

When God Feels Violated

6/17/2020

Amos Series #3

Introduction: Amos is a Heavy Message:

A. More than likely, none of us who have heard or watched this series of messages will think "This is my favorite series of all time".

1. If we don't necessarily like this message, think about how much less the original audience liked it!
2. Amos, by this time, was not on anyone's invite list.
3. He had declared judgment upon the surrounding nations.
4. Now, God aims Amos at the sins of Judah and Israel, God's own people.

B. The sins of the nations were sins of cruelty and inhumanity.

1. They violated the natural laws, the laws that are natural to humanity.
2. The sins of Israel and Judah were more specific.
3. The sins of Israel and Judah were all violations of God's Law and God's Covenant.

C. Long before, in the days of Moses and Joshua, God declared blessings and curses for His people.

1. IF they would follow God, and His love, and his leaders, God would bless His people and their land.
2. If God's people rejected that covenant, they would experience God's curse and judgment upon them.
3. Now, the sins of God's people have reached a point where God can no longer tolerate them.

4. In order for God to continue to a good and righteous God, He had to not only be loving father but also righteous judge.

Amos 2:4–16 (CSB)

JUDGMENT ON JUDAH

⁴The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Judah
for three crimes, even four,
because they have rejected the instruction of the LORD
and have not kept his statutes.

The lies that their ancestors followed
have led them astray.

⁵Therefore, I will send fire against Judah,
and it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem.

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

⁶The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Israel
for three crimes, even four,
because they sell a righteous person for silver
and a needy person for a pair of sandals.

⁷They trample the heads of the poor
on the dust of the ground
and obstruct the path of the needy.

A man and his father have sexual relations
with the same girl,

profaning my holy name.

⁸They stretch out beside every altar
on garments taken as collateral,
and in the house of their God
they drink wine obtained through fines.

⁹Yet I destroyed the Amorite as Israel advanced;
his height was like the cedars,
and he was as sturdy as the oaks;
I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath.

¹⁰And I brought you from the land of Egypt
and led you forty years in the wilderness
in order to possess the land of the Amorite.

¹¹I raised up some of your sons as prophets
and some of your young men as Nazirites.

Is this not the case, Israelites?

This is the LORD's declaration.

¹²But you made the Nazirites drink wine
and commanded the prophets,

"Do not prophesy."

¹³Look, I am about to crush you in your place
as a wagon crushes when full of grain.

¹⁴Escape will fail the swift,
the strong one will not maintain his strength,
and the warrior will not save his life.

¹⁵The archer will not stand his ground,
the one who is swift of foot
will not save himself,
and the one riding a horse will not save his life.

¹⁶Even the most courageous of the warriors
will flee naked on that day—
this is the LORD's declaration.

1. God's people are guilty of rejecting the Covenant.

A. The Israelites were not perfect people.

1. In fact, they were pretty terrible.
2. From almost the day they were led out of Egypt, they struggled with idolatry, adultery, hate, and gossip.
3. Time and again God's people would stray and time and again God would do whatever it took to bring them back.
 - a. When Jesus gave the parable of the Shepherd who would leave the 99 to find the one, He was not referring to a new act of God but to an action that God had been doing since day one.
 - b. God's people would stray, and each time God would send a Judge or a Prophet or a Disaster in hope that they would repent.
4. Thankfully, God is not the one and done kind.
 - a. Instead, He stresses His patience by using the phrase:
 - b. "for three crimes, even four..."
 - c. God is not being unfair in bringing judgment.
 - d. In fact, He stresses that He had been gracious, loving and patient.

e. God is the victim of the crime, not Judah and Israel.

B. God brings charges against Israel and Judah on the basis of their disobedience to the Covenant and Law.

1. It wasn't merely that what they did was wrong.

2. But what they were doing was breaking the relationship they had with God.

C. The sin of Judah was idolatry.

1. Picture this: The great Temple is in Judah and Jerusalem.

a. Jerusalem should have been the place that God was worshipped with utmost truth and purity.

b. Yet, God was not worshipped there.

2. Jeremiah, prophesying a little after Amos, declared:

Jeremiah 16:10–13 (CSB)

¹⁰“When you tell these people all these things, they will say to you, ‘Why has the LORD declared all this terrible disaster against us? What is our iniquity? What is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?’ ¹¹Then you will answer them, ‘Because your ancestors abandoned me—this is the LORD’s declaration—and followed other gods, served them, and bowed in worship to them. Indeed, they abandoned me and did not keep my instruction. ¹²You did more evil than your ancestors. Look, each one of you was following the stubbornness of his evil heart, not obeying me. ¹³So I will hurl you from this land into a land that you and your ancestors have not known. There you will worship other gods both day and night, for I will not grant you grace.’

3. These are drastic accusations.

a. In other words, God is saying: Your grandparents were bad people, but you are the worse!

b. Sin runs in the family!

4. Again, God is going to take a drastic option with the intention that Judah would return back to God and His ways.

5. God isn't being vindictive, He's being redemptive.
6. Just as a good father doesn't rejoice in disciplining their child., our heavenly Father is not excited about bringing about discipline and judgment, but He will do it because it is what is right.

2. The Sins of Israel are more detailed.

A. First, the sins and crimes of Israel are abuses of power.

1. They were selling righteous people as slaves.
 - a. This is probably the selling of debtors as slaves.
 - b. For the price of a pair of sandals, the rich were selling people and families into slavery.
2. The rich systemically oppressed the poor and needy among them.
 - a. Instead of showing compassion and righteous judgment, they performed usury and greed.
 - b. Israel was forbidden by the Torah to charge interest on loans to their, but they didn't care. Ex. 22:25
 - c. Greed brings out the worst in humanity.

B. The second crime is also an abuse of power.

1. There were actually examples of fathers-in-law sleeping with their daughter in-laws.
2. The woman had no right to refuse, leading to out and out rape.
3. Surprisingly, this is spoken against several times in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, so maybe this was a much more common sin than it is in our day.
4. God says that this kind of crime "profaned his name".
 - a. This means to degrade and defile.

b. Not only was this a sin against the woman but also against God.

c. When the weak and helpless among us are mistreated, God feels their pain.

d. **Proverbs 22:22-23**

Do not rob the poor because he is poor,

Or crush the afflicted at the gate;

For the Lord will plead their case

And take the life of those who rob them.

Proverbs 17:5

He who mocks the poor taunts his Maker;

He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.

C. The last crime is a combination of the above sins.

1. Not only do they worship another god at a false altar,

2. They take the cloak or coat of a poor person who owed them money, and have a drunken party with the money obtained from the poor through unfair fines.

3. By this point, God is ticked!!!!

3. God then reminds Israel about all that He has done for them.

A. God sounds like a jilted lover:

1. He reminds them of the time he destroyed the invincible Amorites.

2. He reminds them of the time He brought them out of Egypt.

3. God reminds them of the prophets and holy men that God gave them so they would repent and be saved.

4. In verse 9, 10, and 11 God says "I did this...but you rejected me".

5. I loved you, but you cheated on me.

B. No matter what God did for them, it was never enough for Israel to remain faithful.

1. "A cheater is going to cheat."

2. When we read the whole of the prophets, we get a taste of God's anger and disappointed.

3. Our sin hurts not only ourselves but it hurts God:

4. Listen to the words of God in the Book of Hosea:

Hosea 1:2 (CSB)

²When the LORD first spoke to Hosea, he said this to him:

Go and marry a woman of promiscuity,

and have children of promiscuity,

for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity

by abandoning the LORD.

C. Humanity cannot continue to live in sin and expect God to just take it.

1. Yes, mercy is available.

2. Yes, God is love and full of grace and compassion.

3. Yes, forgiveness is available.

4. But mercy, grace, love and forgiveness all require a turning away and refusal of sin.

5. We cannot expect salvation without repentance.

6. Repentance and obedience are our part of the Covenant God has made with us.

4. At the core, the sins of Judah and Israel were violations of God's Covenant with them.

A. After God led Israel out of Egypt, He made a covenant or binding agreement with them.

1. This covenant is detailed in Deuteronomy, Leviticus and parts of Exodus and Numbers as well.
2. All of these books we hate to read are the foundation for everything else in the Old Testament.
3. Amos, and the other prophets, tell of how God's people consistently broke the Covenant that God had made years before.

B. Part of Israel's responsibility in keeping the Covenant was to be an example of justice and righteousness to the nations.

1. For example: Deut. 16:18-20

¹⁸ "Appoint judges and officials for your tribes in all your towns the Lord your God is giving you. They are to judge the people with righteous judgment. ¹⁹ Do not deny justice or show partiality to anyone. Do not accept a bribe, for it blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. ²⁰ Pursue justice and justice alone, so that you will live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you.

2. Each crime listed in Amos is a violation of God's Covenant.

- a. They were told not to obstruct justice, but they did.
- b. They were told not to trample over the poor, but they did.
- c. They were told not to have sex outside of marriage, but they did.

3. Eventually, the price of their crimes came due and it resulted in their exile from the Promised Land.

- a. Israel was the land of Promise and the Land of Covenant.
- b. Their continue sin led them to being removed from that land.
- c. Just as Adam and Eve could not remain in the Garden due to their sin, Israel and Judah could not remain in the Land of Promise due to their sin.
- d. Could it be that this pattern will be repeated in us today?

C. If the breaking of the Old Covenant through injustice and lawlessness brought such great destruction, how much more does injustice and lawlessness break the New Covenant we have through Jesus' is blood.

- 1. This is why James tells us that the religion that is pure and faultless is one that looks after the orphan and a widow.
 - a. Because the Covenant we have through Jesus is still concerned about humanity.
 - b. Justice and mercy are fundamental aspects of that covenant.
- 2. This is why one of the greatest injustices ever committed was the crucifixion of the innocent and sinless Jesus.
 - a. For within him he received our due punishment and our due pain and our due death although he was innocent and without sin.
 - b. Because Jesus suffered and died, He established an even better covenant so that we might benefit from the just and merciful and gracious attributes of God

5. One of the reasons God was so angry with His people was because they were supposed to be the example.

- A. God told Abraham that, as part of the Covenant, all nations would be blessed through Him.

1. Through Moses, God said in Exodus 19:6 (CSB):

⁶and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.’
These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites.”

2. Time and again, God makes His purpose for Israel clear:

3. Israel’s calling was to lead the people of the world to know God.

4. But instead of being the example, they set a bad example for the neighbors.

5. Instead of being a beacon of light, they played with darkness.

6. Instead of leading others to know God, they rejected God.

7. Instead of modeling justice, mercy, compassion, and truth they were guilty of the same sins as the surrounding nations.

8. Israel consistently violated their purpose and reason for being.

B. Jesus told His followers that they, too, were to be the example.

1. It is our calling and purpose for being to be a light in the darkness.

2. It is our calling and purpose to demonstrate the love of Jesus to a world searching for love.

3. It is our calling and purpose to show the world what real Justice, mercy, compassion, and grace looks like.

4. But too often, we look exactly like the world around us.

5. Instead of leading people to Jesus, we are too often marring the image of Jesus in us and around us.

Closing: Today we have the opportunity to ask the Holy Spirit to examine our own lives.

A. What is God trying to tell us about our own attitudes and actions?

1. In a world crying out for justice, are we modeling true justice and mercy?

2. Can people look at you and see the love of Jesus displayed in and through your words and deeds?

B. Part of all of our responsibilities as believers is to show and tell the world that Jesus loves them.

1. **My words must be equal to my actions.**

2. What this may look like for you may be different than what it looks like for me.

- a. For example, Amos' calling and behavior was different than the other prophets.

1. Hosea was told to marry a prostitute.

2. Ezekiel was told to lie naked for a period of time in public.

3. There was only 1 Moses, 1 David, 1 Peter, and 1 Paul.

- b. There is also only one you.

C. You have a circle of influence.

1. There are people who are watching you and listening to you.

2. You have friends that I won't know, but you do.

3. You have colleagues that I will never have.

D. It is vitally important in this day and time to ask the Holy Spirit to examine our lives.

1. And change what needs to be changed.

2. Repent of your sins and don't do them again.

3. Live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Prophecy to your world of the goodness, and the grace, and the justice of God.

E. The world is looking for the exact things that Jesus has promised and it is your job to show them what that looks like.