

Amos: True Worship - Amos 1:3-2:3

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[0 : 0 0] Well good morning church. We got a fun passage this morning. I have to go home and throw out my Amos pillow now. Go ahead and open to Amos chapter 1. We'll be looking at verses 3 through chapter 2 verse 3 this morning. Let me begin our time asking the Lord to teach us to speak to us and that we would draw close.

Lord you have said in your word that the one in whom you look is he who trembles at your word. And Father we want to be such people this morning. We want to be humble, contrite in spirit. We want to hear what you have for us. Father we want to experience something more of your presence and Lord we pray that your face would be directed towards us. Lord we commit our time to you. We are so thankful that you are sovereign, that you're good, that heaven is your throne and the earth is your footstool. Lord we rest in that even as the world around us continues to spin out of control. And so Lord would you meet with us now?

Spirit of God would you fill me, give me unction and clarity of thought and might we look something more like Jesus because of the time that we have spent gathered here this first day of the week. We love you Jesus and it's in your name we pray and all guys people said. Amen. I don't know if you've seen the I think it's a bumper sticker or car decal that statement no bad days. I've seen it on a t-shirt before. That's a lie. We've all had bad days. Nothing seems to work.

Everything seems to break and then we sort of hit a wall and we're just like I'm done right. I need a new day. I'm done and in our humaneness we all have different thresholds for patience, long-suffering, stamina related to our breaking point when we get to that line of saying enough is enough. Well God too has a threshold where he is willing to endure with sinful men but unlike us he does it in perfection. Everything that God does he does perfectly. Deuteronomy 32 4 says the rock God the rock his work is perfect. Second Timothy 3 9 says the Lord is not slow in fulfilling his promise as some count slowness but his patient not wishing that any should perish. It says in 1st Timothy 2 4 that God desires all people to come to repentance and so God endures with sinful man despite his latest iteration of rebellion in order to rescue still more. But what we learn here about our God is that he is patient. He will not endure forever but for today he continues to endure with sinful man. God is patient. Are you thankful that

God is patient church? Amen? The long-suffering of God is the backdrop for our study in Amos and I think that's important to state after having just read through the passage that we are looking at this morning. God is a patient God and yet his patience has run out which is why Amos states early on in verse 2 the Lord he roars from Zion. God's patient has run out with the northern kingdom. They have been worshiping golden calves for 150 years.

[5 : 2 0] The first king of the north Jeroboam the first has set up idol worship and Bethel and Dan right from the beginning to keep Israel from going down to Jerusalem and the king said to this northern people hey behold Israel your gods and God has been enduring. He is roaring towards Israel and yet the roar is a warning.

There is still opportunity to repent to turn from sin before judgment comes and so the primary message of Amos really comes from Amos chapter 5 verse 4 stating for thus says the Lord to the house of Israel seek me and live.

Seek me Israel and live. God gave Israel then 40 years to repent before finally ultimately they were judged by their destruction by Assyria in 722 BC. But I want us to see something here at the start before we hit this passage God is far more patient church than we often give him credit for and for those of us in Christ the message is the same as it was in Amos day seek God and live. Amen seek God and live experience his grace experience his joy and for those of us in Christ seek the Lord while he may be found that the discipline of the Lord doesn't find us. So this is a very relevant message for us today. Now last week Pastor Eric introduced us to this man Amos writing this

somewhere around 760 BC this blue collar farmer hard-working shepherd a man from the outskirts of the southern kingdom of Judah the kingdom has been divided for about 150 years now and what we learn about this prophet he's really a nobody he's just an ordinary nobody from nowhere he has a sober estimation of himself in chapter 7 he says hey I'm not a prophet I'm not the son of a prophet I'm a herdsman a dresser of figs and yet this is God's choice this is God's choice to speak to the northern kingdom and I want to think in terms of Old Testament prophets as God's prosecuting attorneys towards Israel and yet the thing that we find and learn about Amos is that he's just he's extraordinarily ordinary now what's curious about this book is that God chooses a man from the south to speak to those in the north you have to ask yourself why is that well as scripture is the best commentary on scripture the Bible tells us because an Amos 2 verse 12 we read but you Israel made the Nazarite drink wine and commanded the prophet saying you shall not prophesy so the prophets in the north they're not speaking and hence God has to find someone from the outside to speak for him because up north no one was doing so and that was just a reflection church of really the spiritual condition of the northern kingdom in this day this was a nation that loved their sin they were intoxicated with their possessions man is this relevant we got so much stuff here I was at the transfer station yesterday I'm not so you know I'm not the brightest you know bulb like in the home that I went to the transfer station on a

Saturday behind like 45 vehicles in front of me took a nap it was great and we're just like getting rid of we have so much stuff we're like getting rid of more stuff and that was the that was the condition here in Amos's day they had so much in fact Amos 3 15 how much stuff did they have rights I will strike the winter house along with the summer house and the house of ivory will shall perish and the great houses shall come to an end declares the Lord I mean you got a winter house you got a summer house you got a house of ivory it you got a great house they had so much stuff and they loved their possessions and yet had forsaken their God is this a relevant book church to us today yes yes it is now structurally these first couple chapters that we'll be looking at we're not gonna look at all we're looking at mainly chapter one but I want to understand the structure here is broken down into eight oracles or eight judgments and what we find here there are eight judgments made against eight nations and that then includes at the end Judah and Israel okay today we're not gonna do all eight that's the good news we are gonna do six and I just want to say here off the bat like Amos is brilliant because remember he's an outsider he's from the southern kingdom heading up north he doesn't have a pedigree he's a nobody and he's coming to speak judgment against this place and yet he brings these hard words but he begins by talking about all the neighbors around Israel and you got a sort of wonder like and that's a brilliant strategy because no doubt Israel is not they don't have warm feelings towards all of their neighbors these nations around them it's sort of akin to you know you're at church and you're not sure you're gonna listen to the preacher and all of a sudden they start saying something that you're like oh that applies to that person right to my spouse and then you're like oh yeah preach it preach it they need to hear that and that's sort of what's going on here with Amos as he begins by talking about all the neighbors around Israel man we'll listen to the southern sons you know farm boy speaking to all the folks that we dislike but I want us to consider the image from heaven and I've given you a little map on your note sheet and your bulletin because from God's perspective the lion is circling before he roars against Israel and so we'll take them one at a time these six judgments beginning here in verse 3 looking at this first nation verse 3 to 5 thus says the Lord for three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke the punishment because they have Thresh Gilead with threshing sledges of iron so I will send fire upon the house of Huzal and it shall devour the strongholds of B'hadad I will break the gate bar of Damascus and cut off the inhabitants of the valley of event and him who holds the scepter from Beth Eden and the people of Syria shall go into exile to Kerr says the Lord so the first nation that we learn about here is [13 : 46] Syria to the north Damascus being their capital and there's a rhythm to every prophecy that Amos makes against each of these nations he says for three sins for four and there's a pattern here and it's this poetic device showing repeated infractions sin upon sin and this now is the final straw and so these nations were guilty of more than just the sin mentioned it just so happens that this is the most egregious evil that finally causes God to say enough and so this first nation Syria the crime we learn it says they have Thresh Gilead with threshing sledges of iron about a hundred years before Amos during the reign of two Syrian Kings Huzal and his son Ben Hedad you read about those guys and second

Kings eight they parts are participated in this excessive cruelty in wartime against Gilead and Gilead is that region east of the Jordan primarily the tribe of Gad settled there but specifically the Syrians were pulling threshing sleds over their victims wood sleds with metal spikes sticking out in order to pulverize this is farming equipment used to separate grain from stocks and it's just evil just evil against this people they had won the battle but now they're torturing it's inhumane it's excessive they went beyond reminds us why Moses in

Exodus 21 he pens an eye for an eye known as Lex talionis right the law of retaliation an eye for an eye not a life for an eye right let the punishment fit the crime and that was written in order to restrain evil because human flesh tends to want to take a greater shot than that which was given right I still have a memory of one of our daughters when they were younger their older sister took their spot on the bunk bed and so they proceeded to bite their sister on the keister and I will not name the child but I will let you do your own investigating afterwards to discover and I was just like why what whoa well they took my spot it's just it's in our our fallen nature to take a greater hunk of flesh the Syrians here they were treating man created in God's image as though he were not man and God roars God roars in fact what's fascinating about this entire section is he's actually holding the unbeliever accountable foreign nations they actually know better and we know in scripture that that God from Romans 2 15 that he has placed conscious in the heart of all men that that is a law from God that often gets seared but you know what they know better and so the judgment the capital Damascus and the stronghold Beth Eden they will fall and they will be sent into exile in the land that they originated from Kerr and essentially what we have here is their their proud history being erased church there's a lesson for us and the lesson is this don't treat people like things and things is more precious than people amen Syria treated men as though they were nothing more than kernels of wheat called not to be cruel because man is made in the image of God in fact it says in Genesis 9 that we're not to shed man's blood because God made man in his own image that's why murder is not okay and maybe this morning you're like but Jay I'm not struggling with murder great but do you value things above those created in the image of God do we prioritize our machines our electronics our toys above the neighbor that happens to be in need how much time have we spent wasting time with our kids this week compared to researching the next latest purchase or the upkeep of the stuff that we already possess I'm kind of meddling now

second nation that we learn about here beginning verse 6 says us as the Lord for three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke the punishment because they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to eat them so I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza and it shall devour her strongholds I will cut off the inhabitants of Ashtad and him who holds the scepter from Ashkelon I will turn my hand against Ekron and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish says the Lord God so the second nation we're talking about here are the Philistines Gaza their leading city although that often shifted amongst the Philistines but the crime here is that they carried into exile a whole people to deliver them up to eat them so just like the Syrians that we looked at the Philistines were no better treating people as objects not as curls of wheat but in this case like cattle capturing whole villages and then selling them into slavery for the purpose of turning a profit so they are trafficking human flesh and no doubt many from Israel and they're doing so on this main trade route between Gaza and eat them now our nation we have our own ugly history here but this has been going on since the fall since the beginning of time man committing evil against his fellow man for financial gain back in the fifth century the great evangelist Ireland Patrick wrote a letter to a British chief Carodacus who claimed to be a Christian but he was involved in the slave trade and this is what Patrick writes to him he says you have become a citizen of demons by reason of your evil work well God sees from heaven and God sees what's going on with the Philistines and he destroys then the leading cities of this nation and that actually occurred during the second century BC during the Maccabees period and there's a lesson here for us again and the lesson sounds vaguely familiar don't treat people like things and things as more precious than people profit should never take priority over people ever does our concern for individuals transcend any benefit that we think might come to us one of the things that you guys need to know this protects our pastors but we have no idea what you all give in terms of your offering because we don't want to treat you differently we just assume as talk to Scott we just assume everyone gives a billion dollars a year that's what we do and we treat you accordingly yeah does our concern for people transcend the benefit we think might come to us I had the occasion last week did some car shopping with one of my daughters and it was amazing how interested those salespeople were in

me I didn't realize I was that interesting I was the most interesting man on the planet that day they were so nice I was like man these are my best friends that I've never met bosses how do we treat our employees co-workers how do we treat those that we work with I love the parable of the mustard seed that you know what God's people wherever they are they should be a blessing the birds of the air come and find rest unbeliever those are the birds are people blessed because that we are present there profit should never take priority over people well a third nation let's look at it Amos chapters 9 and 10 here or verses 9 and 10 says thus says the Lord for three transgressions of tire and for four I will not revoke the punishment because they deliver up a whole people to eat them and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood so I will send fire upon the wall of tire and it shall devour her strongholds the third nation that we have here

[25 : 05] Phoenicia tire a leading city up north see look on your map it's not really I know it's not like we're going in a counterclockwise or clockwise fashion is a little more of a dot-to-dot nonetheless Phoenicia their crime very similar to the Philistines their trafficking as well in human flesh there's a difference however because what you see is they're guilty of delivering slaves but it doesn't record that they were capturing them like the Philistines they weren't going on raids into villages and taking whole peoples in order to sell them but they are involved and perhaps the Phoenicians here are doing business with the Philistines maybe they're simply just brokering the deal maybe it's easier to sleep at night knowing you know it's a it's a lesser role right we're just the middle man for this slave trade whose largest account were the Edomites but that said the crime they were more evil because they were violating a treaty it says they did not remember the covenant of brotherhood back in first Kings 5 you just note that we learned that David Solomon they had a working relationship with tire with the king of tire Haram there was there was some sort of agreement there treaty later on we learned that King Ahab marries Jezebel the daughter of one of the Phoenician kings some sort of a marriage made in hell between those two but nonetheless there there there is this treaty there should be peace we call each other friends but the Phoenicians were willing to sell their friends in order to make a buck and so we have here with Phoenicia is really treachery and God notices and God judges because Alexander the great destroys tire in 332 BC a seven month siege and and ironically as a result of that 30,000 were sold Phoenician sold into slavery as God's fire in this case but there's a lesson for God's people and it's the same don't treat people like things and don't take things as more precious than people and perhaps the

Phoenicians less involved just the middleman but they're still guilty their business practices they stink how do we do business do we have to push down do we have to betray in order that we would make a better wage do we have to do that in athletics performance arts students do we talk ill of others who do we have to harm in order to gain financially I mean it's so insidious it's it even works itself into how we speak about other ministries and churches do we speak ill of other churches and Spokane so that we might feel better about the ministry guys doing here and I would say if you want to be successful in business here's your twofold approach this primarily for our younger people here Proverbs 22 29 says hey do you see a man skillfulness work he will stand before kings he will not stand before obscure men number one be skillful in your work secondly first Peter 5 6 humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you so if you want to excel in your career be good at what you do and walk humbly with your God well how do I get good at what I do work hard oh hmm now say if you're a young person you have some great examples here at fourth the folks that are skilled they they they have worked hard and they also walk humbly and the beautiful thing about that is that it has increased their their influence for the gospel and I would say for any of you young in your career man find some of those folks and if you like Jay man I would love to have a cup of coffee with somebody you send me an email and I might make a connection it'll cost you no it's not gonna cost you but man yes work hard and use that influence to proclaim the gospel well let's look at the fourth nation look at verse 11 chapter 1 thus says the Lord for three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not revoke the punishment because he pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity and his anger tore perpetually and he kept his wrath forever so I will send fire upon

Taiman and it shall devour the strongholds of Basra so this fourth nation we're talking about we're talking about Edom we're talking about the Edomites who are the Edomites Edomites are the descendants of Esau that dumb ox of a brother right he got hungry and he sold his birthright for a bowl a soup you read about that in Genesis 25 right guy but the crime of Edom it says he pursued his brother with the sword cast off all pity and his anger tore perpetually he kept his wrath forever

there is no compassion in Edom no compassion for his brother Israel no familial connection only bitter rage because it goes back to Jacob and Esau Israel stole something that didn't belong to them and the generations that have followed have defined themselves by that which they did not receive and revenge is the meditation of their hearts they will not forgive there is blood lust unforgiveness and the judgment we find in verse 12 two key cities Taiman in the south and Basra in the north they're slated for destruction and we know that that actually occurs there in the 8th century wiped out and then by the Nabataeans even a few centuries later and there's a lesson here for us man I've heard repetitions the key to learning church and we're gonna get it this morning because a lesson for us again to stop treating people like things and things is more precious than people Edom had this older brother complex bitter because what his brother received it's the prodigal son story man they got the fatted calf and life for Edom began to be defined by what somebody else received and what was withheld from them it's bitterness Jay there's nothing we can learn from that oh yes there is bitterness is a horrible taskmaster unforgiveness and we're all susceptible and we have to be aware of the enemy schemes here church the first house we lived in here in Spokane we purchased from a builder called himself a Christian and the house had so many issues with it that ultimately we had to move and it costs us thousands of dollars and

I know you guys think I'm loaded all those pastors you know and I had to I had to release that to the Lord because what is in my flesh is I want to I want to kind of think and stew on that and like Lord this is your battle and I've got to release this to you because I don't I don't want bitterness to rule my life and that was the case for Edom that was the case for Edom well let's let's look at this fifth nation look at verse 13 to 15 to the end of chapter 1 it says this says the Lord for three transgressions of the Ammonites and for four I will not revoke the punishment because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead that they might enlarge their border so I will kindle a fire on the wall of Raba and it shall devour her strongholds with shouting on the day of battle with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind and their king shall go into exile he and his princess together says the Lord now these last two nations that we're looking at here Amon and Moab they have a pretty awful beginning both birthed out of these incestuous acts lot at the end of his life did not end his life well you can read about that in Genesis 19 if you're older you know over the age of like I don't know 35 it's pretty bad the crime of this nation it says they ripped open pregnant women in Gilead that they might enlarge their border so what you have here is really a cruelty committed against the most vulnerable cruelty against the helpless women and infants in order to enlarge their borders and this was a tactic in the ancient world to induce fear towards your enemy Assyria perfected it they would decorate the walls of their cities with the slain victims letting everyone know that this is what happens when you mess with us and it was barbaric crimes against women and children oh are we more evolved than Assyria than Amon 63 million people are not experiencing life since 1973 in America 63 million now now we're mutilating bodies of minors in their gender dysphoria got a fight for that that's good for people good for humanity we're not very different from these ancient people church as a nation unless we forget Jesus he is a lion who became a lamb not the other way around and as Amos writes the

[37 : 28] Lord he roars he roars God sees and man is accountable the unbeliever is accountable in Revelation 14 at the end of time God will judge evil upon the earth man will experience the wine press of God's wrath and it says that blood will flow as high as a horse's bridle for 200 miles the God of heaven will roar fear God give him glory for the hour of his judgment it will come God does not take sin lightly period and when man is treated like a piece of wheat or cattle or liability or inconvenience God roars and he will judge unrighteousness and man will be looking for God to be this lamb he's already showed up as a lamb when he shows up the second time it says a lion but you know the lion is good he can be found today he forgives today and I would say in a group this size we all have stories prior to experiencing the grace of God and praise God there's forgiveness amen yeah Paul the taker of life he made an exceptional follower of Jesus amen he experienced the freedom the forgiveness the joy of the gospel and then live passionately for Jesus all the days of his life because there was freedom there there was power there was joy to be forgiven for real well amen judgment comes or it will come it actually occurred by the Assyrians prior to them decimating

Israel about 10 years prior but again the lesson for us is what let's stop treating people like things and things is more precious than people are people in inconvenience to us dads are our children in inconvenience to us or do we understand this is the legacy our legacy of faith husbands are we evil

towards our wives when the doors are closed but we are pretend nice in public Paul said husbands love your wives as Christ love the church period but Jay you don't know I know I know and yet Paul knew God knows and yet he said husbands love your wives as Christ love the church period and so if you're married your wife men that's God's gift to you so stop letting the enemy like throw arrows and say oh she's your enemy she she wants ill for you those are lives and they originate from the pit of hell remember who the enemy is well let's finish up here at the sixth nation Moab look at chapter 2 verses 1 to 3 it says thus says the Lord for three transgressions of Moab and for four I will not revoke the punishment because he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom so I will send fire upon Moab and it shall devour the strongholds of

Kyrioth and Moab shall die amid uproar amid shouting in the sound of the trumpet I will cut off the ruler from its myths and I will kill all his princes with him says the Lord so Moab the crime of this nation they burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom what in the world this is peculiar it's very dark this this nation they're willing to desecrate the remains of a king that they're at war with so so much anger bitterness is fueled reminds me in the 14th century John Wickliffe if you know the story morning start of the Reformation he translated the Bible from Latin into English he spoke out against abuses in the Roman Catholic Church and as a result after his death he was declared a heretic the

Council of Constance in the 15th century and then his bones were dug up burned and then tossed into the river swift like obviously anger is ruling the heart of a person to do such a bizarre and defiling thing and the judgment on this nation they too fell to Assyria God put them down J but I'm not I'm not I'm not that angry towards people I would never do anything like that but what's in the heart what's in the heart Friday night I was parked outside of the mall downtown by that flat stick pub golf place whatever it is I don't know picking up someone for uber and I couldn't quite fully get over so I was over as far as I could flashes on and I'm just saying I probably had it's been a long time as

I've been chewed out that bad by another driver who wasn't happy that I could not park on top of the car that I was next to and I just it was like I was in school at getting like reprimanded by this man was so angry window down just letting me have it I'm like I'm as over I can't I can't get the flashers are on just driver he didn't want to drive around and I didn't make any hand gestures okay I made one wasn't though it wasn't it wasn't and I don't know where it came from I've never done this one but he was just he was letting me have it and just kept on I'm just like and I don't know I was like I miss like and I don't know why I'm having him like like come talk to me more about this I'm glad he didn't come I'm like I'm like like the rest of the evening I'm just I'm just thinking about Jay like man that you got me it got me and I was like how quickly we can begin to just feel that anger towards another person and I wish

[46 : 06] I was more like who do I wish I was more like Melissa I wish Melissa's so good with this she envisions when she's behind slow people she has a little narrative she tells herself I'm sorry I didn't ask if I could share this she's like they've got they've got some soup in the backseat they're taking to somebody in need right now and they don't want to spill it that's why they're driving so slow is that kind of basically yeah and I wish I would have thought this man has some stew in the backseat I'm just a little slow it didn't come to me I think what bothered me was my heart it just it was I was like oh Lord I just felt that anger and I didn't like it I didn't like it and I could see how easy it is for us to go their church and there's a principle we got to stop treating people like things and things is more precious than people I appreciate what Paul says in Romans 12 he says beloved verse 19 never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God for it is written vengeance is mine I will repay says the Lord church what is this passage leave us with as a church this section to the nations and I would say it this way if

God expects the unbeliever to care for his fellow man what does God expect of his people that love him and I would say June is going to be a very easy month to diminish in your love for people as you perhaps read the news as you see the shots that other believers are taking if they're standing courageous for gospel truth I got a phone call this week from a friend on the west side has his own business he's very good at what he does employees a lot of people and he calls like Jay I want some counsel because I'm getting pressured by co-workers or not co-worker but employees I'm getting pressured by other colleagues in the city and they want me to sponsor the parade that's happening this month and they want the name of my business on it and I'm getting a lot of pressure and I'm getting a lot of hate and it's just it's church this is the world in which we live and we can't

miss this message that that Amos has for us we've got to be lovers of people and so at the end of this the application is simply this don't forget the gospel and as we interact with people throughout the day we've got to think in terms of we have been rescued from much we have been forgiven of much and those that don't have Jesus actually have nothing and I so appreciate Scott's counsel as he interacts with folks that stir sometimes the anger is like Jay I see them and I see the unbeliever like POWs and we got to think that way they are prisoners of war they have an eternity ahead of them incarcerated in hell and we have to see the unbeliever that way to keep our hearts soft towards others and so let me end with where we began 2nd Peter 3 9 says this the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promises as some count slowness but is patient towards you not wishing that any should perish but all should reach repentance father we so quickly lose sight of the gospel we lose sight of the fact that we are your ambassadors Lord that our kindness Lord is even part of our apologetic the way that we love one another certainly but Lord the way that we love the unbeliever and so Lord would you continue to give us hearts that are soft maybe skin that is thicker Lord that we would walk and and recognize that those that perhaps want to persecute or say evil against us Lord that they are on their way to hell and Lord that that we have opportunity to be your presence Lord I pray that we would do whatever we can to see others reach repentance Lord give us increase the charity in our hearts Lord crow us that we would be able to be long-suffering and Lord each day might we remember very quickly that you have paid for the penalty of our sins in our rebellion Lord you died for us Lord that we would be refreshed in the fact that you have forgiven us of so much and Lord it would increase the capacity for us to forgive and have compassion on those around us Lord we want to delight your heart as we value people above things and see people as far more precious we ask for your help here Lord and it's in your name we pray Jesus amen