



# REACH

Reach

Part 3

August 15, 2021

If you will, please turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of Amos, Chapter 7. We will begin reading at verse 14 through verse 15; I will be reading out of the English Standard Version this morning. Please stand for the reading of God's Word this morning! **Amos 7:14-15, the text reads as thus, "Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, "I was no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of**

sycamore figs. But the Lord TOOK me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’”

In Amos chapter 7, we are introduced to a minor and yet obscure prophet who was tasked with a purpose that was made manifest when the Purpose of God for his life was revealed. It is in this text that we see a great dichotomy presented when the Purpose of God begins to conflict with the Purpose of Man! Amos, by his own admission, did not have a heritage of the prophetic, no family lineage of prophets, no logical reason for the call, or a reasonable explanation as to why the God of Israel decided to choose Amos to be a prophet to the nation.

As I pondered over our opening text in prayer, there are, for me at least, some points of connection that seem to manifest when I read this text. He was not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; he was simply taking care of his father’s sheep and tending some sycamore fruit and the Lord Took Him!

And if we were to take an honest look at our lives and take a moment to be truthful, how many of us do not come from a religious background or perhaps were not raised in a religious household, or were raised in a religious household but ran from it as soon as we were able to get out on our own.

Or perhaps like Amos, many of us were just going through life and simply “living”, we were minding our own business and doing our own thing and going about our daily lives and the Lord, with seemingly no reason whatsoever, **TOOK** us, and changed our lives, and set a new trajectory for our lives that we could have never dreamed possible?

I know this to be the case for me because on December 12 of 2003, (14 years ago this month) I should have lost my life and woke up in Hell, but the Lord **TOOK** me, and snatched me out of the grip of drugs and alcohol abuse, and turned my life around and set me on a trajectory that I never thought possible. I don't know about you this morning but I am so thankful that He stepped into my mess of a life and **TOOK** me!

I am reminded of the Apostle Paul in his words noted in 1 Corinthians 15:3-11, “<sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup>Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

<sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. <sup>11</sup> Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”

Notice with me verses 9 and 10 of this passage of Scripture, “<sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain.”

Paul, by his own admission, wasn't even worthy to be called an Apostle because of his persecution of the Church of God and the coordinated stoning of Stephen found in the Book of Acts. But Just as Christ chose Paul, and chose you, and chose me, the Lord is able to take whomever He chooses and turn a mess in a miracle! To use us for His glory though we have no glory to offer to Him.

How many of us, like Amos, have taken a moment to look at our life and could honestly say that we still, even to this day, do not understand what Jesus saw in us from the beginning to pursue us even while we were yet so far away from Him.

I don't know about you but I am thankful that He came looking for me! I am thankful that He pursued me! I am thankful that He looked past my hurts and my history and my habits and my hang-ups' and gave me soundness in my faith, a firm foundation on which to stand, a family to call my own, a faithful wife, and a fruitful ministry and a Hope that does not allow me to be put to shame.

I am glad this morning, like Amos, that the Lord stepped into the mess that I had made of my life and **TOOK** me. And many of you in this room can attest to that sentiment because if the Lord had not stepped into your situation and **TOOK** you, some of you even by force of will, you would not be here this morning to testify to the saving power of the Cross. Can I get an honest **AMEN** in the house this morning?

**Point #1 - The Purpose of Man does not reserve the right to alter the Purpose of God for your life!**

How often have we found ourselves surrounded by people who seek to marginalize our gifts simply for the sake of self-preservation; whether it be on the job, supposed friends, or even dealing with family members. Simply put, if the world doesn't revolve around them then they do not want anyone else getting any sunshine.

Quit letting people marginalize your purpose! God destined your purpose in this life; discover it and pursue it! Man may seek to consolidate you, but the God of Heaven seeks to celebrate you!

Some may say, "I haven't discovered my God given purpose yet." But I want you to be encouraged by what King Solomon said in Proverbs 25:2, "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter." Perhaps your purpose has been concealed in God and it will take your personal pursuit of Him to search it out?

**Point #2 - Don't let what you are DOING keep you from GOING when your Purpose is revealed.**

Amos was simply walking out what his purpose was until God revealed His Purpose. Notice in the text, when the Purpose of God was revealed, the purpose of man was relinquished.

Amos did not continue to live according to what had been because of what had been revealed concerning what would be. Amos had received a glimpse of the future and refused to let his yesterday write the headlines of his tomorrow. Yesterday, he was a herdsman and was tending to fruit, but when the purpose of God was revealed, he let go of what had been and laid hold of what was to be. That sounds familiar doesn't it?

The Apostle Paul declared in **Philippians 3:13-14**, **“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the high calling of God that is in Christ Jesus.”**

Amos learned the value of letting go of yesterday, the Apostle Paul learned the value of letting go of yesterday, and we must learn the value of letting go of yesterday or we will never be able to lay hold of what God has set before us.

**Point #3 - If we never learn to let go, we will never learn to lay hold because you can't lay hold of your future holding on to your past.**

The Purpose of Man does not reserve the right to alter the Purpose of God for your life! Even if the purpose of man is a purpose that you manufactured. The Purpose of God is bigger than you...

(Tell your neighbor, “It’s bigger than you!”)

We serve the God of the “along the way” stages of life. Often we may find ourselves praying for the destination but we must understand that there are things that we must learn along the way, whether they are about Him or about ourselves, that are the most meaningful.

We pray, “Lord, Hurry up and get me to that place that you showed me that you had predestined for me to be!” but we negate the process because we don’t see the benefit of scrubbing toilets, flipping burgers, or digging ditches.

The Lord will take you the long way around and show you the scenic route and allow you to learn things like: patience, temperance, longsuffering, forgiveness, calmness, learn how to pray for yourself, and how to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

And when you finally arrive at a destination like Heaven, as wonderful as it will be walk the streets of Gold, and beyond the pearly gates and see the apostles and the saints of the ages, and to discuss the hidden mysteries that have been sealed up in God from Eternity past.



I believe that we will find ourselves seating together discussing the things that we learned along the way. So maybe much of what we pray for in life, as we grapple with the destination perhaps the Lord has slowed you down so you can learn what you need to learn along the way. God can't exalt a king that isn't ready to rule. God can't exalt you if you have not learned what He intends for you to learn along the way.

It's like Jacob with Rachel on the way to Ephrata, when they were almost there she lurched in labor and died in the back of a wagon. She named him Benoni, which meant Son of my sorrow, but Jacob took him, hobbled off to the back of the wagon and named him Benjamin, which meant "Son of my Right Hand". The interesting is that Benjamin was the son from whom most of the kings would stem from. You see it wasn't so much about the destination as it was the events that happened along the way that gives us a glimpse of the goodness of God in spite of the sorrow.

It's like Moses when he began to tell the Children of Israel about the Promised Land and they set out for a land that they had never been to nor seen before. Moses promised to get them there to a place where the grapes would be as big as stones and there they would have their own houses and they wouldn't to be slaves any more.

Little did Moses know that it wasn't as important that he made it to the promised land, it was important that he would learn about God along the way.

We have a God who believes and courses our lives in process, not destination. Yes, He is a God of purpose, but His purpose can't be fulfilled if you don't go through process to prepare yourself for your destination.

What about the Two Disciples who were traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus who were talking about the current events of the time. As they talked about the headlines, they noticed a stranger approaching thus they began to discuss with this stranger about this Jesus of Nazareth and what had happened to him.

And while they were on this 7 mile stretch of road, this stranger began to reveal Christ the Lord in the Scriptures and when they came near to their house, he made as if He would go further, they beckoned Him to come and dine with them. As they set down at the table with Him, they saw Him in the breaking of the bread and they declared, "Did not our heart burn with us as He spoke to us **ALONG THE WAY!**"

I would dare to say to you my brothers and sisters, that it is not the place that you hope to arrive to that is important, it is not the thing that you have been praying about that is important, it is not the breakthrough that you've been waiting on that is important, the thing that are most important to God are the things that happen to you while you are waiting along the way!

Isaiah said it was those that waited upon the Lord, that they would renew their strength. They shall mount up on wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Here the prophet celebrates the waiting place, not the destination. It is interesting here that the prophet seems to be insinuating that it is the times of waiting and process that enable you to fly, run and walk with all endurance! Celebrate the waiting places!

I don't know about you but when I look back over my shoulder and I see from where He brought me! You have the courage to say that the same God that brought me through yesterday can bring me through tomorrow. And when you get to where you are going, it won't be about where you are, but about the things that happened along way!