

Fallen and Can't Get Up

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Let's go back to the book of Amos. If you're visiting today, we're preaching through the Old Testament book of Amos. What a powerful and rich study this is and has been, as Amos, the country preacher from Tekoa, was called out of those remote regions of keeping sheep, shepherding sheep and gathering sycamore figs and called to go into the northern kingdom to the major city, primarily Bethel, and roar the judgment of God against them, and often, Amos uses the metaphor of a lion and a roaring lion to speak of the ferocity, the awesomeness, the devastation of the judgment that God is bringing against Israel for her sins.

Now we come to chapter 5. I'm going to read verses 1 and 2, but I'm going to cover the whole chapter, Lord willing, as we outline this. So Amos writes or preaches to them and he has it recorded here for us and we go to verse 1 and 2 of chapter 5 and here's the way he puts it, verse 1, Amos 5:1-2, "Hear this word which I take up for you as a dirge, O house of Israel: She has fallen, she will not rise again-- The virgin Israel. She lies neglected on her land; There is none to raise her up." That truth, that statement gripped me for the last couple of weeks, "She has fallen and she will not rise again," and even, "There is none who can raise her up." I've entitled this "Fallen and Can't Get Up." Fallen and can't get up.

You know, the doctrine of the fallenness of man is an essential doctrine. It's foundational. When Adam sinned in the garden, he fell. He fell from the place God had put him. He fell from pureness and holiness into unholiness and into corruption. He was whole and right with God and he fell into a state of brokenness. He was damaged goods. But also when Adam fell, we all fell in him. All of mankind is now fallen.

Now, there are three basic views of this doctrine through the ages. The first view would be the liberal progressive view, you might even say, and that is that Genesis is basically not true, it's a myth, it's just a story to maybe teach a lesson. Adam didn't really fall at all. Mankind is not really in a fallen state before the holy God. Man is basically good and all he needs is the right environment. As a matter of fact, you could take an Islamic terrorist and be good to him and put him in a good environment and give him a big hug and we can cure the whole terrorist problem. Ludicrous. But that's a prominent view and that's the kind of view these so-called professors teach in their college university classrooms and teach these little guys and girls, these concepts of a fantasy world and a fantasy

reality that doesn't work in the real world. So man hasn't fallen at all, some would say. He just needs a little better environment, a little encouragement, a little love and he'll be fine.

The second view is more the Arminian view and that is when Adam fell and mankind fell in Adam in the garden, he fell but he didn't fall all the way. He was damaged but there's a part of man whereby he is inherently virtuous enough, there is enough natural inherent goodness in man so that he can choose Christ and choose to do enough righteous or good works whereby God will be appeased and accept him. Now, some brethren that we love and appreciate, their doctrine, at least on paper, basically holds to that but I like what Spurgeon says. He says, "You've heard a lot of Arminian sermons but you've never heard an Arminian prayer." You've never heard somebody say, "God, you're great and good and glorious but I'm pretty good." No, nobody prays like that.

Well, the third view is our view, it's the reformed view, and that is when Adam fell and all of mankind fell in Adam, man is completely and totally marred by the fall. His total being is so corrupted, there is no component of his being whereby he might clean himself up, lift himself up, and make himself acceptable to the one true and holy God. Sometimes we call this total depravity. It's the complete fallenness of man. That's why we need a mighty salvation.

And now Amos is going to use this terminology to talk about how totally corrupted, how thoroughly broken Israel has become and there is no way she can save herself. And of all the things and I do not mean to be trite or humorous, but of all the things, I couldn't get Humpty-Dumpty off my mind this week. Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall. And all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again. I did a little research on Humpty-Dumpty and scholars believe there are probably one or two sources. There was a great king in Britain who had amassed a mighty military but he was overthrown and he fell. His military was defeated and he never rose to the prior again. Another historian says he believed there was a great cannon made by a great king in England decades ago, centuries ago, and this great cannon was placed on the wall of the city but it was so big it crushed the wall and the wall, the cannon and everything was so damaged they couldn't put it all back together again. In all those scenarios, though, the image is just exactly what the Bible teaches of man's fallenness and just exactly what Amos is teaching about the fallenness of Israel and that is: you are so fallen, you are so corrupted, you are so broken, you can't be fixed unless God does something supernaturally.

So let's look at it together as we see the way Amos describes this fall. Now let's remind ourselves that Israel has been experiencing the best of times. I mean, at this time when Amos is preaching to them, they have been experiencing unprecedented economic prosperity. Their kingdom has expanded greatly and accomplished new trade routes which brought great income and commerce into their country. The people are doing well. Things are up. Jeroboam like his forefathers, has expanded the false church, if you will. They built a false church in Bethel and another false church in Gilgal and a false church in Beersheba whereby they kept some orthodox things but they added the carnal

amusements and pleasures of Baal worship. They put it all together and the people just loved it. It was so relevant and it was so contemporary. It was just cool to go to church.

So everything's up. Everything is positive. Everything is going great. And then this guy named Amos walks into town, this country bumpkin, proclaiming God's judgment and they all think, "What are you talking about? Look at the blessings of God on us." You see, Amos was telling them, "I see things differently because God sees things differently and at this point," Amos says, "I'm going to describe your condition in a song." Isn't that what he says in verse 1? "I'm going to take up for you a dirge, but," he says, "I'm going to sing not the kind of song you want sung, I'm going to sing a dirge," that means a sad and primarily a mournful type song. We would say the blues maybe today. Outwardly you look great. Outwardly it looks like this is a time for joy and for celebration but remember, man looks on the outer appearance but God looks on the heart.

Jeroboam II, king at this time, followed in the paths of the wicked and compromising kings before him, perhaps he even flew a banner that said, "Make Israel great again." But Jeroboam II, like the kings before him, forgot something very important and that is that Israel was only truly great when she was truly righteous. While Israel had prospered outwardly, she was decaying inwardly. So Amos comes in and says, "I'm gonna sing a song about you guys but not a song of joy and not a song of happiness, not a song of celebration. I'm gonna sing a dirge, a sad and mournful song."

The title of the song we see is in verse 2, if you will, and I'm saying this as a figure of speech, not that Amos is literally titling it that, and that is, "She has fallen, she will not rise again." The idea of fallen means dashed down.

Notice Amos uses the feminine pronoun here, she has fallen. I think there's a purpose for that because women are more emotional. Do you ever watch Shark Tank? Why is it 9 out of 10 times the women on there cry? It's because God made women special. Thank God he didn't make women like men and he didn't make men like women. I'm glad there's the beauty and the creativity and the attributes that ladies bring that men cannot bring or do. But ladies feel more deeply, they hurt more deeply, and I think that's why he uses the feminine pronoun to say, "In my song, I want you to grasp the depth of the sorrow you should feel for your condition."

He talks about her in verse 2 as being the virgin Israel. I think that means she was God's one and only exclusive people and up until this time, at least since her redemption from Egypt, she's never known domination or control or belonging to another other than just Jehovah God. But now due to her own sin and rebellion, she's lying in the streets, Amos says. The beautiful, pure bride of God, Israel, now lying in the mire and in the dirt.

He uses the word "neglected" in verse 2, "She is neglected." You see, having sinned away her covenant care and protection from God, she's now without the divine protection and provision she needs. Now she doesn't think she needs it but the Assyrians are marching. Here they come. They don't know it yet. God knows it and Amos knows it and they forfeited divine protection and provision.

Not only does it say "she" and she's "the virgin Israel" and she is "neglected," lying in the streets but she's in her land. She is neglected, lying in the streets in her land. Remember that was the land God promised her, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of God's great blessings for Israel. But due to her own undoing, that very land is going to become the place of her judgment. Her own land.

This false notion about hell has been around forever, that you go to hell and you'll be without God for eternity. No, you will not. You're going to go to hell and do you know who you're going to run right into in hell? You're going to run right into God but he will not be there in love and grace and mercy, he will only be there in his wrath and in his judgment. You will not get away from God. You will face God either in grace and mercy through his Son, Jesus Christ, or in his eternal wrath and judgment in hell.

You see, they thought somehow being in the Promised Land as God's chosen people they were sort of inoculated. And Amos here, you've got to understand, these are shattering things he's saying. These are compounding troubling things. "Israel, you in the land of promise are going to find it to be the land of curse and judgment." I can't make this as strong as it is.

So she has forsaken her God and when calamity strikes, what does Amos say? No one can raise her up. All of her new lovers and all of her new friends will not be able to put her back together. She's broken.

So in this fallen state, she's fallen into a corruption and into a brokenness, a defilement and let me use the rest of the chapter to outline some aspects of how broken she is. First of all, I. She fell and she broke her head. She fell and she broke her head. Her thinking is now corrupted. Her thinking is now broken.

We could see this in many ways but the two that really jump out to me, look at verse 18, if you will, and notice what it says in verse 18, "Alas, you [Israel] who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light." Now they were looking for the coming day of the Lord, that's a phrase used throughout the Bible to talk about when the Lord, the Messiah returns. They were longing as God's chosen people for the day of the Lord when he would finally rid the earth of all the God-haters and establish Israel as co-regents with him in this new, eternal, glorious kingdom. They were looking for the day of the Lord but they were warped, they were corrupted, they had broken thinking. The prophet says, "You don't understand something: the day of the Lord is not going to be a day of blessing for you. It's going to be a day of judgment for you."

How many people in church today in the United States of America and even around the world, think because they're jumping through some hoops and they're going through some motions and they've morally cleaned up some things in their own life, they're thinking God is good with them and their thinking is broken. It's warped. It's wrong. That's what Israel thought.

Verse 20, "Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?" She just doesn't see it. She's blind. You know, the more you see and the more you harden and make your heart and your sensitivities coarse, the more blind you become. The point is they thought that living in the lust of this world's pleasures, callously abusing their fellow man, the way they had perverted religion and embraced powerless ritual in their religion, they thought all this was fine and good with God. They thought the Lord's going to return, he's going to bless us, he's going to exalt us with himself. But exactly the opposite is true. The prophet says, "No, God is angry with you because you've trusted in your own understanding." The Bible says, "Do not trust in your own understanding but in all your ways acknowledge Him." Sir, can I ask you this morning, have you worked out a religion, a morality, a philosophy of life that fits you? I'm telling you, that will not work with God. You come to God on his basis and in his wisdom, not on your own.

But they had worked out a convenient philosophy and system of governing, an economic system and a religious system that fit them though they put the trappings of orthodoxy on the outside of it, but their thinking was completely wrong on this. Not only that, not only they're thinking about their own righteousness was broken, but their thinking on God's sovereignty was broken. You see, they would probably not deny that Jehovah was sovereign but then they'd turn right around and mix Baal worship into their Jehovah worship. Scholars call it the Jehovah bull cult. They'd bring that golden bull calf in and then they'd also worship Jehovah and they'd say, "We checked off our Jehovah worship but we love the sensual pleasures and amusements that Baal worship brings in. It makes it more relevant and contemporary and the people like it better." But they forgot God isn't sovereign and Baal isn't partially sovereign. No, it's just simply this: God is sovereign. He's the only true Lord and the only true sovereign.

Look at there, if you will, in verse 8, "He who made the Pleiades and Orion And changes deep darkness into morning, Who also darkens day into night, Who calls for the waters of the sea And pours them out on the surface of the earth, The LORD is His name." Now remember, they worshiped Baal along with Jehovah because they believed Baal controlled nature, he controlled the seasons, he gave their crops fertility and brought fertility to their livestock and in their own households. So they thought God wasn't sovereign because Baal is really also, but the prophet says, "No, you're wrong in your thinking. You're broken in your thinking. There is only one true sovereign."

And this Pleiades and Orion, that's the constellations and that's what they would look to to determine, "Hey, it's harvest time or it's planting time or it's the rainy season," because as the earth would tilt on its axis through the seasons, of course, the constellations would appear in different parts of the sky. And he's saying, "God made all of that. God makes the seasons. God is the one who controls everyday things like the morning, darkness turning to light, and nighttime, light turning into darkness. And even catastrophic events that come, God governs all of that. You're wrong in your thinking about God's sovereignty. The point is, you've begun to embrace Jehovah along with the idols of your

contemporary age as what you're trusting in and that's wrong thinking and that brings the judgment of God."

Well, not only that but thirdly, they were broken in their thinking about their future, primarily their future prosperity. Look at it there in verse 11, the last part, "you have built houses of well-hewn stone, Yet you will not live in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, yet you will not drink their wine." So they thought, "These are prosperous times, things are doing well." They were proud and confident that their birth heritage as a Jew granted them unending blessings and prosperity even though they were willfully unrighteous and functioned in unbelief. They were so badly mistaken. They were fallen and broken in their thinking about their future prosperity.

How long do you think God is going to let America go on in prosperity? Just one simple thing: a culture that embraces the killing of the unborn will face the judgment of God. Not to mention the rest of it. Wrong thinking. Thinking this is going to be okay. Our economy is doing good. Wrong thinking.

Furthermore, they put obviously great importance on the size of the nation but notice what he says here in verse 3, "For thus says the Lord GOD, 'The city which goes forth a thousand strong Will have a hundred left, And the one which goes forth a hundred strong Will have ten left to the house of Israel.'" He said there's going to be a devastating reduction in your great might and even in your population. Your thinking is wrong.

So they fail and Amos says, "You've got broken heads. Your thinking is corrupted. As you think about what righteousness is and think you're righteous, you're thinking wrong. When you're thinking about God's sovereignty and that Baal is partially sovereign, you're thinking wrong. There is only one true sovereign, Jehovah. And when you're thinking about your future and things are going to keep going well, you're going to build houses," he said, "but you're not going to live in them because you're going carted off into captivity, those that live, and your population is going to be reduced from 1,000 down to 100, from 100 down to 10."

Well, not only when they fell did they break their heads, they broke their hearts. Now, I'm not talking about a broken heart and I know that's all we talk about in our culture today is your broken heart means you're hurting, you're offended, somebody did you wrong. That's not what we're talking about here. I mean their heart, what they loved, what their affections went toward was broken. It was corrupt. It was wrong.

You see, in their heads they were thinking wrong and in their hearts they were loving wrong. You ladies do understand you can have deep strong emotions and yet they be wrong. Your affections and your heart can feel strongly about something. "Well, I just feel strongly about that." Well, wootido. So did Hitler. He felt strongly about his cause. So did Jezebel. She felt strongly about her cause. Just feeling strongly doesn't mean anything. You're supposed to make sure your emotions are governed by truth. And you men, you're the heads of your households. You make sure with sweetness, with kindness and with humility, but make sure you're leading your wives and your children to think

biblically and not be driven by emotions. They let their emotions, their affections, go toward wrong things.

In Matthew 22:37-38, Jesus is speaking and he said to them, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment." So first we should have a love for God. This is the great thing, this is where our affections should be, but their fallen, corrupted, broken hearts revealed their fallenness and their brokenness in their worship. You see, worship is really about who you love. If you love wrong, you worship wrong. If your heart affections are not right, then your worship is going to be wrong.

And they had self-willed worship. They had out of themselves designed worship which fit them and fit the culture of the day and made people happy. They loved themselves. They loved sin but they did not love the God who revealed himself in the holy Scriptures. And the worship that came from these fallen broken hearts – now listen, two aspects – the worship they developed out of their broken heart affections was both perverse and powerless. Perverse and powerless.

If you will, look at verses 5 and 6. Now the context is impending judgment, the context is the Assyrians are about to crush you. But the prophet says in that context, "do not resort to Bethel And do not come to Gilgal, Nor cross over to Beersheba; For Gilgal will certainly go into captivity And Bethel will come to trouble. Seek the LORD that you may live, Or He will break forth like a fire, O house of Joseph, And it will consume with none to quench it for Bethel." Here's what he's saying, now that's their big megachurches of the day. Remember, that's the false Jerusalems. Wicked King Jeroboam had set up so that he could keep them from going down into the southern kingdom and worshipping at Jerusalem where God told them to go. So he built something that would fit them better and here's what the prophet is saying, "When you see the judgment knocking at the door, you're gonna think, 'Let's go run to the house of God and seek the face of God and be saved.'" And the prophet said, "Don't go there. That's why you're being judged. The church you're attending is causing you to be more condemned than if you didn't attend it at all. Don't go to Bethel."

Now, not exactly, there's not a perfect parallel here but the shock of that would be, let's say the Islamic armies of the world are somehow crashing onto our shores and marching across our lands and we get together to seek God and a prophet rises up and says, "Don't go to the Baptist church. Don't go to the Methodist church. Don't go to the Presbyterian church. That's why they're here judging you now." That would be shocking, wouldn't it? Again, I'm not saying there's a perfect parallel, I'm just saying that's the shock of this.

He said, "Look, don't go to church but instead seek God." Now be balanced. There are good churches and sound churches where you can find God, amen? Praise the Lord for that. Unfortunately, in this day at least in the northern kingdom, there was no established church that could be said to be sound and good. So here's my point: their worship, Amos is saying, "Your worship is perverse." Remember, they brought the Baal worship into Jehovah worship. It's perverse and furthermore it's powerless.

Notice how he points out the powerlessness of it. Let's see, look there in verse 21, "I hate, I reject your festivals." Now wait a minute, these festivals are what the Scripture required of them. "Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies." Wait a minute, Moses wrote about these solemn assemblies. It's in the Bible.

Verse 22, "Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them." Wait a minute, wait a minute, the law requires burnt offerings and grain offerings. God said, "I don't care. I don't want them."

The last part of verse 22, "And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings." Wait a minute, the Scripture says bring peace offerings. God said, "I don't want it."

Verse 23, "Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps." Brother Tom, they had a whizz-bang, jam it up, get it going, exciting song service in these churches and God said, "I don't want to hear any of it. I'm not impressed by it. You may have captivated the whole northern kingdom with it, but I hate it."

"But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Do you know what he's saying? "You've perverted my worship and it's powerless because I'm not seeing any change in your lives. I'm not seeing unrighteousness become righteousness. I'm not seeing unholy people becoming holy people. I'm not seeing proud arrogant people becoming holy, humble, God-honoring people. Yeah, you've got a great big worship experience going on and it's the big fad and the big noise in the whole countryside but," God says, "I hate every part of it."

Now don't you sit there and say, "Well, I'm thankful that evangelicals or Baptists today aren't the same kind of wicked sinners that Israel of old." Oh, don't kid yourself. Are you listening to your pastor this morning? Old Jewish flesh is not any more wicked than modern Baptist flesh. We can do the same stuff if we're not careful. Amen? Don't be proud.

Now, I don't have time to go into it, but Bethel and Gilgal and Beersheba, those were three geographic locations – now listen – where their forefathers found God. Abraham worshiped in these places. Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord at Bethel and had his heart changed, was born again. God changed him and he left Israel not as Jacob. And then Beersheba was a place that Jacob was encouraged by God to go on to Egypt and find grain and meet with Joseph. On and on we could go about the marvelous, true, spiritual experiences that God gave their forefathers at these cities, but in each one of them, Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba, now the glory hath departed. They are no longer places where you can find God and where God revealed himself as the Savior of his people and the one who would protect them and provide for them. Because of their sins, God said, "Well, you've got the geographic location, that is where I met with your forefathers, but there is a great big difference between when I met with them and now. When I met with

them, I was there. Now I'm not there anymore. Yeah, you go through the same motions plus you've added some Baal worship in to pervert the thing. You go through the motions but I'm not there."

Their hearts were wrong. They had a heart that loved a worldly church, a carnal church, a flesh-pleasing church. Their affections, their hearts were broken. III. When they fell, not only did they break their heads and break their hearts, thirdly, they broke their heading. A heading means to chart a course. The course of their life, the course, the chartered course for their lives they were living was a broken, it was a corrupt life that they were living.

Look at verse 7, if you will, they "turn justice into wormwood And cast righteousness down to the earth." Now, justice is sweet but they had corrupted the justice system of the land. They were using the justice system to crush the innocent and the afflicted and the wealthy and the powerful would use the justice system to bring harm to the innocent so that they could get more material gain out of them. When he says you "turn justice into wormwood," wormwood is bitter. So the people of the land that would be taken advantage of would want to go to the authorities of the day and into the justice system to find justice for their cause and they would just find more injustice. That's what God is saying, "I'm not seeing holiness in the heading of your life, the course of your life. It's full of injustice."

Look at verse 7 there, the last part of verse 7, they "cast righteousness down to the earth." In other words, when Amos or some remnant preacher would point out the truth of God, they would just consider it as worthless. "Let's just throw that away."

Verse 11, talking about the course of their life and how it was broken and wrong, "Therefore because you impose heavy rent on the poor And exact a tribute of grain from them, Though you have built houses of well-hewn stone, Yet you will not live in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, yet you will not drink their wine." The injustice, the extortion and taking advantage of the truly poor.

Then verse 12, "For I know your transgressions are many and your sins are great, You who distress the righteous and accept bribes And turn aside the poor in the gate." And I've told you in balance again: this isn't what the common or modern liberal calls poor, these people were really poor. They were not poor because they didn't have three fine cars like the folks in the suburbs, they were poor because they barely had enough to live on and they were still trampling upon them for their own self-advancement. He said, "Look at the course of your life. Look at the heading of your life. Look at the type of life you're living. It's broken and corrupted and wrong."

Amos said, "Israel is fallen. She's fallen. She's broken her head. She's broken her heart. She's broken her heading." And lastly, "She's broken in her hope." She's broken in her hope. In other words, she's trusting in hoping in something that is not a hope at all, it's a false hope, it's an empty hope.

Look at verse 16. Now, you can't think of a more painful picture of hopelessness, verse 16 says, "Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, 'There is wailing in all the plazas, And in all the streets they say, "Alas! Alas!" They also call the farmer to mourning And professional mourners to lamentation. And in all the vineyards there is wailing, Because I will pass through the midst of you,' says the LORD." For 150 years they've been basically living the way I've been describing in this whole sermon. For 150 years things just seemed to get better and they did better and they thought everything was good and they were putting their hope in what they were presently doing and God said, "It's a broken hope. It's a false hope. It's an empty hope."

Look at another verse that points out the hopelessness of the day. Look at verse 13, "Therefore at such a time the prudent person keeps silent, for it is an evil time." The prudent person keeps silent. What does he mean? He means people are so far gone, they're so hardened and coarse, that they've passed the point of even being worthy of hearing a word of rebuke or restoration. Jesus said the same thing when he said, "Don't cast your pearls before swine." That's what he's saying, he's saying, "Y'all have gone so far that at least the great majority of you are beyond repair. You've just sinned away the day of grace."

They had a broken hope, a counterfeit hope, a false hope. But God, God is their only hope. You see, while they had their idea of what they would hope in, that was a no hope and a false hope. There is a God hope. There is a hope given by God. So let's go to V. and let's end with that: an unbroken and sure hope. There was a hope extended to them. There is a hope that remains, a divine hope from God, and we see it all through here.

I'm going to just skim through here very quickly. Look in verse 1, "Hear this word which I take up for you as a dirge, O house of Israel." Verse 4, "For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel, 'Seek Me that you may live.'" Go to verse 6, "Seek the LORD that you may live." Verse 14, "Seek good and not evil, that you may live." Verse 15, "Hate evil, love good, And establish justice in the gate! Perhaps the LORD God of hosts May be gracious to the remnant of Joseph." So he says, "In the midst of all this, here's what you're going to have to do: you're going to have to do what Moses did with the children of Israel." Remember, Moses is up on Sinai getting the law and Aaron is down there with the children of Israel, do you remember what Aaron did? They were kind of getting hard to control, they were getting hard to keep happy so Aaron said, "Here's what we'll do, I'll bring in a golden calf and all the sensuous pleasures and amusements of Baal worship but we'll call it a worship of Jehovah." Have you ever heard of that before? So this kind of stuff was going on way before Jeroboam I or the II started in the northern kingdom.

It must be something in the fallenness of man to take the true worship of God and want to bring sensual worldliness into it. It just must have been around forever. As a matter of fact, you can go all the way back to Adam. You know, I called this Jeroboamite religion, this mixing of carnal amusements and pleasures with true worship of God because Jeroboam established it so prominently in Israel in the northern kingdom but really it's Aaronite religion. Aaron did it there at the bottom of Mount Sinai while Moses is up on the mountain and all the people...remember Moses came down and said, "What's all this?"

I hear fighting or shouting." They're just all dancing and having a good time. Man, this is happy church. Moses said, "Who is on the Lord's side?" And a remnant came over to Moses and they got out their swords and they just killed several thousand of them.

God said, "That's not the way I do it. You don't combine my wisdom with your wisdom, you just stay with my wisdom." This whole idea of doing church, "Well, we do church." Well, how do you do church? "What do you mean, how do you do church?" It's not your church. It's Christ's church. You don't get to do church your way. You don't get to go to church that makes you happy or fits you. The church is to make Christ happy and fit him – and listen to me – when it does, if you're his, then it will make you happiest and fit you the best but it's always in that order, amen? Now sometimes you have to come to a true church and repent and talk to yourself and say, "Shut up, Self. Love what God loves." Am I the only one that has to do that? Am I the only one that has to do that? Maybe y'all done arrived. I don't know.

How do you do church? Here's my point: he's saying, "You're going to have to go outside." I didn't finish Moses. Moses is there and so to seek the Lord, he went outside the camp. He said, "That's so rotten over there, I can't even seek God over there." And then all of those who would want to inquire of God met with Moses outside the camp. When Jesus came to pay for our sins on the cross, he didn't meet with the established religionists of the day and say, "I'm your Messiah. Let me fit in. I'll go along with what you're doing, just let me save you." No. He went outside the gate and died on the one and only true altar that's ever existed, Mount Calvary, for the sins of the people. You find God outside the camp.

What does Amos say to the northern kingdom in our text? "Do you want to be saved? Do you want to have true hope? Don't go to Bethel. Don't go to Gilgal. Don't go to Beersheba." You're going to have to come outside of that and find God through his Son, Jesus Christ. Our early forefathers, the Anabaptists, sometimes called the step-children of the Reformation, they didn't fit in with the Church of England, the Anglicans. They didn't fit in with the Roman Catholic Church. They didn't fit in with the Presbyterian state churches of Europe. Do you know what they did? They opened their Bibles and they read about the Gospel and they were born again by Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and they began to read that only true believers are to be baptized so they rejected the state baptisms, the state sprinklings of the Presbyterian churches and the Catholic Church and the Anglican church and they were hated and despised because they found God outside of the camp. They began to realize you can't find God as good in the camp.

Now, look, I know there are some wonderful and godly forefathers who are not of the Baptist line and I praise God for them but I'm just sorry, they missed it on baptism. During the Great Awakening, John and Charles Wesley and the Calvinist branch of the Great Awakening, George Whitefield, began to preach in the Anglican churches primarily, "You must be born again. You must be born again. Do not trust that you were sprinkled as babies. Do not trust that you take the sacraments of the church. Do not trust that you're of the lineage of your forefathers. You've got to know God through a conversion experience, believing in Jesus Christ." And do you know what happened?

They didn't go outside the camp, they got thrown out of the camp. The church said, "We don't like you guys." So they just started preaching to a new group, the Methodist church came out of it. Now, I believe the Methodist church on a whole does not look anything like the original Methodist church looked. It's backslidden badly.

But God moved outside the camp and that's what Amos is saying. "You can be saved but don't go to Bethel, don't go to Gilgal, and don't go to Beersheba." Don't go to those megachurches. You find God through Jesus Christ." By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. You see, we're all born with broken heads, we think wrong. We're all born with broken hearts, our hearts naturally have affection for wrong things. We're all born with a broken heading, we all would choose a course of life that's wrong and corrupt. And we're all born with a broken hope. Every single one of us – listen to me – every single one of us wants some sort of hoop jump religion that make us feel good about ourselves. "Give me a hoop jump I can jump through. Give me a motion I can go through. Give me something I can do in an organized structure that makes me feel okay with God." That's a broken hope.

Here's what I'm going to give you: Jesus Christ. I'm going to leave you shipwrecked on him and stranded on him. You come to salvation in and through him, not a structure, not an organization, not a system. Now all of that can be good unless it begins to replace him, unless he starts getting crowded out, because there will be a remnant saved. Back in verse 3 and 4, "For thus says the Lord GOD, 'The city which goes forth a thousand strong Will have a hundred left,' 900 will be gone but 100 will be left, 'And the one which goes forth a hundred strong Will have ten left.'" God, now listen, here's the point, God is still saving some. Paul said, "I've become all things to all men that I might by all means save some." But here's what you've got to do: you've got to do what verse 10 tells you, "They hate him who reproves in the gate, And they abhor him who speaks with integrity." Here's what you've got to do: you've got to quit hating the one who reproves in the gate. You've got to receive the reproof of God, the reproof of God that says your thinking is wrong, your heart is wrong, your heading is wrong, and your hope is wrong. If you'll heed that reproof and turn to Christ, you can be saved. You can be saved.

Is it not astonishing how a 2,800 year old book speaks profoundly and accurately to what we deal with in today's professing Christian culture? I mean, powerfully. And friend, Grace Life Church could very easily fall right into that trap if we're not vigilant and very intentional about staying with the truth in everything we are and everything we do. God forbid that the Lord would have to speak with somebody and say, "If you want to find me, don't go to Grace Life Church of the Shoals. That's part of the problem." God forbid. God forbid such a thing.