

"MAJORING IN THE MINORS: EXPLORING THE MINOR PROPHETS" FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 23 | PENTECOST 5

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE: "REBUILDING ON THE RUINS"

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, in your kindness you called us to share in your eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. You promise that after we have suffered a little while, you will restore, support, and strengthen us, and you will place us on a firm foundation. (1 Peter 5:10 NLT) We look forward to the complete restoration and rebuilding you are doing in our lives. As we are renewed, may the light of Jesus shine through us! In his redeeming name we pray, Amen.

CONNECTING QUESTION

Do you consider yourself a half-a-glass full or a half-a-glass empty person? What prompts you to fill up your glass to feel full and rebuilt?

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Aloud & Meditate on God's Word: Amos 1:1-2, 9:1-3, 11-15; Acts 15:1-19

WATCH VIDEO

Video Presenter: Maria Devenport

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Invite the Holy Spirit to lead as you work through the questions in this guide. Cover what your time allows and encourage everyone to finish the guide on his or her own.

1. What does Amos say about himself in Amos 1:1, 3:7, and 7:14-15? He was not a professional prophet, but a simple man from the southern state of Judah, whom God called to minister to the northern state of Israel. Do you think he felt qualified? When have you felt unqualified to do something for God (teach a middle school class, give a spontaneous speech, etc.) but did it anyway? How did you feel when you finished your assignment?
2. Amos first pronounces judgment on Israel's neighbors in Amos 1:3-5, which might have made the Israelites glad. In the rest of the book, Amos brings God's message straight to their hearts showing them the ways they had turned from God. What were some of the sins Israel committed in Amos 2:6-8 and Amos 5:21-26? Do you see any similarities today?
3. How did God try to get his people's attention and what was their response? (See Amos 4:6-9.) What does this reveal about God's desire for a relationship with you?
4. In Amos 3:1-2 Israel is called "family" and "chosen". What is implied by these names? God says that because he lovingly chose Israel, he is punishing her. Why is such discipline necessary? (See Deuteronomy 8:5; Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:4-11.)

5. In Acts 15:1-5 the Jewish believers wanted the new Gentile believers to follow the Law of Moses and the tradition of being circumcised. How did Peter address their thoughts in Acts 15:6-12? James recognized that work of God was in agreement with the words of the prophets (Acts 15:13-15), and quoted Amos in Acts 15:16-18. Do we as the church, inadvertently make it difficult for those turning to God (Acts 15:19) by requiring they uphold tradition, structure, and other rules?

6. What is the message in Amos 9:1-4? How do you attempt to run and hide from God? Is it possible? (Ask Jonah! – June 16 Life Group Guide; Psalm 139:7-12.) Describe the ways the Lord promised to restore his people and their future in Amos 9:11-15. How do you see Jesus the Messiah fulfilling this prophecy? (See Jeremiah 33:14-18.)

REBUILDING ON THE RUINS

“Because God loves people, he hates oppression. He hates anything that takes advantage of you. Love does not overlook injustice. It will not ignore the unprotected and underprivileged. God’s justice will come for every oppression. But even more than that, God will restore far more than this life can take from you. Love will eventually bring a harvest of justice and blessing in your life that no oppressor can stop.” (Jennifer Rothschild – “66 Ways Gods Loves You”)

What are the “ruins” in your life? What needs rebuilding and restoration? Take time to think and pray about how God wants to restore you in any of the following ways (list credited to Pastor Tim):

- **Moral and Ethical Integrity:** Rebuilding personal integrity if your actions have been sinful and not aligned with God’s values. This may involve introspection, asking for forgiveness and making amends where necessary, and recommitting to live out your beliefs more faithfully.
- **Personal Faith and Spirituality:** Rebuilding your personal relationship with God, often after periods of doubt, neglect, or spiritual dryness.
- **Relationships:** Restoring broken relationships within family and other relationships, including healing from past hurts, misunderstandings, or long-standing estrangements.
- **Mental Health:** Restoring mental well-being after periods of depression, anxiety, or other mental health struggles, which may require reestablishing healthy habits, seeking therapy, or finding support networks.
- **Physical Health:** Rebuilding physical health after illness, injury, or neglect.
- **Career or Vocational Path:** Rebuilding professional lives or vocational paths, especially after job loss, career changes, or educational pursuits that did not turn out as planned.
- **Hope and Optimism:** Rebuilding a sense of hope and optimism about the future, especially after experiencing significant disappointments or traumatic events.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank You, Merciful Father God for the ultimate restoration that you bring through your Son, Jesus Christ. Your promise of renewal and restoration offers us hope today, reminding us that from the ruins of our own lives, you are always at work, building something new, something eternal. May we continually seek you and partner with you in the work you are doing. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Our Father...