

Amos: True Worship - Amos 3:9-15

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Preacher: Jayson Turner

[0 : 00] Well, it's good to be here this morning. Fourth, amen. Begin our week seeking the Lord, recalibrating our affections towards him.

And it is good to be here this morning. We are in a study in Amos, and we're going to be looking at the second part of chapter 3. This morning, Amos chapter 3 verses 9 through 15.

But let me pray for our time, and then we will dive into our study together. So, let's pray. Lord, as the psalmist writes, for a thousand years in your sight, our blood is yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

So Lord, we desire to number our days, that we might get a heart of wisdom. And Lord, part of that is gathering as a body, as your people.

Lord, to be reminded of that which you say is good and true and right, and how you have rescued us in order to live lives in a way that glorifies you and sees the gospel go forth.

[1 : 16] Lord, that we would live for the joy of others. Lord, would you instruct us this morning? Would you tell us things about yourself? Would you remind us of the people that you have made us to be?

And Lord, that we would be transformed because we have spent time with your people before your word. And so Holy Spirit, would you speak?

And we will give you thanks for all that you accomplished in us today. We love you, Jesus. In your name we pray. And all God's people said, Amen.

I don't know if you have been sort of caught up in the news story recently of this submarine that went down to observe the Titanic wreckage at the bottom of the ocean, this Ocean Gate submarine, and just the tragedy that followed.

But I was thinking about the statement that Ocean Gate made related to those five members of the submarine. And there was a spokesperson for the company that gave an epitaph.

[2 : 27] And he said, these men were true adventurers. Or maybe more akin to they shared the adventurous spirit together.

And I was thinking about that epitaphs. And not to be morose this morning, but what will be said of us?

What will our tombstone read? So I did a little research, found some interesting epitaphs this week on some tombstones of some famous individuals.

Thought I'd read a few for us to get us thinking this morning. William Bonney, or otherwise known as Billy the Kid, his tombstone reads, Truth and History, 21 Men.

The boy bandit king. He died as he lived. I'm assuming 21 men means he killed 21 men. Sammy Davis Jr. on his tombstone, it reads, The Entertainer, He Did It All, Talented Individual.

[3 : 39] Or how about Jim Morrison, the lead for the Doors, died at the young age of 27. And his tombstone reads, True to His Own Spirit.

Perhaps my favorite from an ordinary individual, his tombstone is in Wainesville, North Carolina, and it reads this, Come, Blooming youth, as you pass by, And on these lines do cast an eye, As you are now, so once was I, As I am now, so must you be, Prepare for death and follow me.

And then underneath there's a post script, Somebody added this line, To follow you, I am not content, How do I know which way you went?

Well, these epitaphs, they tell us something of the lives of the people that lived. They tell us something about their approach to life, that which they ascribed value to, that which they found precious in life.

And this morning as we approach our text, our passage really could read like an epitaph. And tell us much about what Israel, the northern kingdom at this time, what they actually lived for, what they

found precious.

[5 : 05] So sort of a cheery morning, I agree. But I think, I hope that we'll sort of think about this question, you know, what will our epitaph be in this life?

What will our tombstone read? Well, what have we learned thus far in our study from Amos? We know thus far from the verses that we have covered, that the northern kingdom is in this series, the season of great prosperity.

The stock market is on the rise, people are feeling secure. It's a good time to live in Israel in terms of prosperity.

And they're feeling invincible, like things are good. And that's sort of what the heart tends to do, right? When things are well, you feel strong, it's like, man, nothing can touch me.

But with this great prosperity, what we also have found is that there's great spiritual apathy. There is indulgence in sin, and there is absolutely no concern for one's fellow man.

[6 : 20] The people of the northern kingdom, they're obsessed with things and could care less about people. And so really, as we consider this text this morning, what we'll find is there's not a huge gap between the 8th century BC and the 21st century AD.

2800 years, and the Bible still speaks, church. It's still relevant. There's not a book on the planet that does this, except for God's Word. Well, Amos, the individual, he is prophet, one of the minor prophets.

He's actually just an ordinary guy. He's a farmer, he's a fig picker. He's from the southern kingdom. And yet he's God's choice to bring judgment upon the northern kingdom in their spiritually dull state. And so today, we're going to pick up our study in the second part of this first sermon that Amos is preaching or giving, this woe sermon.

And just as you look at the structure, chapters 3 through 6, we have like three sermons. And so we're going to complete the first one against this northern kingdom.

[7 : 31] And just recall how this sermon began. Scott shared with us last week, at the beginning of Amos 3 and verses 1 and 2, God reminds Israel first of his goodness to them, right?

I brought you out of the land of Egypt. You only have I known of all the families of the earth. So this sermon begins with God reminding Israel, I chose you, you are my choice of all the families of the earth.

I chose you even though you were the least. And we know that from Deuteronomy 7.7. It says, you know what Israel, they were essentially a flyover state. You wouldn't even bother with them.

They were the least of all the nations. And yet God chose, sovereignly chose to pour out his favor and grace upon them. You are my choice. I have been present with you.

I have sustained you. I have helped you. And now you have rebelled. And so let's begin here. The second portion of this first sermon here in verse 9.

[8 : 36] Amos writes, Proclaim to the strongholds in Ashtad and to the strongholds in the land of Egypt. And say, assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria.

And see the great tumults within here. And the oppressed in her midst. So the second part begins with a scene right out of law and order.

Amos is instructing this imaginary herald to call two key witnesses to view the court proceedings, God's court, against the northern kingdom's capital city, Samaria.

And it's interesting that we have these two witnesses because according to Mosaic law, Deuteronomy 17.6, you can look that up later. Two witnesses were required in a capital case before a defendant could be tried.

And so God calls two witnesses to listen to the court proceedings against his people. Who are these two witnesses? Or we could say, who is the jury pool?

[9 : 51] We have Israel's two fiercest enemies. First you have Ashtad, which was a major Philistine city. Just west of Jerusalem.

Perhaps these Philistines are still not over the Goliath incident a couple hundred years prior.

They're very happy to oblige to receive jury duty. The second witness is the nation of Egypt, an ancestral enemy of Israel.

Israel was enslaved to them for 400 years. Perhaps Egypt is still sore over losing all of that cheap labor. Upset up the plagues that God sent.

And so they're excited as well to have a front row seat at these proceedings. And so it's really ironic that God calls these two nations as witnesses against his people because these two nations, they

were very skilled at evil themselves.

They were very skilled at crimes against humanity. I mean, recall Pharaoh ordered that all the Hebrew baby boys be thrown into the river Nile.

[11 : 09] And yet these two nations are the ones judging Israel. A nation that has been behaving in the exact same way.

And in fact, it says here in verse nine that Samaria is full of great tumtums, or we could say unrest and oppression.

So there is unrest in Samaria in this northern kingdom. The poorer are at unrest. They're being exploited. They're being intimidated by those who are godly, who have resources, who have means.

And in fact, we could say they are treating people like things, and things is more valuable than people. We would say about Israel as what Paul said of the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians chapter five one where he says, you know, it's actually reported that there is sin among you and of the kind that is not tolerated even among the pagans.

So you have these two nations, adept at evil, judging as it were, or listening to God judge his people for behaving the exact same way, the believer acting just like the unbeliever.

[12 : 38] And the scandal is Israel knew better. Because what? They had God's revelation. They knew better. And this is a difficult scene, no doubt.

I'm sure for Israel to stomach, right? They're on trial before their God. They're being judged, corrected by then somebody who was adept at the very same things that they were doing.

They were being judged by those who they felt these guys aren't even qualified to judge us. We know what the Philistines are about. We know what the Egyptians are about.

Can you imagine that? It would be like yesterday I drove a fella to the casino. I was uberine much of the day yesterday, hoop-fest.

But I spent a lot of my time, seems like there are airway heights around the casinos. And I picked up a fella who owned nine cats.

[13 : 48] And I didn't have to ask that he owned cats. I knew when he got in my car that he was a cat aficionado. All the windows had to go down to breathe.

And taking him to the casino for the afternoon. And I was just thinking about what if God had this individual come over to my house and sort of judge me on my hygiene.

I'd be like, who is this guy? What in the world? And I just want us to sort of understand that this is embarrassing for God's people, for Israel, to have these enemy nations judging them.

Some of you guys know what that's like if you're maybe an older sibling and you grew up with a younger sibling who constantly wanted to judge you, be in charge of you.

I was a younger sibling, I was often the one in the doghouse, but when my sister who was older did something wrong, I capitalized. I loved that. And this is sort of the scene you have here with Egypt and the Philistines judging, listening in on God's judgment upon his people.

[15 : 05] I mean, imagine your worst enemy having a front row seat and watching as God brings judgment. It's awful. It's awful for Israel. It's awful for God.

The people that he chose of all the families of the earth. Well, what's the judgment? Well, let's look, verse 10. Amos writes, they do not know how to do right, declares the Lord.

Those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds. So Israel's behavior has become so normalized that it says here, they do not know how to do right.

Their consciences has been so recalibrated towards evil, they can't even recognize sin anymore. And that's a scary place to be.

Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4, he says, in later times, some will depart faith, sin, searing their consciences.

[16 : 20] What does that mean to sear? It literally means to cauterize. And when you cauterize a wound, you kill all the nerves. There's no feeling. And we live in a culture that has done that in so many ways.

Amen? It's not even sinful in the church in many places to just move in with your girlfriend.

Or shading the truth. Lines become such a way of life, you can't even identify the truth from the lies anymore.

And in fact, this is what's said of Israel. They do not know how to do right. And the sin that has led them there, it says there's violence and robbery in their strongholds.

Now, strongholds would be any residence higher than one story. So this would be the large homes in Israel, the palace, King's fortress. And so what we have here is Amos is primarily speaking to those who have resources, to the wealthy, those who could afford such dwellings.

[17 : 42] And the wealthy in the Northern Kingdom are involved in violence against their fellow man for personal gain. And as we look already, and we'll see again in chapter two and then again in chapter eight, it talks about Israel that people are being sold for silver, that they're being sold for a pair of sandals.

It's as if these insignificant things, these loans or IOUs are being cashed in and people are being sold into slavery because they can't pay their bills.

And these are not exorbitant bills. They're very meager and yet there is a heartlessness towards those within this nation.

The well to do amongst God's people have become consumed, not with others, but with stuff. I want more stuff.

What's at the heart of these actions as a nation? It's greed. Greed is the defining attribute of their very self-oriented lives.

[18 : 55] The Northern Kingdom full of godless, greedy people, all the while professing, hey, we're the people of God.

God's people cherishing gifts over the giver and then exploiting others to amass more for themselves.

So what we're talking about here in the Northern Kingdom, it's interesting. Materialism is not a new thing. It's been going on since the beginning, since the fall of man.

Israel, what could their epitaph read? They loved their stuff. And maybe you're here this morning like me and maybe internally you're saying, great, Jay, I'm not a materialist.

I'm not a materialist. I just like stuff. Right? And I'm with you. I like stuff as well.

[20 : 00] I like researching stuff. I think that is a male characteristic. If we're going to make a purchase, we research. And then we research.

And then we're confronted by our wives and they say, stop researching. Just buy the thing. Stop. Okay? And I have been guilty as charged.

Yeah, I like stuff. I like new stuff. I even like you stuff. I like Craigslist. And I would say I am a recovering materialist.

It's interesting as I was reflecting on this wonderful passage that Scott gave me to preach. Thank you, Scott. I was thinking about how the Lord has confronted me in this area over the years.

And one of the things that guys and cars, they go together and I like German cars. And I've owned probably 15 to 20 cars in my life thus far, all German, all older.

[21 : 04] But in the course of owning different vehicles, the Lord has convicted me twice to sell cars. I've sold two cars because of materialism that had crept into my heart.

And I noticed it because I began to drive and feel a little superior, I know, if this is shameful, to those on the road that didn't have the same vehicle as me.

And it wasn't that it was so nice. It was like one of those sort of understated cars that you thought, oh, that's just an ordinary Honda cord. But it had over 300 horsepower and I could pass you, you know, at a whim.

And so I've had two cars that the Lord had to deal with me on and I sold because the Lord convicted me.

And so I understand we all do. And so this was a wonderful passage to prepare. Thank you, Scott.

[22 : 09] You know, we live in a culture that has just sort of normalized greed. We're constantly told to upgrade our devices, advertising.

It's really based upon what creating a need, creating a space of being discontent, right?

Moving people to that posture. And is that a good thing, church? No. I mean, to quote Scott's grandmother, we need more stuff like we need another hole in our head.

Is that the way it works? Yeah. And yet we live in this culture that has normalized it. Does stuff satisfy? Yeah, for a little bit. Totally.

Yeah, that's why we want more of it, but then it wears off, right? It's like there's this, I got it. And then it's like, it never sticks, right?

[23 : 18] It never sticks. And in fact, what's interesting is Samaritan, verse 9, it says, Man, they had an excess of stuff and yet the city is described as what? Being full of what?

Tummels. Unrest. There's unrest there. Materialism is a God that never fully satisfies. Which I think is why maybe one of the best honeydews that we can do is go to the transfer station often, right? Go to the dump. And I don't know if you've ever done this where you're there and you're like offloading all of this stuff and you kind of rehearsing your mind of what it was like when it was new.

And the feeling that you had, you're like, wow, that didn't last long. That didn't last long. And it can be a spiritual exercise as you consider, man, I used to love this stuff.

It's just stuff. And when you go to the dump, you realize, oh, the Bible tells the truth. Because moth rust destroys.

[24 : 25] Cod's word says it plain. So if you're here, you're a recovery materialist. How do you know if you worship stuff here this morning?

And by the way, when I say materialists, this could be true of the individual that has the least, right? Paul says to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6, 10, he says, For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

It doesn't say for the possession of much money. It says for the love of money. And it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. Some of you here maybe are like, Jay, I don't need to hear this because I'm part of the whole tiny house movement. You know what I'm saying? I don't have a lot of stuff. Yes, you do. Because experiences are stuff.

And all those places that you want to travel and all the collection of photographs on Instagram, it's the same. Yeah, you're going to hate me after that one.

[25 : 33] A couple of questions to consider. If I happen to be, you know, is this idolatry in my heart? The first question would be this.

Where do you experience the greatest amount of awe and gratitude in life? Where do you experience the greatest amount of awe and gratitude?

A few years back I was at a Seahawks game. And what I realized is there were worshipers there. Our sports stadiums are sort of the 21st century equivalent to ancient cathedrals, medieval cathedrals.

And it was so interesting because you saw there was awe present at this event, at this experience. And I still remember there was an individual wearing a Seahawk jersey.

I think it was Cam Chancellor at the time back in the Super Bowl era of the Seahawks. And on the field, Cam Chancellor made this amazing play. And the guy with the Cam Chancellor jersey stood up, pointed at himself, and he said, I did that!

[26 : 43] I'm like, you picked out the right jersey? What did you do?

But it was like, there was this awe that was present. And I just wondered, do we experience greater awe when we are rooting for our sports team?

Or perhaps we're admiring our new purchase, whatever that is. Vehicle, television, I don't know.

And if we experience greater awe there than before our God, then that's a problem. That's idolatry. And I would suggest as we have more time to spend our days outdoors this summer, let the beauty of God's creation move you to worship the maker of that.

Experience the awe of the maker, not just the stuff. So enjoy your stuff, but don't worship it. And you're like, Jay, where's the line? That's between you and the Lord.

[27 : 54] And the Lord's convicted me. I have no doubt He will convict you when needed as well. Second question you can ask if this is an issue for me is the question.

Do we invest more care in our stuff and never in God's bride, the church? Right? Do we exert energy to actually wash and detail our prized vehicle, but never have given a second thought about wasting time preparing and teaching a Sunday school lesson for a bunch of kids?

And if you fall into that category, I'm actually not trying to guilt you into serving. I'm actually exhorting us to be part of the body because there's actually great joy in that when you serve.

And there was a season when I didn't have a lot to give. I had a lot of health issues in my mid 40s, and it was all I could do to get out the front door. And I'm telling you what, the fact that I get to serve the Lord in whatever capacity allows, man, it's the best.

And it's for our joy. And by the way, the Lord is worthy. Amen. He's worthy. Well, let's look at the sentencing for Israel as they are absorbed with just a massing more stuff in life.

[29 : 29] Let's look at verse 11. Says, therefore, thus says the Lord God, an adversary shall surround the land and bring down your defenses from you, and your strongholds shall be plundered.

God will judge Israel. And when Amos is writing this, they're about 40 years out from the Assyrian army coming in in 722 BC, and just wiping out this kingdom.

The looters, they will be looted, and God is not mocked. And you have to wonder if Israel, I don't actually wonder, I believe this to be the case, they are lost in their consumption, and the mindset is one of denial.

It's like, we're invincible. Look at how great things are going. We're the greatest kingdom on the earth. Things aren't going to change. We're secure.

It's very easy to have that mindset. It's sort of that 2nd Peter 3 9 mentality of the Lord is slow to fulfill His promises. Church, things change.

[30 : 44] No, but, Jay, don't you understand, it's always been this way. And it's just like, keep on going this way. No, things change. I mean, even this morning, there are folks that are not here.

I mean, there's many up at camp, not talking about them, but those who are no longer with us. Like, the constituency of this body is different than it was 5 years ago, 10 years ago, 15 years ago.

There's even new families here with us from a year ago, 5 years ago. I've been here 3 years. I'm new, ish.

It's a strange thing. It's really strange. I don't even think about that. I don't even know how I got to Spokane, but I'm here. And I'm part of this, whether you like it or not. Thank you for hiring me, Scott. I appreciate that. Things are not always going to be this way. Things change. It was so odd because this week, as I was thinking about that in my preparations to study, it's like, man, how did I get old?

[31 : 50] You know things change. You just look in the mirror. You're like, who is that, right? And I was thinking about this even in my preparation because my house was quiet and I'm like, this is weird. It wasn't always that way.

I have so many years of trying to study and prepare to teach God's Word and just distraction. Little children giggling down the hallway.

My favorite sermon preparation memory was an evening I was just trying to get things together and there was all this giggling. I went down the hall and I'm like, what is going on? And there's these little girls that are all adults now and they're like, Dad.

We learned how to squeak with our armpits. I'm like, that's brilliant. Man, I used to do that.

I'm just saying, there's not a lot of squeaking happening anymore these days. Don't go up to them and ask. Please don't. They'll say, Dad, never talk about us again.

[32 : 51] Life, it's just, there's a brevity, right? As the Psalmist says in Psalm 90, teach us, Lord, to number our days. Teach us to number our days, right?

And there's a day when we will meet the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5.10 says, hey, we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ someday. That will happen. Things will not always go on as they are going today.

And that's wisdom to walk in that posture. And Israel was thinking, we're untouchable. God won't judge us. Things will never change. They were 40 years out from God's judgment.

And how bad will the devastation be? Look at verse 12. Thus says the Lord, as a shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion, two legs or a piece of ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued with the corner of a couch and a part of a bed.

So Amos here is now retrieving animal parts from a lion's mouth. What is going on here? Well, there was an ancient practice, you read about in Exodus 22.13, that instructs, if you were to borrow your neighbor's livestock, their ox, their goat, whatever, or you're shepherding the animals for them, and an animal is torn apart by a wolf on your watch, then what you would do is you would bring proof of death so that they would know that you had not sold their animal for a profit.

[34 : 29] So you go and say, hey, look, I have here's the ear or the ankle, and yeah, your animal was torn apart. And that's the image that we have here. How bad is the devastation going to be for Israel?

Well, in the case of the Northern Kingdom, all that's going to be left after God judges them through this warring nation of Syria, all that's going to be left is the corner of a couch, says, or part of a bed, right?

What's left? The devastation is so bad, it's so complete that you've got a leg of a bed left. That's it. And it's like the scene of the aftermath of like a tornado, right?

That's all that's left. That's how bad the devastation is going to be. And so if some were to go and show up on that scene and sort through the aftermath of that devastation, what would they think of this nation?

What would they learn about God's people? They probably would be wondering, man, did these people, did they love the Lord at all, or did they just love their stuff?

[35 : 44] Look at what's left. And maybe that's a question for us this morning, right? As our kids kind of sort through our possessions someday when we're gone, what are they going to learn about us?

And I hope our legacy transcends just leaving them, you know, a fat inheritance check. Not you, Turner girls, but all the rest, right? I'm just, what's our legacy going to be?

I hope that my legacy to my family will be Dad, and he loved people and he loved Jesus. He loved people and he treated God as though he was real.

I would hope that that is the inheritance that I leave for them. Let's continue on. Look at verses 13 and 14.

It says, here and testify against... See here.

[37 : 01] Here and testify against the house of Jacob, declares the Lord God, the God of hosts. That on the day I punish Israel for his transgressions, I will punish the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground.

So when judgment comes in 40 years, and by the way, nothing can hold back God's hand, right? He's described here as the Lord God, God Almighty. He's described here as God of hosts, God of armies, right? Psalm 135 says, whatever the Lord pleases, He does in heaven and earth and the season and the deeds.

Whatever the God chooses to do, He'll do. And the tragedy here for Israel, the God that chose them, that has protected them, that has loved them, it's the same statement that Isaiah makes in Isaiah 63.10, where he says, But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit, therefore he turned to be their enemy and himself fought against them.

God has become Israel's enemy. And security is not going to be found for Israel when judgment comes in their religious activity.

[38 : 36] We read here, it talks about the horns of the altar, and there was an adulterous altar set up in Bethel and in Dan, a little bit further north. They're in the northern kingdom.

The first, the first set it up. I don't want you going down to Jerusalem. I'll set up some worship centers for you, but you're not going to worship Yahweh. You worship a golden calf. But God says, you know what? You think your religious activity is going to save you when I come to judge, it's not. In fact, He says, I'm going to cut the horns off the altar. What is that? Well, there was a provision in Exodus 21 that explained that if you had caused an inadvertent death, you could actually go to the altar in Jerusalem, or in the synagogue, or in the Tabernacle at the time, grab the corner, grab one of the altars and claim asylum.

It was like, you know, when you're a kid playing tag, like, I'm on base. You can't get me, right? I'm going to cut the horns off. There's nothing to grab on to your lukewarm religious exercises.

They're not going to rescue in that day. Judgment's coming. So that's not going to keep, that's not going to stay in my hand, nor is your security going to be found in the things that you possess.

[39 : 57] Let's finish up verse 15 tells us that it says, I will strike the winter house along with the summer house. The houses of ivory shall perish and the great houses shall come to an end, declares the Lord.

Man, they had houses upon houses. Archaeologists have actually found in Samaria houses that had some inlaid ivory with some Egyptian symbols.

So they maybe had like imported Egyptian ivory into these homes, very nice homes. But for Israel, man, they possessed a lot. They had an excess, houses upon houses.

Their portfolios were stacked and yet that's not going to keep God's hand of judgment from coming. Wealth is a placebo, church. We learned that in priors 1811.

The man's wealth is his strong city like a high wall in his, what, imagination. Not going to rescue you. You can't stop God's hand.

[41 : 03] It's a placebo. That airplane's, it's heading towards earth, 500 miles an hour. And just because a little like, you know, mask drops down, that's not going to rescue you.

It's not like wealth is like, you know, I'm put the mask on and even though we're going at 500 miles, I'm okay. Right? You look over at your wife, you're like, hey honey, we're good. Right? Check it out. We're going to live.

You're not going to live. You're going to die. That's what wealth is like. It's a placebo. Security is not found in wealth and yet so many of us orbit our lives around it, the quest to attain it.

And scripture says that approach to life, it ruins many. Some have even wandered from the faith because of it. It ruins a man. Steinbeck in his novel, *The Pearl*, writes this about this poor fisherman that discovers this, the pearl of the world.

Everybody wants Steinbeck writes this, every man suddenly became related to Kino's pearl. Kino's the poor fisherman. And Kino's pearl went into the dreams, the speculations, the schemes, the plans, the futures, the wishes, the needs, the lusts, the hungers of everyone.

[42 : 26] And only one person stood in the way and that was Kino so that he became curiously every man's enemy.

He has the thing that we want and he is now our enemy. How many spend this life simply trying to amass more?

Didn't Jesus tell us a parable about this? Luke 12? The man that built barns and then more barns? It's a bad way to live.

We have a neighbor that has five dwellings on their land and they live in an RV because all those homes are full of stuff.

For the believer, love people, love God. And if you happen to possess much, which actually is in the perspective of the planet, all of us, hear God's voice on the matter.

[43 : 49] 1 Timothy 6, 17 and 18. As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, catch this, to be generous and ready to share. What can we learn from this passage, church?

Yes, work hard. Yes, enjoy the bounty of God that he has blessed you with and yet hold it loosely and invest it where rust and moth will never touch it in people.

In terms of our epitaph, it's not actually what's read about us at the end. It's what we're doing every day because we are writing our epitaph each and every day before all around us. Amen?

Father, thank you for just this sobering text. Lord, your people just, they cease to pursue you and to love anyone around them. Lord, and we can be consumed. We can be derailed.

[45 : 15] We're taught every day in culture to want more. And yet, Lord, we want to guard against all covetousness. Lord, we know that you have told us that life does not consist in the abundance of our possessions.

And so Lord, I pray that you would continue to work in us a generous spirit. With that which we possess and maybe most importantly with this resource of time, that we would be a people that serve others.

Lord, that we would be a people that would serve you. We would invest in your work. We would serve here at our local church. Lord, you call us a body. You want all of us to participate. We don't want to be a church of consumers. Forgive us when we think that way, when we behave that way. But Lord, might we learn from just this wayward example of the Northern Kingdom. And Lord, if there's things that have just gripped us, confront us that we might repent and take whatever steps that you would ask of us in that way.

But Lord, we want to use this life well. We want our people to know that we were those that actually did love people, serve people, and loved you for real. It's in your name Jesus we pray. Amen.