

# “Amos – Unpopular Love” //

## The Minor Prophets #3

### Announcement

*I love that story because it encapsulates everything we're praying for in this Year of Disciple-Making: one person **being intentional about sharing the gospel with someone, and then discipling that person until they make disciples of others.***

*I am also really excited because **something we have been working and praying toward** this week finally happened. With the help of a group called “God Behind Bars,” we are opening our 11<sup>th</sup> Triangle campus in the Triangle women’s prison.*

So, Summit Church, will you welcome our sisters in Christ who are joining us for the 1<sup>st</sup> official time!

### Introduction

Well, if you are like me, **some of our worst childhood memories go back to the fear of being unpopular.** That I would say or do or wear something that would make me get labeled ‘uncool.’

**Recently, I read a book where the author described** one of his worst childhood experiences—see if you can relate. He said, *My family didn’t have a lot of money, so I never had the coolest name-brand clothes. One year my parents bought me two pair of Sears Tuffskin jeans for school, a brown pair and a blue pair. All the cool kids had Levis with the silver or red tabs and Nikes to match. I had two pair of Tuffskins and one pair of Stride Rite tennis shoes that had to last all year. Both pairs of jeans wore a hole in the seat area, and so my mom, who was big into cross-stitching, sowed an American flag patch over one and a huge Indian head patch on the other. I can still hear kids pledging allegiance to my rear end and calling me ‘Tonto.’ I vowed that I would do whatever it took to never have to face that kind of rejection again.<sup>1</sup>*

I was listening this week to *The World and Everything In It*, my favorite news podcast, and they told a story about a man who was arrested and fined in China because he hired 200 guests to come to his wedding. (His new wife lived in a different city, and they were getting married in his, and he didn’t want to look like a loser so he hired 200 people at \$12/head to sit on his side of the aisle. Well, that’s illegal in China and he was arrested and fined.) My 2 thoughts: 1. How unpopular do you have to be to need to hire friends to come to his wedding? 2. Does this really happen so often in China they need a law on the books to prevent it?

I feel like those are **fair questions.**

**Today, I want to introduce you to the most unpopular of all the prophets: Famous Amos, the most despised man in Israel. We**

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<sup>1</sup> A. Stanley, *7 checkpoints*, p.116

Works Consulted:

“Healer of the World,” Tim Keller

Amos, James Montgomery Boice

Amos, Paul House

“Does God Care?,” Mark Dever

commemorate him today with little bags of cookies, which is a pretty cool legacy, but back then he was not appreciated at all.

**So, open your Bibles to that book**, the book of AMOS. He's the 3<sup>rd</sup> in our 5-week series on the Minor Prophets. His book is right after Joel.

**A couple of quick things to note about Amos, as you turn there:**

- **First: Amos was unusual among the prophets in that he wasn't a vocational prophet** like most of the other guys.
- **In the first chapter, Amos tells us** he was a normal, blue collar worker guy—a cattle farmer who also tended a field of sycamore trees (1:1; 7:14).
  - He **hadn't gone to seminary to write sermons** for a living, just a man merely trying to do his job when his spirit became so burdened with what he saw around him that he couldn't stay silent anymore.
- And I want to point out again before we get started that some of the greatest contributions in church history have come through **"ordinary" people** like Amos.
  - **'Ordinary' people brought about most of the greatest reforms in the church...**
    - **William Wilberforce** and the abolition of the slave trade:
    - Or **William Booth**, founder of the Salvation Army, "layperson" who did more to mobilize the evangelical church to care for the poor in urban centers than anyone in history.
    - Or **Rosa Parks**, an ordinary woman whose boldness provoked many pastors to stand up against the injustices of segregation.
  - And I say that because one of my deepest prayers and hopes for our church is that God will raise up Amoses in our congregation...

**Second, Amos was one of the most unpopular prophets in Israel's history because he brought a message of warning during a time of great national prosperity.**

- **The year was approximately 800 B.C.**, Jeroboam II was king, and Israel was still surging from the prosperity they had gained under David and Solomon.
  - They were the unchallenged, dominant military power in the region.
  - They controlled the trade routes through the Middle East, which had led to a financial boom. The stock market was good; they were at peace.
- So, when **Amos shows up with a warning about coming financial disaster and military destruction**, it seemed utterly unrealistic.
- In fact, some of the things he said simply sounded **unbelievable**. **For example,**
  - **2:15**, "The archer will not stand his ground... and he who is stout of heart among the mighty men shall flee away naked in that day, declares the Lord." Israel's archers at the time were a source of national pride—they were their crack warriors, fearless, devastating marksmen. Saying "they will flee away naked in that day" would be like saying to us, "**Your Navy Seals will collapse into the fetal position and cry for their mothers.**"
  - Or **3:15**, "I will strike the winter house along with the summer house, and the houses of ivory shall perish, declares the Lord." These people had nice houses, summer houses and winter houses. **When you have all 3 you are pretty set**. They thought surely they were **secure from all financial disaster**.
  - So, the idea of ruin was unrealistic.

**But mighty empires, and mighty men and women**, are not usually brought down by financial or military disaster. They are brought down by sin—by corruption from within. And that is what was happening in Israel.

So, let's take a look at his message, and see what is in it for us. The first 6 chapters are **one, sustained sermon** that Amos preached on a feast day in Israel.

We have the charge; the counterfeits; the excuses, and then a false and true hope.

## I. The Charge (ch. 1–2)

Amos chapter 1 tells us that during a national holiday celebration, and Amos stood up in the center of one of Israel's most sacred cities, Bethel, and started **proclaiming the Lord's judgment on 6 surrounding nations<sup>2</sup>—Damascus, Philistia, Tyre, Moab, etc.**—nations that were all competitors and enemies with Israel.

- This was **undoubtedly well-received**, because one of the fastest ways to build friendship with someone is to complain together about the same people.<sup>3</sup> Everybody likes to hear about judgment on their enemies.
- I'm sure the crowd was all nodding their heads and saying, "Amen. Preach it preacher."

But then in chapter 2, he **suddenly pivots and starts talking about** Israel's sin. Which didn't go over quite as well.

He talks about them **in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person**, and says, "This is the charge against Israel."

- "**They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals.**" (2:6). IOW, **they exploit the poor**:
  - "**Silver**" was a symbol in those days for a loan or a huge debt.
  - The **world economy in Amos' day was changing**. Up until this time Israel had existed as mainly a collection of localized farmers, but to keep up in the new world economy they had to focus on **mass-producing** a few specialized cash crops.

**Which is fine**, but a few people had figured out how to rig the system—through monopolies or inflation (that kind of stuff)—and put all the rest of the farmers into deep debt.

- Things were so bad that poorer people were going into debt **even to buy even a pair of shoes**—which is what he is referring to here.
- And **in those days, there was no such thing as declaring bankruptcy**. If you couldn't pay your debts, you went into forced servitude.
- IOW, people were having to sell themselves into slavery just to stay alive...
- He continues: **... they trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth...**
  - This means used their riches to twist the justice system.
  - Later in the book he describes how the rich manipulated the court system to benefit themselves in ways the poor could not (5:12)
- **...and (they) turn aside the way of the afflicted (2:7)**
  - They were simply **apathetic** toward those who suffered. They lived lives of ease, comfort and luxury in the face of suffering.
  - An **important thing to notice here** is that God sees this a breach of **justice** (He makes that clearer in 5:7, 15, 24).
    - **I point that out because we tend to put** helping the needy under the heading of charity. (If you don't do it, you are stingy.)
    - But according to Amos, **God sees a failure to help the poor as injustice, a more serious thing.**
    - The word "**justice**" (*mishpat*) **occurs over 200 times** in the OT, and usually when you see it you'll see four classes of people brought up: widows, orphans, foreigners, and the

<sup>2</sup> Damascus, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab

<sup>3</sup> Mark Dever, *The Message of the OT—Amos: Does God Care?*

**poor**—what one scholar calls “the quartet of the vulnerable.”<sup>4</sup>

- The **just person is the one involved helping** these four groups.
- “He executes *justice* [*mishpat*] for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, *giving him food and clothing.*” —**Deuteronomy 10:18**\* Interchangeable?<sup>5</sup>
- One scholar said: “In the OT, ‘**justice**’ is not just putting down the oppressor, it’s also helping to lift up the oppressed.”<sup>6</sup>
- “*The just person, in the Old Testament, is one who sees his or her resources as belonging to the whole community... a gift they’ve been given to steward for the benefit of the whole community.*”<sup>7</sup>
- But those in Amos’ day didn’t see it that way. **They saw their riches as theirs**, to be used for their benefit, and so they were oblivious to those who didn’t have them.
- The most politically incorrect **verse in Amos:** Amos 4:1, “Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, ‘Bring, that we may drink!’ He refers to the housewives of Israel as “the cows of Bashan.” **That takes boldness in preaching** to a new level.
- One commentator said, “Well, **obviously, the image didn’t mean what it means** in our language, today.” Yes, but he still called them ‘cows’.
- **These women**, Amos said, spent their days spending their husband’s money and pursuing luxury when people were

suffering all around them. They didn’t have to work, which was great, but they cared only about **fashion** and **vacations** and **staying in great shape** and **eating organic** and **driving nice cars** and they spent their days doing those things while people around them were dying.

**Back to his description in chapter 2... verse 7** Amos calls out their **2:7: Complicity with the new sexual order of the day.**

- Israel was undergoing their own version of a **sexual revolution**, and God’s people were just going along with it. They didn’t really speak out against it; preachers quit preaching against it.

This was charge against Israel... And, God says, maybe the worst part of all this: “Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorites before you... and it was I who brought you up out of the land of Egypt and led you for forty years in the wilderness to possess the land of the Amorite.”

- IOW, I saved you by grace, and you respond to all that by ignoring, even exploiting others?

And I raised up some of your sons for prophets... but you commanded the prophets saying, “You shall not prophesy!” (2:9–12)

- And then after I delivered you, you didn’t want to know what I had to say? If you could trust me to save your life, don’t you think you could trust me to guide your life?

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Zech 7:10–11

<sup>5</sup> See also Ps 146:5–7; Psalm 103:6

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/more-than-mere-equality>

<sup>7</sup> <http://archives.relevantmagazine.com/god/practical-faith/what-biblical-justice> Cf. Tim Keller, Healer of the World. “Psalm 72’s perfect king, for instance, possesses this concern: ‘May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! (v. 2). May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy,

and crush the oppressor! (v. 4) For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight. (vv. 12–14)...’ I’m not suggesting these descriptions of the coming messianic king flatly translate into legislation on Medicaid, Section 8 housing, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Still, a Messianic people should consider the concerns of their Messiah... This psalm suggests that justice isn’t just a putting down of the oppressor. It’s a lifting up of the oppressed and downtrodden.” Jonathan Leeman, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/more-than-mere-equality>

**Most infuriating to God in all this**, Amos said, is that they did all this while remaining fervent in their religious devotion.<sup>8</sup>

- They came right on in to church, acting like nothing was wrong.
- Like Isaiah, who prophesied right after Amos said, *“These people honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me.”* (Isa 29:13)
- They come to church and sing my praises but their hearts are a million miles elsewhere, and that’s demonstrated by what occupies them the rest of their week. **Because, you know, what you really believe about God** is not demonstrated by how loudly you worship on Sunday, but by how you live the rest of the week.

Well, when Amos got done **with this section** the ‘Amens’ had died down significantly.

- Reminds me of the story I heard about the woman in church who was so excited to hear the pastor was finally going to preach a prophetic sermon about sin. So, he started talking about drunkenness and pornography and she was shouting, “Amen.” He started talking about corruption in Washington and she was like, “Preach it!” She turned to her neighbor and said, “He’s on fire this morning!” **Then he started talking about the sin of gossip** and she leaned over and said, “He just need to mind his own business.”

(The Bridge to Our Day)

*The bridge between Amos’ day and our day is not a hard one to make:*

**I can stand up here and talk about...**

- **Moral corruption** in Hollywood
- The **violence** and degradation of women depicted in gangsta rap music, or how **vulgar TV shows** have gotten
- **Moral vacuity of postmodernism**
- The **secularist agenda** being crammed down our throat by media and the education establishment

- **Activist judges** who are misusing their positions in our country to curtail religious freedoms
- **Fatherlessness** in certain communities
- The **corruption and hypocrisy** of groups like Planned Parenthood
- **The evils of Islamic terrorism** or the wickedness of **religious persecution** in places like Russia, China or North Korea
- And I can talk about how bad all those things are and we all say... **“AMEN. Preach. It. Preacher,”** just like Amos’ audience did.

**But what happens when the spotlight turns on us? How many of Israel’s sins do we also see replicated in the church?**

- **Don’t we live in a country where justice has often been perverted** in favor of the rich?
  - Where, too often, we have seen **underprivileged or minorities oppressed**, even at times treated like they were sub-human?
  - In a country where, still, the **rich can work the justice system** to benefit themselves?
- Where **minorities have historically been treated differently** before judges or in schools...
  - **And there’s still plenty of evidence** that it continues to happen—not everywhere all the time but certainly in enough places that it should bother us.
  - And **maybe we are not guilty of it ourselves**, but do we show empathy for those to whom it is happening—and respond like we would if it were happening to our kids?
- Or, on another front, sometimes I hear **Christians justify abortion** because *“Well, imagine what her life would have been like if she’d had the kid... she had so much going for her—she was the only one in her family to get to college and that would have messed everything up.”* As if that justifies the taking of a human life, of someone made in God’s image? Isn’t that also a perversion of justice?

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<sup>8</sup> Henrietta Mears, *What the Bible is All About: Understanding Hosea, Joel, Amos*, 299–310

- I know Christians who **live in sexual immorality** throughout the week and sit in church on the weekend because they want God to be a part of their lives.
  - **Church-goers who do whatever they want** in these areas but come in on the weekend and sing, “I have decided to follow Jesus.” It’s like A.W. Tozer said, “Christians don’t tell lies, they usual sing them.”
  - **Or those who no longer tell the truth** to their friends about what the Bible says about sexual immorality because it is just easier to go along with it and not get the reputation for being “that guy.”
  - **You may not be doing it**, but you go along with it. You are complicit with it.
- **Maybe in our church this weekend we have married men and women cheating on their spouse** and justifying it as “Well, my spouse has really let me down,” or “we made a mistake getting married,” as if that excuses it.
- There are **plenty of Christians** in churches across America who work in businesses that use questionable even if “legal” means in order to exploit those with less economic power...
- **And, of course, just as in Amos’ day, we have Christians who live in luxury** while people around them perish.
  - Christians, on average, **give about 2.4% of their income** to God’s work. A lot don’t give anything.
    - **Jesus, who was a prophet similar to Amos, said to the religious of his day**, “You tithe mint and spice and cumin...” (your spice drawer!) But you haven’t even gotten into the weightier parts of the law, which is to love others like you love yourself, and use your money to show mercy.
    - Most Christians in America aren’t even at the tithe!
      - 80% of those at this church aren’t there...
    - And the irony, the richer you get, the less, percentage-wise, you tithe.
      - **This is true of us as well.** The families in our church who self-identify as making less than 45K are **twice**

**as likely** to be tithing as those who make more than 150K.

- I’ve heard people say, “Huge sum of money! I tithed when I made 25K/yr.” Right. And God gave it to you to steward, not to insulate yourself from suffering; he gave it to you to help alleviate the suffering.
- You may make a huge amount of money, but there is a huge amount of people who need the gospel a huge amount of suffering.
- **God didn’t give you financial means to insulate yourself** from the pain of others to alleviate the pain of others. Which direction is your money taking you—away from pain and suffering and inconvenience or deeper into it? **Answer that question carefully...**

**Let’s be honest:** I am talking to a **group of people who, for the most part, have grown up in privilege**, like the people of Amos’ day...

- **For some of you it has been the privilege** of being a part of the majority culture so you tend to get the benefit of the doubt when others do not.
- For others, it is **the privilege of getting a good education** and having a good job, or growing up in a country where you had lots of opportunity.
  - **Even being lower wage** in this country carries with it privileges that some of the richest in many parts of the world don’t have. Trust me, I’ve been there. All of you are privileged.
- Let me be clear: **Usually, there is nothing immoral about being in a position of privilege**; nothing you should feel guilty about, but justice demands that we use that position of privilege to help empower those who don’t currently share it—to make sure they get treated equally under the law and that the doors of opportunity stay open to them just as to others.

**We love talking about the sins of others**, but wouldn't Amos probably say many of the same things about us that he was saying about Israel?

- **And listen, I know talking about our sins will not make me popular.**
- (I wondered when I was working on this if we would have some people walk out even while I was speaking just now or at least compose angry emails to me in their mind. If so, my email is [hank@brananmurphymusic.com](mailto:hank@brananmurphymusic.com).)
- **But, here's why we have to do this: God makes clear to Amos: If you want my presence, you will take sin seriously.**
- People who treat sin lightly don't take God seriously, and churches that tolerate sin alienate Christ.<sup>9</sup>

*That's the charge...*

## II. The Counterfeits (7:10–11)

**Well, sadly, Amos' voice was not the only one heard in his day.**

There was another preacher, TV preacher, big ministry... **Amaziah**.

**Amos 7:10**, Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words."

- Another preacher, Amaziah, claiming to speak for God, rose up to oppose Amos. He told the King that Amos was a radical and trouble-maker. He convinced Jeroboam to banish Amos.

*Couple of things I want you to see there...*

- **First, there will always be pseudo-preachers (or bloggers) ready to tell our generation whatever they want to hear.**
  - I am not a **perfect preacher**, and I have a lot of **blind spots** in my own life. You need to pray for clarity and courage for me.

- BTW, this is why I am committed to just teaching through the Bible—following an expository rather than a topical approach—because I know in so doing God's word will confront us with things that I don't even think about.
- If I get up here and do only creative, topical series, I'll end up just affirming us most of the time.
- I'll just stand up here all the time and tell you that you can be more than a conqueror.
- But **if we let God's word guide us**, we'll hear not only what we want to hear but what we need to hear.
- **Pray for me, that God gives me the courage in this. To faithfully preach both the popular parts and the unpopular, both the comforting and the offensive; to give you the words that fill us with hope and also the ones that fill us with anger, word that not only affirm the better angels of our culture but confront our demons**.
- Because let me tell you something: ***In my heart, I want to be popular; I like to be liked.***
  - And so, daily I feel the pressure to conform to culture so that I, and our church, will be more popular.
  - But I know that will only grieve and drive out the presence of Jesus.
  - **Last year I pointed out how in Revelation 2 Jesus talked about a church that was faithful in every way** except that they tolerated those who taught and practiced sexual immorality, and because of that, Jesus removed his presence from that church (Rev 2:12–18). I don't want to lose the presence of Jesus. People say, "If you **don't soften your stance** on this, you're going to lose people." I say, "Well, I hate that, but I'd rather lose them than him."
  - ***But I need you to pray for me: to confront our sins, popular sins***, not just the sins of others.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Dever, *The Message of the OT—Amos: Does God Care?*

- **Second, (most importantly) those ‘preachers’ closest to the centers of power are most likely to ignore injustice and defend the status quo.** (leave up)
  - Let me give you a sad and uncomfortable fact of history: In the days of slavery and segregation, many conservative, Reformed, Christians were complicit with the status quo.
  - The first decriers of racism and slavery were the Quakers and Anabaptists—who were marginalized groups on the fringe, far from the cultural and political power centers of the day.
  - Majority Christian culture, many good people, were mostly silent on it, at least at first.
  - Now, thank God, the reason the reforms worked was because the church eventually repented, realized how inconsistent these things were with what they believed, and got involved. Christians have always fueled, and driven, these reforms.
  - The **denomination we do a lot of our mission work through**—the SBC—has been one of the dominant religious groups in the South for over 150 years. And its initial leaders were complicit with, even spoke up in defense of, slavery and then segregation in the South.
  - **Why?** It’s not that their fundamental belief structure was bad. Unquestionably, our belief system is perhaps best equipped to undo racism: (one blood, one Father, one problem, one solution, etc). And that’s been the fuel of racial reforms throughout history.
  - **Was it that it was just really difficult to resist cultural pressures of the day?** Sure, that’s part of it. Culture has an enormously shaping influence on us, still today. **But that’s not the full explanation...**
  - The full explanation you see here with Amaziah: **Those ‘preachers’ closest to the centers of power are most likely to ignore injustice and defend the status quo.**

- I look back at some of our **theological heroes**: guys like Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield. Many of them not only did not speak out, but went along with slavery in their day.
- In their works, you’ll read the most **beautiful description of the Fatherhood of God**, the **unity of the human race** regarding things like our sin problem, our adoption in Jesus Christ, and you know that right outside their window was a slave they were just blind to...
- Were they just really bad people? No, they didn’t think about it because it didn’t affect them. They were in the places of privilege and power and just ignored it.
- They were fallible men and women. As are we. I wonder sometimes if I would have been the same way. I’d probably have been worse.
  - The more I get to know myself the less impressed with me I am. I’m not some bastion of courageous virtue.
  - I tend to be blind to things that don’t affect me, too.
- So, we need to have open hearts to the HS, filled with humility, committed to the Scriptures and open to other believers, too (because other believers, particularly ones not like us, help us see our blind spots.)

Don’t go for the counterfeits...

### III. Excuses (3:12, 5:21)

Israel turned to a couple of other lines of defense to excuse themselves, and Amos confronts them both.

The first one: **“But we are God’s chosen people” 3:2**

- “We’re forgiven, we’re chosen, we’re God’s favorites.”

- God says to them in 3:2, “That makes your sin even worse!” You not only knew me as lawgiver, you knew me as Father and Redeemer! To whom much is given, much will surely be required.
- **Second, “Our religious zeal makes up for our moral shortcomings” 5:21**
  - At this point in their history, they went to church all the time. They put on all the feasts.
  - In **5:21 God says**, “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.”

**We can’t excuse ourselves with grace.** “Well, thank God that God accepts us by grace!” We’re not perfect just forgiven.

- If we’ve *really* been forgiven, we’ll be more passionate about these things, not less!
- **A failure to show concern for the poor shows a misunderstanding of the gospel—we’ve never realized our own pressing need for God’s merciful attention to us in our sin.**
- **Matthew 25:** I was ... and you ... He’s not saying that the way you have a relationship with him is to do these things. He’s saying the way you can tell you have a real experience of grace is that you see people in need and pour your heart out for them.
- **A true Christian simply can’t** be passive about hunger, sickness, oppression or injustice.<sup>10</sup>
- Karl Marx famously called *Christianity the opiate of the people. But it’s more like the smelling salts...*
- And that means if you have never **woken up to injustice**, never been moved by compassion, if you are not generous, it begs the question of whether you have ever encountered the real gospel.
- **If you’re not compassionate, and passionate about delivering from oppression, your religious experience, even if you are insanely religiously busy, is fake.**
- I wonder sometimes if God would say, I hate your...

- If it’s not accompanied by compassion and generosity and a commitment to justice, I believe he would.

**Amos 6:1, Woe to those who are ease in Zion!** At ease, playing through life, when so many around are suffering.

**I found an old sermon on this text by Charles Spurgeon, where he identified 3 groups** at ease in Zion:

- **The apathetic:** They **just don’t care**. They are not cruel and vicious people, they just don’t think much about it.
- **The self-indulgent:** Maybe they **care but they love creature comforts too** much to actually sacrifice...
- **The procrastinators:** Those who know they are **supposed to do good**, but don’t actually do anything about it.
  - They care enough to repost things on Facebook and like the heck out of certain things but never do anything about it.
  - You know, the slactivist... They are kind of an activist but not really.
- **Woe to you who are at ease in Zion!**

Let’s talk for a minute about the amount of people around the world who have never even heard the name of Jesus. This is a **position of privilege all of us occupy—it is the greatest position of privilege**. You know the gospel that has saved you from sin, death and hell. There are people around the world who have never heard it! **Don’t we owe it to them?**

- This is what Paul was saying in a passage significant in my life, **Romans 1:14—debtor...** why? Never met them.
  - Because Jesus saved me, I owe the gospel to people who haven’t heard it.
  - I was no worthier than others... and so with that experience of grace comes the obligation to share it with others.

<sup>10</sup> Tim Keller, “The Healer of the World.”

- **It's not fair to experience that kind of grace** and keep it to yourself...
- Knowing the gospel, and not doing everything we can to get it to others, is the greatest injustice the church can commit.
- Every saved person this side of heaven...
- To not do so, it's more than a lack of compassion, but a breach of justice
- I recently heard a GREAT example of this. The first American missionary was an African-American named **George Lisle**...
  - He had been born a slave in Virginia. His master became a Christian and liberated him... but instead of simply sitting on his newfound freedom, he actually sold himself back into temporary servitude to board a ship to Jamaica, where he became a missionary to the slaves there.
  - That was in **1783, 10 years before William Carey**, and 30 years before Adoniram Judson.
- If there **were ever anyone who might have said**, 'I have a right to be at ease in Zion,' to turn the attention back on himself and use his freedom to make something of himself, it was George Lisle. But he **realized that hearing the gospel had made him an extremely privileged person**, and with the privilege of hearing the gospel came the responsibility to take it to others.
- **Again: Knowing the gospel, and not doing everything we can to get it to others, is the greatest injustice the church can commit.**

#### (IV. False Hope, True Hope (8:1–2; 5:18–19))

**So where did all this leave Israel?** And what was going to happen to them?

**8:1–2**, This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit.... Then the LORD said to me, "The end has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass by them."

- **Summer fruit = overripe fruit.** You know how overripe fruit is? It looks fine on the outside, but rotting at the core. Take one bite—and regret the day you've were born.
- He says, "You look fine on the outside, but you are 'ripe' for judgment."
- (Some of you have had experiences with churches like this... great on the outside, get inside and full of jealousy, corruption, gossiping, and meanness."

**5:18–19** "Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you desire the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light, as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him." **5:18–19**

- *That's a bad day...*
- *They talked about how much they yearned for God to come back. To deliver us from all our enemies. Amos says, "No you don't."*
  - **Amos refers to "the Day of the Lord" 5 times.**<sup>11</sup> It is always a day of judgment. And Amos says, "That judgment begins with the house of God."
- **A lot of Christians are like that...** "Oh, Jesus when will you rapture us? When will you come back and rule on earth?" I'm not sure you want that.
  - **For those walking in sin**, Jesus coming will be like darkness, not light; like they are running away from a lion of bad financial situation and into the bear of Jesus' judgment.

**But therein lies the good news:**

- Like I showed you last week, the New Testament Apostles said that the "**Day of the Lord**" **the Minor Prophets** talked about **began with the crucifixion of Jesus**. There, the judgment we feared and deserved was poured out on him. Because of that, if we are willing to genuinely seek God, we can find safety.
- **Fav old hymn: Rock of Ages was written by** an Englishman named Augustus Toplady in the first year of the American Revolution,

<sup>11</sup> Henrietta Mears, *What the Bible is All About: Understanding Hosea, Joel, Amos*, 299–310

1776. He was in a field in England when suddenly a storm swept down out of the sky—lightning, thunder, and hail. He ran toward a large rock face and when he got to it he saw that an earthquake had split the rock open, and there was a crack just big enough for him to fit in. As he waited the storm out inside of it, he thought of God's coming judgment and of the fact that Jesus, the Rock of Ages, was broken by God so that sinners like ourselves, who hide in him, might be safe. He took out a little playing card, a little Ace of Spades, and wrote on it: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee."

And because of that, we can seek God **for blessing** and goodness.

**But here's what that kind of repentance looks like:** **5:14** Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said. **15** Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate... **23** Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. **24** But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Well, **It feels weird to call our worship leaders and musicians up here after a passage** in which God says, "I hate the noise of your songs..."

**But that's the point.** Singing is not just what we do to close the service. The song is of no value unless it accompanied by surrender and worship...

Let's **humble ourselves before God now** and let the Spirit work in our hearts—let's let him unearth the sins in our hearts, as our **pastors** at all our campuses come...

