

LET JUSTICE ROLL: JUDGMENT BEGINS HERE

INTRO/ATTENTION GETTER

There's a story in Scripture where a prophet comes to a king—not with an accusation, not at first—but with a story.

You may know it... it's the story of King David and Nathan the Prophet.

Nathan tells David about a poor man.

A man who didn't have much—just one small lamb.

And this wasn't just livestock to him.

This lamb grew up in his home.

It ate at his table.

It was held in his arms.

It was, in many ways, like part of the family.

And then the story shifts.

There's a rich man.

A man with plenty—flocks, herds, more than enough.

And when a guest comes to visit him, instead of taking from his own abundance...
he goes and takes the one lamb from the poor man.

He takes what was precious to someone else...
and treats it like it was nothing.

And as the story is told, you can almost feel what David feels.

Something rises in him.

A sense of justice.

A sense that this is deeply wrong.

And he doesn't hesitate.

He speaks.

“That man deserves to die. He should pay it back four times over—because he had no compassion.”

But what David doesn’t realize...
is that he has done something even worse.

He has taken another man’s wife...
and arranged for that man to be killed.

Nathan the prophet looks at him and says

“David, you are the man.”

In a single moment, the story turns.

What felt distant becomes personal.
What felt like someone else’s sin...
becomes his own.

And suddenly, David is not standing over the story anymore—
he’s standing inside it.

BRIDGE

That moment—when the story stops being about someone else and starts being about you—

that’s exactly what’s happening in our passage in Book of Amos today.

What begins as a word about *them*...
turns into a word about *God’s own people*.

It turns into a word about us today.

BIG IDEA

Our Big Idea for tonight is **God confronts His people when their lives contradict their calling.**

And as you will see, He does this because...

He has given them His Word... but they rejected it.

He has shown them His heart for the poor... but they exploited the vulnerable.

He has spoken to them... but they ignored Him.

And God, because of His deep love for us, simply will not ignore that. He will confront.

Turn with me to the passage tonight Amos 2:4-3:8. We won't read the entire passage at once, we'll read it in parts.

If you don't have a Bible...

EXEGESIS

Amos 2:4-5

4 This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Judah,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because they have rejected the law of the Lord
and have not kept his decrees,
because they have been led astray by false gods,
the gods their ancestors followed,

5 I will send fire on Judah
that will consume the fortresses of Jerusalem.”

Up to this point in Book of Amos, God has been speaking judgment on the nations *around* Israel—

Damascus... Gaza... Tyre... Edom... Ammon... Moab...

And if you were part of God's people listening to this, you would probably be nodding along.

“Yes... God sees their violence.”

“Yes... God sees their injustice.”

But then... God turns.

He speaks to **Judah**.

Now Judah is not just another nation.

Judah is *God's people*.

This is the southern kingdom—

the people who had the temple in **Jerusalem**,

the center of worship,

the place where God's presence was known among them.

These are the people who had been given the Law.

The people through whom God would bless the nations.

The people who God Himself had delivered over and over again.

He says—

“For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not relent...”

In other words—

their guilt is real... and it is serious.

And then He tells us why.

“Because they have rejected the law of the Lord...

and have not kept His decrees...”

Do you see it?

The issue is not that they didn't have access to God's Word—

it's that they *rejected* it.

They same word that came unimaginable through fire and thunder, at Mount Sinai

They same word that strengthened and prepared to enter the Promised Land

they had been reminded of it over generations...

and they chose another path.

And that's where everything begins to unravel.

This leads us to the first reality in the text:

They rejected God's Word.

I. They rejected God's Word

Now... before we go any further, let me just say something about how we read the Bible.

If we read the Bible... and we only see other people's sin...

if every passage reminds us of someone else—
someone out there, someone else in the room—

then we're not really reading it the way it's meant to be read.

Because the Word of God is not first a spotlight for others...
it's a mirror for us.

This book should lead us to ask "Lord, where is this true of me?"

You see, we reject God's Word too.

I don't mean that we forget it. I don't mean that we haven't heard it. I don't even mean that we may disagree with it.

I mean that we know what it says, believe it to be true, and still push it aside.

We *read* what God says about humility...
but we're quick to defend ourselves and prove we're right.

We *know* what God says about generosity...
but we hold tightly to what we have.

We *read* what God says about serving others...
but we prioritize our comfort and convenience.

We *hear* what God says about making disciples...
but we stay silent about our faith.

We *hear* what God says about sexual integrity...
but we justify small compromises that pull us away.

We may not reject God's Word loudly—

But we live like it doesn't have the final say.

Application: Light & Life, I need to ask us tonight... Where are you rejecting God's Word? Is it in your finances? Is it in what you entertain? Is it in your need to be right? Give this area to the Lord.

If we'll be honest before God tonight...
not defensive, not hiding—

I believe He will not only forgive... **He will begin to heal that which contradicts our calling.**

Bridge: But we need to understand... that if we harden our hearts,
Sin never stays personal.

When we push aside God's Word,
it doesn't just affect us—

It shapes how we see and treat others.

Our Wesleyan tradition reminds us,
there is no such thing as private holiness.

When God's Word is rejected...
it will show up in our relationships.

And that's exactly what we see next—
God's people exploited the vulnerable.

II. They exploited the vulnerable

We see this beginning verses 6-8 of chapter 2

6 This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Israel,
even for four, I will not relent.
They sell the innocent for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals.

7 They trample on the heads of the poor
as on the dust of the ground
and deny justice to the oppressed.

Father and son use the same girl
and so profane my holy name.

8 They lie down beside every altar
on garments taken in pledge.

In the house of their god
they drink wine taken as fines.

Do you see it? People being treated like commodities. Sold for silver or for a pair of sandals. The poor are being pressured even more.

This is about people being treated like objects, when they should have been protected.

The command to care for the poor and the oppressed wasn't unclear.

God had already spoken about this.

In Exodus 22, He said—

Do not take advantage of the widow, the fatherless, or the foreigner.

In Deuteronomy 15, He said—

Do not be hardhearted toward the poor... be openhanded and generous.

In Leviticus 19, He said—

Don't reap to the edges of your field—leave some for those in need.

God had already made it clear:

God's people care for the vulnerable.

And yet in Amos...

They're doing the exact opposite.

Amos continues...

“Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name”

This is deeply broken.

What Amos is describing here is not just immorality— it's **exploitation**.

It's taking someone who is likely vulnerable...

and using them without regard for dignity or for holiness...

Dismissing that this person bears the image of God. And therefore dismissing the God who placed His very image in them.

Now, for most of us, this exact situation may not be our story— but the deeper issue is something we all have to wrestle with.

Do we treat people as God's image bearers... or do we use people for what we want?

Do we love them as God calls us to... or do we reduce them to objects— in our actions, in our thoughts, even in what we consume?

Before I continue... I want to say this carefully—

some of us hear this and feel conviction...

others feel shame...

and some have been on the other side of abuse, and we feel the weight of what's been done to us.

Please hear me on this... **God's heart is never to crush—
it's to expose what's broken so it can be made right.**

Because when that doesn't happen—
when what's broken stays hidden—

we can drift into what Amos describes next:

still showing up at the altar...
still going through the motions of worship...
still religious, if you would...

while our lives tell a different story.

Application: So tonight... bring what's broken into the light.

If you see places where you're putting yourself before others—
bring that to the Lord.

Confess it. Don't hide it.

Because what stays hidden... doesn't get healed.

And when it stays hidden, worship at the altar never flows into the streets, it never flows into the way we live.

But when we bring it into the light— God meets us there.

Bridge: Can I remind you... God loves you right now... broken and all, in your sin and all

but of course He loves you too much to stay silent when your life contradicts your calling.

So He will speak. He will warn. He will remind. He will call you back again.

Family, we see in Amos that God was never silent

His people just didn't listen. In verses 9 and on, we see that

III. God speaks - but they ignored it

Listen to the closing words in chapter 2.

9 “Yet I destroyed the Amorites before them,
though they were tall as the cedars

and strong as the oaks.

I destroyed their fruit above
and their roots below.

10 I brought you up out of Egypt
and led you forty years in the wilderness
to give you the land of the Amorites.

11 “I also raised up prophets from among your children
and Nazirites from among your youths.
Is this not true, people of Israel?”
declares the Lord.

12 “But you made the Nazirites drink wine
and commanded the prophets not to prophesy.

13 “Now then, I will crush you
as a cart crushes when loaded with grain.

14 The swift will not escape,
the strong will not muster their strength,
And the warrior will not save his life.

15 The archer will not stand his ground,
the fleet-footed soldier will not get away,
and the horseman will not save his life.

16 Even the bravest warrior
will flee naked on that day,”
declares the Lord.

Notice... God reminds them of what He has done. He gave them victory against the Amorites even when they were terrified of them. He led them out of Egypt, and

sustained them in the wilderness. He raised prophets and Nazirites, people who took a vow to be set apart, to dedicate themselves fully to God's service.

God did this so that His people would not be without guidance. So that they would have examples to follow, voices to listen...

But what did His people do? Verse 12.

They made the Nazirites drink wine.

They didn't just ignore holiness—they made it harder for others to pursue it.

They told the prophets not to prophesy. Why? Because they didn't like it. Because it confronted them.

And we see this pattern all throughout Scripture.

In 1 Kings 22, a king says,

“I don't want to hear from that prophet—he never tells me what I want to hear.”

In 2 Chronicles 24, a prophet confronts... and they kill him.

And then in 2 Timothy 4, Paul says...

“The time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine...

but will gather around them teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.”

God speaks...and His people push His voice away.

And the consequence of that is simple.

They will experience the consequences of their actions. Listen to these words...

“I will press you down...”

“The swift will not escape...”

“The strong will not retain their strength...”

“Even the bravest will flee...”

Everything they trusted in... their prosperity, their stability, their armies... all of it begins to fail, because family... know this... we cannot build a life around rejecting God's Word and expect it to hold us. Sooner or later, it will fall apart.

Application: So again—God loves you too much to not confront when you're living in a manner that contradicts your calling.

So let me ask you...

How do you respond when God's Word confronts you?

When it challenges you... corrects you... presses into something you'd rather leave alone...

Do you lean in... or do you start to push it away?

Because you may not heckle one of our pastors, or you may not tear one of the pages in your Bible, or you may not fight a friend that speaks truth into your life.

But you can ignore the message... dismiss the messenger...
or surround yourself with voices that say what you want to hear.

Bridge: Now, I must tell you that like the people Amos describes, we too reject God's Word, we too miss the Imago Dei in others, we too ignore what God has said... but our God is so good, that according to verses 1-8 of chapter 3... He still speaks!

CHALLENGE

Listen to these words... It is from these verses that we will draw our challenge and response for tonight. Chapter 3:1-8

“3 Hear this word, people of Israel, the word the Lord has spoken against you—against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt:

2 “You only have I chosen
of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you
for all your sins.”

3 Do two walk together
unless they have agreed to do so?

4 Does a lion roar in the thicket
when it has no prey?

Does it growl in its den
when it has caught nothing?

5 Does a bird swoop down to a trap on the ground
when no bait is there?

Does a trap spring up from the ground
if it has not caught anything?

6 When a trumpet sounds in a city
do not the people tremble?

When disaster comes to a city,
has not the Lord caused it?

7 Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing
without revealing his plan
to his servants the prophets.

8 The lion has roared—
who will not fear?

The Sovereign Lord has spoken—
who can but prophesy?

Let's begin with this...

“You only have I chosen... therefore I will punish you”

Sounds harsh at first, but that would be a misreading. Why?

If a stranger says a harsh word to me, I am good. I'll wave goodbye. But if my wife or a friend says a harsh word, it hurts more. Doesn't it? It hurts more because we expect more of those that we have strong relationships with.

God is saying... how could I judge the other nations more harshly if I never showed them who I am the way I showed it to you? I gave you my protection. I showed you my glory. I went before you... I rescued you...

They were given more, so their response mattered more.

Family, can I tell you... you and I have been given more... so our response matters more.

God's people are not exempt. If anything, we are more accountable.

Amos goes on to ask a series of rhetorical questions so as to emphasize that this warning is not random... it's not accidental. He confirms this by stating that God does nothing without revealing His plan to His prophets.

Why? Because this is who God is. He does not act without speaking. He does not bring consequences without first bringing a word.

He is not trying to catch His people off guard—

He is patient...

He is merciful...

He is calling them back.

Every warning is an act of grace.

And now Amos responds the way all of us should respond... would you read this aloud with me?

8 The lion has roared—

who will not fear?

The Sovereign Lord has spoken—
who can but prophesy?

Amos, this shepherd, this ordinary man... is leading by example... he is saying

The Lion has roared, how can we not pay attention
The Lord has spoken, how can I not prophesy?

Now let's not get confused, to prophesy is not just to declare

Let me unpack prophesy... it doesn't just mean speaking, it means responding to what God has said.

It's not just talking on stage... not just preaching in a spotlight... but rather a life that is aligned with His Word.

We prophesy not just with what we say... but we prophesy with our very lives.
Here is the challenge Amos gives us here: We don't just hear the Word - we respond by aligning our lives with it.

Because the question is not— “Did God speak?”

The question is— **What will you do with what He has said?**

Where He has spoken— don't delay.

Where He has convicted— don't ignore it.

Where He has called you— don't stay where you are.

This is what it means to grow, to mature, not just hearing the Word...but aligning our lives with it until we see Him face to face.

In a minute, we are going to have the opportunity to respond at this altar.

But before we do, I need to point us to Jesus, because family, we don't align to God's Word by ourselves. No, we come to Jesus and He aligns us.

When we're tempted, we come to Jesus and He transforms our desires.

When we are believing lies, we come to Jesus and He speaks what is true.

When we are feeling the weight of our brokenness, we come to Jesus and He shows us His incredible grace.

We don't align our lives by trying harder—we align our lives by deeper surrender to Jesus. So tonight, you're not responding to just a message, you're responding to Jesus. And He transforms you.

ALTAR RESPONSE

As we come to respond tonight... I want to invite you to respond in one of three ways...

1. If you have neglected God's Word

For some of us, maybe we have grown too comfortable depending on someone's voice - a sermon, a podcast, a devotional...

but we are not engaging with God's word ourselves.

Maybe you have fallen out love with it

What you need to do tonight is not wait for the feeling

But to repent and turn. To pick up this book again. To read it with fresh eyes.

To treasure it for what it is, God's very words to you.

If that's you and you know you've neglected God's Word, would you come to the altar?

2. If you have put yourself before others

For others of us, we've put our needs first... our comfort first... our preferences first— even when it came at the cost of someone else.

And tonight, Jesus reminded you that He died for them too, that He loves them, and you're called to love them too. He is calling you back to a life of love... a life that reflects His heart for others.

If that's you... would you come to the altar?

3. If you have resisted His grace

For some of us, we know what God's Word says— and we've been choosing to ignore it.

Not because we don't understand— we just don't want to obey.

And tonight, God is bringing that back to your attention.

Not to shame you— but because His grace is at work in you. He calls things out of you that don't align with who He has called you to be.

Maybe you've withheld generosity...

maybe you've been dishonest...

maybe you've refused to reconcile...

or you've avoided asking for forgiveness.

And the Lord is knocking on your heart— inviting you to stop resisting and start surrendering.

If that's you... would you come to the altar?