

## LET JUSTICE ROLL: JUSTICE WITHOUT BORDERS

Church Turn with me to **Amos 1:3-2:3**

Have you ever noticed that a siren only really gets your attention when it gets close?

When it is way off in the distance, you hear it, but you keep doing whatever you were doing. It fades into the background. But when that siren turns down your street, when it pulls up near your house, when it gets close to your people, suddenly everything changes. Now you care. Now you are alert. Now your heart is engaged.

And if we are honest, that is how a lot of us treat injustice.

If it stays far enough away, we can live with it as background noise.

If it is outside our circle, we can stay detached.

If it does not interrupt our world, we can keep moving.

But Amos opens with a holy interruption.

Amos says, **“The Lord roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem.”** God is sounding the alarm. God is raising His voice. God is making it clear that what we have learned to ignore, He has never ignored.

**BIG IDEA: God sees every injustice—and He will respond.**

And church, here is the line I want us to carry with us: **God’s justice reaches further than your map.**

That is the word tonight. That is the burden of this text. That is the truth Amos is pressing down into the soul of the people of God.

Because Amos is not here to help us have a few thoughts about world events. Amos is not here to simply make us angry at ancient nations. Amos is here to reveal the heart of God. Amos is here to show us that the Lord is not blind to cruelty, not numb to suffering, not passive toward evil, and not limited by the borders that limit us.

He sees farther than we see.

He cares farther than we care.

He judges farther than we imagine.

### **God's justice reaches further than your map.**

"Let's go to the Word tonight. Amos chapter 1, beginning in verse 3, and we'll read through chapter 2, verse 3. And as we read, I want you to listen for the repeated pattern. Listen for the nations God names. Listen for the sins He exposes. And listen for the kind of God this text reveals."

*This is what the Lord says: "For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not relent. Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth, 4 I will send fire on the house of Hazael that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad. 5 I will break down the gate of Damascus; I will destroy the king who is in the Valley of Aven and the one who holds the scepter in Beth Eden. The people of Aram will go into exile to Kir," says the Lord. 6 This is what the Lord says: "For three sins of Gaza, even for four, I will not relent. Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom, 7 I will send fire on the walls of Gaza that will consume her fortresses. 8 I will destroy the king of Ashdod and the one who holds the scepter in Ashkelon. I will turn my hand against Ekron, till the last of the Philistines are dead," says the Sovereign Lord. 9 This is what the Lord says: "For three sins of Tyre, even for four, I will not relent. Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a treaty of brotherhood, 10 I will send fire on the walls of Tyre that will consume her fortresses." 11 This is what the Lord says: "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not relent. Because*

*he pursued his brother with a sword and slaughtered the women of the land, because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked, 12 I will send fire on Teman that will consume the fortresses of Bozrah.” 13 This is what the Lord says: “For three sins of Ammon, even for four, I will not relent. Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders, 14 I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah that will consume her fortresses amid war cries on the day of battle, amid violent winds on a stormy day. 15 Her king will go into exile, he and his officials together,” says the Lord. This is what the Lord says: “For three sins of Moab, even for four, I will not relent. Because he burned to ashes the bones of Edom’s king,*

*2 I will send fire on Moab that will consume the fortresses of Kerioth. Moab will go down in great tumult amid war cries and the blast of the trumpet. 3 I will destroy her ruler and kill all her officials with him,” says the Lord.*

Now let me set the stage for a moment. Amos is prophesying in a season when things looked stable and strong on the outside. Israel had visible success. There was prosperity. There was activity. There was religion. There was the appearance of blessing. But beneath the surface, there was rot. There was compromise. There was injustice. There was exploitation. There was hollow worship. There was a people who still knew how to gather, but were drifting from the heart of God.

And into that moment, as Pastor Joel reminded us last Wednesday when he opened the series God raises up Amos.

Not a palace prophet.

Not a polished insider.

Not a man formed in the center of power.

A shepherd. A man from Tekoa. A voice from outside the center, sent by God to speak to the center.

And church, that is still like God.

God will raise up voices that do not fit expected molds. God will send somebody from the margins to confront what has become normalized in the middle. God will put His word wherever He pleases. Because when God gets ready to speak, He is not dependent on human systems to find a messenger.

So Amos begins with the roar of God, and then he starts naming nations.

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

And if you were an Israelite hearing this for the first time, you probably liked this sermon at first. You would have been nodding along. "Yes, Lord. Judge them. Yes, Lord. Expose them. Yes, Lord. Deal with our enemies."

Because there is something in all of us that likes judgment when it starts somewhere else.

But Amos is doing something deeper. He is not just denouncing enemies. He is revealing God. He is showing us that the Lord is not a tribal God, not a regional God, not a God whose concern stops at Israel's borders. He is the Judge of all the earth. His holiness is not local. His righteousness is not confined. His justice does not stop where our concern stops.

### **God's justice reaches**

Further than your neighborhood.

Further than your comfort.

Further than your preference.

Further than your politics.

Further than your ordinary patterns of concern.

And that means this word is not just for “them.” It is for us. It is for the church. It is for anybody who claims to worship the God of all the earth.

The first thing Amos shows us is this: **God judges cruelty.**

Over and over again we hear the same prophetic phrase: “*For three sins of...*” and “*even for four...*” That is Amos’s poetic way of saying the sin has piled up. It is accumulated. It is overflowing. This is not one isolated moment. This is entrenched wickedness. This is repeated violence. This is cruelty that has become a pattern, policy, and culture.

And then God starts naming it.

Damascus is judged for threshing Gilead with sledges having iron teeth. Gaza is judged for carrying whole communities into exile and selling them. Tyre is judged for betrayal. Edom is judged because he pursued his brother with the sword and stifled all compassion. Ammon is judged for horrifying violence in order to enlarge territory. Moab is judged for desecration that revealed contempt all the way down. Amos is not just listing sins. He is exposing brutality. He is exposing dehumanization. He is exposing power without mercy.

And here is what this text makes plain: God is not morally neutral about cruelty.

He does not shrug at exploitation.

He does not excuse violence.

He does not redefine brutality as strength.

He does not call oppression wisdom.

He does not look at human beings made in His image being crushed and simply move on.

God judges cruelty.

That is why Genesis 18:25 matters so much here. Abraham asks, **“Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”** Amos answers that question with a resounding yes. He will. He absolutely will.

And family, that matters because if you live long enough in this world, cruelty can start to look normal. Injustice can start to feel expected. Oppression can start to feel permanent. The abuse of power can start to feel like the way things have always worked and always will work. And in moments like that, people begin to wonder whether God sees any of it.

Amos says He does.

He sees the violence.

He sees the exploitation.

He sees the greed.

He sees the crushing systems.

He sees the lives treated as disposable.

And He will respond.

Now let me bring that closer, because cruelty is not only a national issue. It is a heart issue. It can show up on a battlefield, but it can also show up in a conversation. It can show up in policy, but it can also show up in posture. It can show up in conquest, but it can also show up in the way we use people, the way we ignore pain, the way we harden ourselves, the way we keep moving while somebody else is bleeding.

And that is where Amos stops being a word about the world out there and starts becoming a word about the world in here.

Because it is possible to condemn the brutality of the nations while still carrying a heart that has learned how to cast off compassion. It is possible to be outraged by evil in history while remaining numb to pain in the present. It is possible to know the right theology and still have the wrong heart posture.

And the Spirit of God wants to deal with that tonight.

The second thing Amos shows us is this: **God sees what people hide.**

Psalms 33:13–15 says, **“From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth— he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.”** That is one of the clearest windows into this whole passage. God sees all mankind. He watches all who live on earth. He considers everything they do.

That means nations can hide things from one another, but not from God.

Leaders can hide things from the public, but not from God.

Systems can hide behind process, language, power, and image, but not from God.

People can hide things from each other, but not from God.

God sees what people hide.

And I want to say that in two directions tonight.

First, it is a warning.

It is a warning to the proud. It is a warning to the unrepentant. It is a warning to anybody who thinks appearance is enough. Because you can manage your image with people. You can protect your reputation. You can shape the narrative. You can look stable, look spiritual, look polished, look strong. But you cannot hide from the God who sees to the bottom of things.

But second, this truth is also a comfort.

Because some of you know what it is to carry pain that other people never fully saw. Some of you know what it is to have hurt minimized, overlooked, buried, or moved past too quickly. Some of you know what it is to feel like your pain never really registered with the people around you.

This text tells you that heaven saw it.

God saw it.

God knows it.

God has not missed one thing.

And that matters. It matters deeply. Because one of the deepest wounds a person can carry is not only what happened to them, but the feeling that it did not matter enough for anybody to really stop and see. Amos reminds us that the Lord sees what people hide. The cry may have been ignored on earth, but it was not ignored in heaven.

Church, this is why the holiness of God matters so much here. Because holiness means God is not compromised. He is not morally blurry. He is not soft toward evil in the way human hearts can be soft toward evil. He is pure. He is righteous. He is blazing in moral perfection. He is not

corrupted by power. He is not distracted by appearances. He is not manipulated by presentation.

A holy God sees sin clearly.

A holy God names evil truthfully.

A holy God cannot be indifferent to dehumanization.

That is why weak views of holiness always produce weak views of justice. If God is small in our imagination, then evil will seem small too. But if God is holy, then cruelty is never small. Exploitation is never small. Indifference is never small.

The third thing Amos shows us is this: **God holds all accountable.**

This is one of the most important truths in the whole text. God is not just addressing Israel. He is addressing the nations. That means His authority extends beyond covenant borders. He is Lord over all the earth, and He holds all peoples accountable for how they live in His world and how they treat people made in His image. Amos presents the nations as answerable before the God of Israel because He is not merely Israel's God. He is the Judge over all.

And Acts 17:30–31 brings that same truth into the New Testament with stunning clarity: **“In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”**

That means this message is not trapped in the Old Testament. This is not just ancient prophetic intensity. This is still the moral reality of the universe. God commands **all people everywhere** to repent. And He

will judge the world **with justice** by the man He has appointed. And who is that man? Jesus.

Let that settle on you tonight.

The same Jesus who welcomed children.

The same Jesus who touched lepers.

The same Jesus who wept at Lazarus's tomb.

The same Jesus who carried the cross.

The same Jesus who rose from the grave.

That same Jesus is the appointed Judge of the world. Acts 17 roots the coming judgment of God in the risen Christ Himself.

So when we preach Amos, we are not preaching a God who is unlike Christ. We are preaching a God fully revealed in Christ. Jesus is not the soft alternative to the God of the prophets. He is the full revelation of the holy God of the prophets. He is mercy. He is grace. He is compassion. And He is also righteousness, truth, and judgment.

That means accountability is universal.

Not just Damascus.

Not just Gaza.

Not just Tyre.

Not just Edom.

Not just Ammon.

Not just Moab.

All people. Everywhere.

Now here is where Amos starts getting very close. Because it is very easy to hear this message and think about them.

Them out there.  
Them in power.  
Them in history.  
Them in broken systems.  
Them in far away places.

But Amos is not simply building a case against them. He is setting up a confrontation with us. Because once you establish that God judges cruelty, sees what people hide, and holds all accountable, then nobody gets to hide behind religious language and still keep a cold heart.

And that is where I want to say the line as clearly as I can:

**You can't worship a global God and ignore injustice in the world.**

You cannot sing to the God of all nations while your heart stays closed to the suffering of people made in His image.

You cannot pray, "Your kingdom come," while remaining unmoved by what breaks the heart of the King.

You cannot celebrate the cross and stay detached from human pain.

You cannot love a Savior who crossed every border to come to us and still insist on keeping your compassion inside safe borders.

And I think that's where the deepest conviction lands tonight.

**Not hatred. Not scandal. But indifference.**

Because indifference is one of the most respectable sins in the church.

It does not always look rebellious.

It often looks calm.

It often looks measured.

It often feels safe.

It often sounds wise.

But indifference is dangerous because it allows the heart to remain untouched by what matters to God.

Indifference says, "If it is not close enough to interrupt me, I do not want to carry it."

Indifference says, "If it is outside my world, I can keep it in the background."

Indifference says, "I can worship vertically while staying closed off horizontally."

### **But indifference is not the way of Jesus.**

Jesus moves toward pain.

Jesus moves toward the overlooked.

Jesus moves toward the broken.

Jesus moves toward the burdened.

Jesus moves toward the places everybody else learned to avoid.

So if we are becoming like Jesus, then our hearts should not be getting smaller. They should be getting larger. Holier, yes. Clearer, yes. Stronger, yes. But not colder.

And I want to say that plainly tonight: holiness should not make you hard. Holiness should make you tender in the right places. Holiness should not make you detached from human pain. Holiness should make you more aligned with the heart of God. Real holiness is not private perfectionism. It is a heart captured by the love of God and formed by the character of God.

**That means the more we are transformed by Jesus, the less room there should be in us for indifference.**

So tonight this text is not calling us to become experts in every global issue. It is calling us to repent of spiritual smallness. It is calling us to let God break apathy. It is calling us to ask for eyes that see farther than our comfort, farther than our habits, farther than our fear, farther than the narrow map we naturally live by.

Because **God's justice reaches further than your map.**

And church this is not just about what God sees out there. It is also about what He sees in here.

He sees where we have grown numb.

He sees where we have become selective.

He sees where our worship has been loud but our compassion has been thin.

He sees where we want presence without transformation.

He sees where we have mistaken distance for maturity.

And the grace of God tonight is that He exposes all of that, not to shame us, but to heal us. Not to crush us, but to call us back. Not to push us away, but to summon us into repentance and renewal.

Because every prophetic warning in Scripture is also a mercy. God names sin because He intends to deal with it. He exposes what is wrong because He is calling people back. He confronts because He loves.

And all of that drives us to the cross.

Because if God is this holy, if God is this just, if God sees this clearly, then what hope do sinners have?

Our hope is Jesus.

At the cross, God does not ignore justice. He satisfies it. He does not lower His standard. He upholds it. He does not excuse sin. He judges it. But in stunning mercy, Jesus steps into the place of sinners and bears judgment for us.

So the message tonight is not just, "God judges." The message is also, "God saves."

The Judge has made a way for mercy.

The Holy One has opened the door for sinners.

The One who will judge the world with justice is the very One who died and rose again so we could be forgiven, transformed, and made new. Acts 17 ties the certainty of judgment to the certainty of resurrection.

That means there is mercy tonight for the indifferent.

There is mercy tonight for the hard-hearted.

There is mercy tonight for the numb.

There is mercy tonight for those who have lived with too small a heart.

Jesus can soften what sin has hardened.

Jesus can awaken what comfort has put to sleep.

Jesus can enlarge what fear has shrunk.

Jesus can give you His heart.

So church, here is the call tonight: **Let God stretch your map.**

Let Him stretch your concern.

Let Him stretch your compassion.

Let Him stretch your prayer life.

Let Him stretch your discipleship.

Let Him stretch this house into a people whose worship is not disconnected from justice, whose holiness is not disconnected from mercy, and whose altar life is not disconnected from the streets.

Because **God's justice reaches further than your map.**

And if that is true, then our hearts cannot stay where they are.

Tonight I want to invite us to respond in two ways.

First, I want to call us to **repent for indifference.**

Not vague guilt.

Not emotional performance.

Real repentance.

If the Holy Spirit has shown you places where your heart has become numb, detached, selective, or small, bring that to Jesus tonight. Do not explain it away. Do not hide behind busyness. Bring it into the light.

Second, I want to call us to **prayer for compassion**

Ask the Lord to let you see what He sees.

Ask the Lord to let you care about what He cares about.

Ask the Lord to make your worship costly enough to change how you live.

Ask the Lord to make this church a people whose hearts are alive to Him and tender toward the world.

PRAYER: Father, tonight we thank You for speaking to us.

Your Word is true.

Your heart is holy.

Your justice is right.

Forgive us, Lord, for every place where we have grown indifferent.

Forgive us for letting suffering become background noise. Forgive us for keeping our hearts small while claiming to belong to the God of all the earth.

Search us tonight. Break apathy in us tonight. Soften what has grown hard. Awaken what has gone numb.

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your mercy. Thank You that the Judge is also our Savior. Thank You that at the cross You made a way for sinners to be forgiven, cleansed, and made new.

Holy Spirit, give us Your heart.

Let us see what You see.

Let us love what You love.

Let us care about what matters to You.

Let this church be marked by holiness and compassion, by worship and obedience, by truth and mercy.

And send us from this place changed. Not just moved for a moment, but transformed. Take us from the altar to the streets carrying the heart of Jesus. We trust You. We surrender to You. And we ask all of this in the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.