



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Amos, Jonah, Hosea, Micah Sermon Series
Supports Session 1: Listen to God
Sermon Title: "Guilty as Charged" (Amos 2:4-5)

Connection to Amos 2:4-16

Amos called upon the residents of Israel to accept responsibility for their transgressions and to turn to a merciful God for healing.

Introduction/Opening

Have you ever seen police lights in your rearview mirror and wondered who the officer was pulling over, sure that it was not you? Israel and Judah thought God was upset with someone else as Amos preached. The truth was they were the ones about to be pulled over. To be restored to God's favor they would need to accept the truth proclaimed by Amos and turn to God's covenant for life.

Outline

1. We Minimize our Guilt
 - a. A challenge Amos faced was that the people of God felt they were incapable of falling into disfavor with Yahweh. Chosen by Him, they felt they were better than their sinful neighbors. What a surprise that Amos was targeting them by his stinging rebukes.
 - b. Amos repeats the formula "for three sins even for four" for Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, and other neighboring countries (1:3,6,10,13). Amos then names Judah and Israel (2:4,6) with the same formula. The phrase stressed the severity of their sin against God.
 - c. The conduct of Israel, the northern Kingdom, and Judah, the southern kingdom, was likened to the atrocities of their neighbors. Edom was guilty of murder, refusing to show compassion, Ammon had ferociously killed pregnant women.
 - d. It is easy to see the mistakes of others. However, we need to look closely at our own thoughts, motives, and conduct. We are guilty too.
 - e. It is healthy that we admit we are sinners (1 John 1:8), but we cannot use our lack of perfection as an excuse for sin. We may admit our error but minimize our wrong by insisting we are only human.
 - f. Knowledge of our sin should frighten us because sin, no matter the size, corrupts our lives. Paul warned the Ephesian church to not give the devil an "opportunity" (Eph. 4:27). Some versions translate the word as *foothold* or *toehold*. Just as a skilled mountain climber can scale a cliff with only small escarpments for their toes and hands to grip, the devil will climb into our lives with ruin and despair if we give him a toehold.

2. We Deflect our Guilt

- a. Israel and Judah agreed with Amos about the sin of the Moabites. They even said “Amen” to his harsh words. However, he soon proclaimed their guilt.
- b. After crisscrossing to their neighbors, the charges of Amos land on God’s chosen people in the middle of the corrupt nations. Amos was not only targeting Israel’s ungodly neighbors, but he was also aiming to convict God’s chosen people.
- c. Nathan used a similar approach when he confronted David about taking Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba. Through a parable, Nathan angered David by reporting the sin of a prosperous landowner who seized a poor family’s pet sheep for supper instead of cooking one from his own large flock. David proclaimed the man deserves to die for this sin. Nathan concluded his story and charged David with, “You are the man!” (2 Sam. 12:1-15) As Nathan employed David’s disdain for injustice in others, so Amos encouraged Judah to see her sins.
- d. We deflect sin by blaming others. We are apt to play the victim as we point the finger at others for starting a chain reaction that led to our misdeeds.

3. We Can Find Freedom from Guilt

- a. Isaiah also presented indictments against the chosen people, preceding his words with a call to reason that though their sins are like scarlet, they shall be (once cleansed) as white as snow (1:18).
- b. There must be acknowledgment of sin (confession), turning from corruption to righteousness, (repentance) to receive restoration as the people of God (salvation). And all this by the faithful action of Yahweh in restoring His people (9:11-12).
- c. God’s Son, Jesus, died in our place, paying the penalty for our sin.
- d. Even though sinners, we also have the capacity to respond to God’s truth. When we confess our wrongs, Jesus is completely willing to forgive us and then guide us into purity (1 John 1:9).

Conclusion

The spiritual “Standin’ in the Need of Prayer” has these lyrics: “Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord, Standin' in the need of prayer. It's me, it's me, it's me O Lord, Standin' in the need of prayer.” The lyrics do not deflect but accept the need of grace. It’s me. The power of forgiveness and restoration is granted to all who own their need of God’s forgiveness and place their faith in Jesus Christ.

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