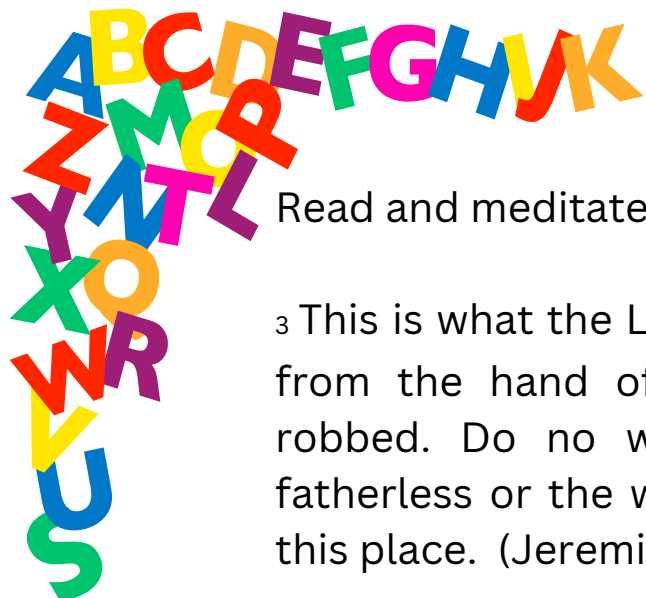




For Further Study

Read and meditate on the passage below:

3 This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. (Jeremiah 22:3)

This passage comes from the prophetic oracles of Jeremiah, a prophet of Judah in the early seventh century BCE. The prophet spoke during a time of great injustice. As God's messenger to the people, he explains that they are to focus on doing what is both just (justice) and right (righteousness).

Notice how these emphasizes are directly related to the care of people who are in dire circumstances (rather than prioritizing someone's relationship to God). They are commanded to "rescue" someone who is being robbed. The details are not given, so we don't know exactly what was happening. The overall gist is that people are harming others by taking advantage of them.

In addition, three groups of people are mentioned: 1) foreigners--people who are from other lands and either by will, force, or circumstance happen to be in Judah, 2) the fatherless--most likely minors or children who do not have a living father and consequently have no source of care, provision, and protection, and 3) widows--women whose husbands have died, most commonly by disease, battle, or injury. Each of these people groups are particularly vulnerable and in need of help rather than harm. Yet, the people see these struggling groups as a means for their own selfish gain.

Instead of helping them, the people are doing them wrong, being violent to them and even killing them. So, Jeremiah speaks up and calls for justice. He works for change. He strives to make the world a better place, which will not occur in his country during his lifetime. Justice is a slow, deliberate and long arch.

PRACTICE:
Speak out about
injustices that you
see in the world.

