

Amos – Sermon 3 – I tried to tell you – Amos 2:6-16

Intro:

1) Story

- a. Husband and wife were driving down the road when they passed a flashing road sign that said: Bridge Out Ahead
- b. Husband looked at the sign and said – “That’s ridiculous, they’ve had that sign there for months”
- c. Few miles later they passed another sign – Detour This Way
 - i. Again, he ignored it
- d. Wife said: Maybe you should turn around
- e. Husband replied: I know these roads better than they do
- f. Few moments later, they came around a turn to discover the bridge really was out
 - i. E slammed on his brakes, his wife folded her arms, looked over to him, and said those words – I tried to tell you

2) Now let’s be honest – those words are rarely spoken quietly

- a. They’re usually delivered with a smile or smirk that says – “You should have listened the first time”
- b. But as painful as those words can be, they’re even more painful when they are true

3) When we come to Amos 2:6, God is essentially saying the same thing to Israel

- a. For 2 chapters God has been putting up the warning signs
 - i. Damascus – judged for their sin
 - ii. Gaza – judged for their sin
 - iii. Tyre – judged for their sin
 - iv. Edom – judged for their sin
 - v. Ammon – judged for their sin
 - vi. Moab – judged for their sin
 - vii. Judah – judged for their sin
- b. All along – Israel is probably sitting there in agreement
 - i. “That’s right, Amos! You tell those pagans what God thinks!”
- c. But they don’t realize that every judgment pronounced on the surrounding nations is actually a warning sign on the road they themselves are travelling
 - i. At verse 6 we reach the “bridge is out” portion of the text
 1. The spotlight turns to them
 2. The finger is now pointed toward their direction
 - ii. The sermon is no longer about the sins of the nations around Israel – it has become about Israel’s sins

4) However – you’ll note – before God moves into His judgment on Israel, He reminds them that He had done everything necessary to warn them

- a. He raised up prophets to preach His Word, He gave them Godly examples to manifest holy living
- b. IOW – when judgment finally came to Israel, Israel could not plead ignorance
- c. Essentially in this portion, the message is simple – I sent you prophets, I gave you examples, I tried to tell you!

5) We are brought face to face with a hard truth about unholy living

- a. God’s judgment often falls not because people lacked information, but because they ignored revelation
 - i. That’s what we see here in Amos 2:6-16
- b. Sermon: I tried to tell you
 - i. I wonder how many times we can look at our life and have God say the same thing about our: actions, pursuits, priorities, intentions, stewardships

Amos highlighted their Spiritual Departure

1) In Amos' address to Israel, he starts in the same manner as he did with the surrounding nation's judgment

- a. Note – this isn't just a pre-programmed, pre-set patterned of message
 - i. Rather – stating Israel's judgement this way was meant to convey a message
 - 1. It tells us that Israel's sin had piled up sin upon sin where it had now become habitual and had to be addressed
 - 2. Using the same pattern as how he addressed the surrounding gentile nations – Amos is effectively saying that Israel was acting just like they were
 - a. This is the opposite of how they were called to live – Lev. 19:2
- b. IOW – Amos addresses their spiritual departure in a serious tone

2) They Exploited of the Poor

- a. What stands out to me in this portion of the text is the emphasis of the rebuke on Israel
 - i. Notice – although Israel was engaging in idolatry – the emphasis of the rebuke here seemed not to be centered on idolatry
 - 1. Rather – Amos started out expounding on Israel's mistreatment of each other and their disregard for one another as God's people
 - ii. The situational irony is not lost here – Israel, who had been on the receiving end of great oppression by the surrounding nations, has now turned that oppression inward on herself
- b. “They sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes”
 - i. This statement reflects two realities:
 - 1. The wealthy were falsely accusing the poorer of owning them money and therefore sold them off into slavery for a profit
 - a. Note – they were “righteous” – not having done anything wrong
 - 2. They were selling into slavery those who could not pay off a small amount of debt
 - ii. The first instance reveals the ungodly greed of the people and infers how even the judges were being corrupted through bribery in order to pass such a judgement
 - iii. The second instance reveals the disregard for God's Word in that the small debt was/could have been paid off if given a little more time, yet they were still being sold off
 - 1. “This accusation probably means they sold innocent, faithful, God-honoring poor people into slavery to pay very small debts. This level of greed reveals a very hard heart.” – Paul House

- c. By addressing both realities – it tells us that the Israelites were not fulfilling God’s Word and Will when it came to the treatment of those less fortunate
 - i. In the law – provisions were made for the poorer and the needy to be helped by the wealthy
 - 1. IOW – the wealthy had a God-given obligation to look out for and help the poorer brother or sister
 - ii. Provisions:
 - 1. Gleaning laws – Lev. 19:9-10
 - 2. No-interest loans – Lev. 25:25-38
 - 3. Sabbatical year – Lev. 25:1-7
 - 4. Year of jubilee – Lev. 25:9-17
 - 5. Debt cancellation – Deut. 15:1-6
 - 6. Help for the poor – Deut. 15:7-11
 - 7. Prov. 22:22
- d. Rather than showing the mercy of God that they themselves were continually recipients of – they hardened their hearts and were overcome with greed
 - i. Statements on Greed:
 - 1. Greed is a plague on individual life, family life, and community life
 - a. It leads to all other kinds of sin – stealing, adultery, lying, coveting, false-teaching
 - 2. Greed robs you of contentment and thanksgiving
 - a. We are commanded to live in an atmosphere of thanksgiving
 - i. 1 Thess. 5:16-18
 - ii. An atmosphere of thanksgiving is a result of a humble soul
 - iii. Greed is a result of a pride-filled soul
 - 1. Pride is something God rejects – 1 Pet. 5:5,6
 - 3. Greed leads the people of God to act in a way contrary to His character
- e. Notice the result of such attitudes and actions – V7a
 - i. Pant – trample, crush
 - ii. The wealthy were trampling the head of the poor into the dust of the earth
 - iii. “turn aside the way of the meek”
 - 1. Turn aside – to stretch out the arm – fig. to push out of the way
 - 2. Meek – afflicted, poor, oppressed
 - iv. Imagery – they literally pushed the oppressed out of the way to gain a profit for themselves

3) They Engaged in sexual immorality – 7b

- a. There's two ways to look at this statement & both could be happening at the same time
 - i. Both father and son took sexual advantage of their young female household employee
 - 1. The picture is one where both father and son took sexual advantage of an Israelite maiden who worked for the family and was in need of a job
 - a. Its as if, for the sake of her income – she had to endure such sinfulness
 - 2. The implication – if she failed to comply, she could lose her job she desperately needed
 - 3. Ironically – this type of sexual immorality was one reason in which the pagan nations of the land of Canaan were driven out by God's people
 - a. Lev. 18
 - ii. This could be a reference to the sexually immoral practices of certain idolatrous worship practices of the day
 - 1. It is noted in some cases of Baal worship, women would prostitute themselves out as an act of worship
 - a. This could be a reference to such cult prostitution – Hos. 4:14
- b. Of course – all of this was in opposition and rebellion of God's Word
 - i. Fathers were called to set a Godly example and lead their families to worship God rightly, know His Word, and abide by it – Deut. 6

4) They Embraced Idolatry – V8

- a. Picture here is of the upper class of people flaunting their sins before the Lord at the place of worship
- b. Essentially – the wealthy were using coats of the poor, who owed them money, to lie down as they “worshipped” God
- c. Backdrop:
 - i. The law allowed Israelites to take the garment from a person as a pledge for a debt
 - 1. But the garment had to be returned before the cold of night set in
 - a. Ex. 22:26-27, Deut. 24:17
 - ii. Evidently, the wealthy were not returning the coats, but were using them as pillows or blankets for their own comfort as they went to worship God
- d. Insult to injury – they would bring wine that was purchased by the fines they gained from the poor to worship idols
- e. The whole picture is one of total disregard for who God is and what He has said in His word

5) The scene here is overwhelming – and it's meant to be

- a. Israelites, who were called to be the holy people of a holy God were exploiting the poor, engaging in sexual immorality, and embracing idolatry all while claiming the name of the Lord

Amos highlighted God's Sovereign Deliverance

1) Here's where the message gets interesting

- a. Instead of moving right into the punishment portion of their sin like the address to the other nations – Amos highlights God's sovereign deliverance
 - i. IOW – He is presenting God's faithfulness on the backdrop of Israel's unfaithfulness

2) After expounding on the failure of Israel in their relationship with God, Amos moves to exposing God faithfulness in His relationship with Israel

- a. Don't miss the picture God paints here:
 - i. God's message expounded on Israel's mistreatment and oppression of the poor, weak, and needy
 - ii. Now He reminds them of how He treated them when they were poor, weak, and needy

3) God reminds them that He destroyed their enemies

- a. Destroyed – to be desolate, to lay waste, to annihilate
- b. God is reminding them of His great deliverance from the mighty opposition of the Amorites when they went into possess the Promised Land
- c. By themselves, they could have never conquered the Land of Canaan – Num. 13:33
 - i. The Lord was reminding them – if it were not for His intervention, they would have never succeeded
 - 1. Remember the 12 spies report
- d. Notice what God did – uprooted them
 - i. By the time Amos was delivering this message, the Amorites have ceased to be a military threat to Israel

4) God reminded them how He delivered them from slavery

- a. As slaves in Egypt – Israel was no more than mere property
 - i. They were put up on the selling block alongside sheep and cattle
 - ii. They were treated as simple pieces of machinery
- b. This slavery was oppressive and caused the people much grief – Ex. 2:23
- c. Rather than turn a deaf ear to their cries and oppression – God intervened and delivered Israel
 - i. The message is clear – this is what God did when you were oppressed, but look how you treat the oppressed
- d. Further – Amos makes mention of God's provisions for the Israelites in the wilderness
 - i. Mannan for food – Ex. 16:4
 - ii. Water from a rock – Ex. 17:6
 - iii. Clothes did not wear out and their shoes didn't fall apart – Deut. 8:4,29:5
 - iv. Led them by a pillar of cloud by day – Ex. 13:21,22
 - v. Led them by a pillar of fire by night – Ex. 13:21,22
 - vi. God's presence was among them in the tabernacle – Ex. 40:34-38

5) God reminded them how He declared His Word to them – V11,12

- a. One of the greatest gifts God gave Israel was spiritual leadership
 - i. Prophets – Godly men who spoke to God’s people what God’s Word was
 - 1. 2 Pet. 1:21
 - 2. IOW – God did not leave them w/o His Word
- b. Notice – He even raised up men who would set in front of Israel a holy example
 - i. Nazarite – a special vow made, outlined in Scripture, as a commitment to pursue God and live a life of holy commitment
 - ii. “The vow of the Nazarite is described in Numb. 6 and was used to express a special desire to draw close to God and to separate from the pleasures and comforts of this world.” – David Guzik
- c. Instead of receiving these people with humility and an open heart – the rejected and despised them – V12
 - i. It is clear – the people did not want to hear the real Word of God nor were them interested in actually living holy

Amos highlighted their Sure Destruction – V13-16

1) What is the outcome of all this?

- a. Judgment

2) The Burden of God – V13

- a. The imagery of this verse is fascinating
 - i. A cart weighed down with a full load of grain cracking and groaning under the burden of the load as it goes down the road
 - ii. Idea here – Israel's sin have become a great burden to God
 - 1. Similar verses:
 - a. Gen 6:5,6
 - b. Isa. 1:4
 - iii. Clarity – this is not teaching that God is overwhelmed by their sin and unable to bear the burden of it
 - 1. This is an anthropomorphism used to communicate how Israel's sin offends God and He will no longer bear it

3) The Brittleness of their defense

- a. V14-16 detail how human effort will not prevail against this judgement
- b. Even their most skilled, mighty, and courageous warriors will fail
 - i. Interesting – remember, they are at a time of military superiority
- c. Message is clear – your defenses are brittle even though you think you are mighty
 - i. The swift will fail
 - ii. The strong will not prevail
 - iii. The warrior will be defeated
 - iv. The archer will be ineffective
 - v. The foot soldier will flee
 - vi. The cavalry will be overthrown
 - vii. The brave will throw down their weapons and run

Closing

- 1) Ending the message this way begs the question – Is there any hope?**
 - a. If God judged Israel like this – what chance do I have?
 - b. If human effort will fail at God's judgment, what can I do?
 - c. Answer – Rom. 5:6,8

- 2) It is right to conclude – on your own, you will have no real defense for your rebellion against God**
 - a. No matter what defense you attempt to put up

- 3) Also right to conclude – we have a deliverer**
 - a. In the middle of this admonishment God was gracious to remind them of His deliverance
 - i. The instances are intentional
 1. Defeated the enemy keeping them from the Promised Land
 2. Delivering His people from slavery through the death of the delivering Lamb
 3. Declaring His Word of truth in a world of lies
 - b. It's a reminder that – in the midst of our rebellion – God is still able to deliver
 - i. This Father's Day – let us celebrate a Heavenly Father who loved us and sent His Son to redeem us!
 - ii. Don't ignore the warning, the bridge is out ahead– I tried to tell you!