



## SERMON RECAP

### OCTOBER 12, 2025

#### The Promise of Change Keeps Us Going

Series: The Change Makers

Scripture: Psalm 82

Making change is difficult. Sometimes it feels futile. We get bombarded with bad news all the time. It seems like nothing changes. The more work we do, the more toil we put in, the more it seems like things are falling apart. We feel like we are paddling upstream, riding a bike into an insurmountable head wind. This week as we wrap up our Change Makers Series, we look at Psalm 82 and also step into our next series on the Psalms. That is because the Psalms provide spiritual fuel for our change making fire. Psalm 82 is not a particularly famous or beloved Psalm, but it is our bridge from one idea to another.

John Dominic Crossan, a renowned New Testament scholar as well as Clint McCann, the author of the *Reading the Psalms Again for the First Time*, claim that Psalm 82 is the most important text in the entire Bible. It certainly feels like one of the most perplexing and also most troubling.

It is troubling because in verse 5 it names something that feels very timely. "They don't know; they don't understand; they wander around in the dark. All the earth's foundations shake," is the Common English translation. Eugene Peterson, the creator of *The Message* puts it this way, "Ignorant judges! Head-in-the-sand judges! They haven't a clue what is going on. And now everything's falling apart, the world is coming unglued."

This seems to name a very real anxiety we are facing. It feels as if everything is falling apart. We recognize that the world is coming unglued. These are much more tangible ways of saying "the earth's foundations shake," but this is exactly the point. We seem to be at a point where foundation of everything is shaken. So why keep doing justice? Why keep working for change when it feels like everything is just coming unglued?

Psalm 82 is troubling, indeed, but it is also called the "most important" for a reason. It addresses the very essence of God. While things are falling apart, God has acted, and because of this, we can endure.

Crossan and McCann call Psalm 82 the most important text in the Bible because it defines the nature of God. God is God because of justice. The psalm opens with a divine council. This is a perplexing concept that can be interpreted many ways. At the heart of what happens however, the LORD (Yahweh) rises up and takes claim as the One God of all Creation.

There are other powers that make a case for divinity. There are other sources that claim to have power, but they cannot be God because they did not enforce justice for the widow and orphan. They are illegitimate because they allow the poor be trampled. They are impotent because they fail the destitute.

The only power of God that has meaning is the power of justice, which is God's love enacted in public. If the power of the world is not enforcing justice for the poor, the widow, and the orphan, then they are no longer a legitimate power. When we work for change, we are tapping into this divine power. We know it is not futile because it is the only thing that has real power in the world.

In John 10:34-37, Jesus seems to cite Psalm 82. When religious leaders confront him about his claim to be the Son of God, Jesus makes the argument that he is righting the wrongs of those that failed in the divine council of Psalm 82 (with various ways of interpreting that). They resent his claim, but he says to them, "If I don't do the work of the Father, then don't believe me."

Jesus knows that he is doing the work of God. He is doing the work of justice, and the way that we follow Jesus is by following him in that work.

This is the promise of change making that we can cling to. This is the promise of change making that can empower us. When we are moved by compassion, work to collaborate, open up the creative process, and tap into the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we know that the change we make is real. The power we tap into is God's.



NEXT WEEK:

Enthronement Psalms: God is King, Psalm 98