

I. Introduction

- A. Who is ready for some good news?
- B. Before we get into the word of God, I have to ask a question. Actually, two questions.
 1. If you were here last weekend, clap your hands.
 2. Now you know what I'm going to ask. Did you do any weird stuff? If you weren't here, that was last week's message. Do weird stuff!
- C. We are going to get right into the word of God today. My talk today is part four in a series. We are studying a powerful book in the Bible called Amos. It is overlooked. It is ignored. But it's a powerhouse just sitting here, waiting for somebody to open it up and dive in.
- D. So here we are, in Amos. The series is called a Maverick Spirit.
- E. The title of my talk today is taken from our place in the Bible, so I'm going to read a little bit of that first and then I'll give you our topic today.
 1. *"A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"* (Amos 3:8)
 - a) And we are going to connect this with the opening, in Amos 1:2:
 2. *"And he said: 'The LORD roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers.'"* (Amos 1:2)
- F. The prophet Amos is painting a powerful picture. There is a ferocious lion. It is crouching in the bushes. It is ready to pounce. The danger is there, but the prey doesn't see it. The threat is real, but the prey is clueless. The lion roars. The roar of the lion is a warning. You still have time. The lion is about to pounce, but there is still a moment between the roar and the coming devastation.
- G. Hope has not yet vanished. There is still a chance.
- H. The title of my talk today is:
 1. **When the Lion Roars, Run!**
 - a) Head's up... I have an agenda today. And one of those is that you will run today into the arms of God.
 - b) I am praying that anyone here who does not know Jesus will be saved today.
 - c) I'm going to show you how.
 - d) And I'm not only going to show you how, I'm going to talk you through it.
 - (1) Yeah it's weird, but I won't embarrass you.
 - (2) Yeah it's weird, but when the world is this messed up, doing weird stuff is the only option that is truly sane.

I. Now let's back up to chapter 3, verse one, and I will backfill information as we need it.

II. Message

- A. *"Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against [about] you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish [visit] you for all your iniquities.'"* (Amos 3:1-2)
 1. Here comes the prophet Amos. He's there in the marketplace calling out to anyone who will hear. He's preaching, warning, announcing. Amos has a message from God. It is a message to God's own people.
 2. He calls them the children of Israel. He calls them the whole family... the whole lot of them. All the 12 tribes of Israel.
 3. He's got a word for his whole church. He's got a word for all his people. He's got a word for me. He's got a word for you.
 4. Pay attention. Listen up. Open your ears, your heart, your mind. Hear this word.
 5. Now, as I've been preparing this message, actually, I've had a really hard time. But I have this picture in my head and I want to show it to you.
 6. There's a fierce storm outside. Lightning. Wind. Rain. Thunder. The lightning is striking the Earth. It's getting closer and closer.
 7. Where do you want to be?
 8. You want to be in that house. You want to get inside that house. And once you're inside, stay inside.
 9. There's the image. We'll come back.
 10. Because all of Amos is a warning. It is a warning to people who know everything, have everything, and need nothing. But they are so far from God, and they won't admit it.
 11. So Amos starts preaching some pretty harsh stuff. God is coming to visit you for all your iniquities (bad sins).
 12. But before we get into that...

B. Grace

1. Do not miss the profound love, and the **amazing Grace, here in the middle of this warning.**
2. There are five reminders of grace buried here about God's relationship with his people. Let's dig them out.
 - a) **God's people are a Chosen People.** He is speaking to Israel by name. God specifically says that the people of Israel are his chosen ones (1 Chronicles 16:13). God chose the group. Today that choice applies to everybody who believes in Jesus. When you believe, you become part of the chosen people of God. God looks at you and says Yes! I choose you! I want you. Come on in. That's what I want for you today. Come out from the storm. Come into the house. You are chosen from this.
 - b) **God's people are his Adopted Children.** God calls them his family. If you have Jesus, that's what you are. And so was Israel. God declared, "Israel is my son, my firstborn (Exodus 4:22). And he says the same thing about you. There is no such thing as a fatherless believer in Jesus. Come out from the raging storm and get into the house of grace.
 - c) **God's people are Redeemed People.** God brought them up out of Egypt and he set them free. Same thing here. When you believe in Jesus, God redeems you. That means he opens up the prison doors and says, Be free. What prison doors? You tell me: loneliness, depression, despair, anger, addiction, partying, porn, violence, greed, isolation, fear of getting close, fear, anxiety... be free. Be free. Be free. You have a redeemer. Be free.
 - d) **God's people are his Intimate Friends.** "You... have I known." This knowing is the deepest possible communion in love and oneness. When you receive Jesus, God becomes your best friend. He'll never betray you. He knows you. He knows all about you. He sees everything. And you know what? He still loves you and wants your company. If you have Jesus Christ, if you get saved, then God is not only your Father, and not only your Savior, he's actually your best friend too. That's the invitation I'm putting out there today.
 - e) **God's people are his Exclusive Treasure.** "You only have I known." There's that word *only*. There is something we have that nobody else has. This does not make us feel superior; it just makes us grateful. Going back to the house in the storm, there's an only factor. There's an exclusivity factor. Only those inside the house are safe from the storm. I am talking to a lot of people today, both in the room and online. But my message is the same: only those inside the house of salvation are safe from the storm of judgment. God says, You only have I known. You only have I loved in this deepest possible way. You only have I saved.
 - (1) Won't you become one of the "ONLYs" today
3. All this adds up to grace. This is love. This is the covenant of grace on full display. Here it is in all its glory.
 - a) In a few minutes, I'm going to invite you to run into this household of grace. I'm going to invite you to pray to receive Jesus. He built the house. He paid for it. He's opening the door to you right now.
 - b) That's what I'm preaching.
 - c) And that's what Amos was preaching too.
4. And these people have this grace. They possess it. It belongs to them. They've escaped the howling storm and run for shelter into the house.
5. But, there is something tragically wrong.
6. Because after all this love and grace, God says,
 - a) **I will visit you for all your iniquities.**
 - b) What happened?
 - (1) **They went outside the house and back into the storm.**
7. On what planet is that a good idea?
8. So now God will visit them.
9. Amos stands before religious people who have rejected the love of God, disrespected the mercy of God, and made jokes about the grace of God.
10. They have brought God down. They have brought themselves up. They made God little. They made themselves big. They made God dumb; they made themselves smart.
11. So they know better, so they leave the house, and go back into the storm.
12. Better get ready, because now the lion is about to roar.

- C. *"Can two walk together, unless they are agreed [met]? Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing? Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no [bait] for it? Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all? If a [warning] trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?" (Amos 3:3-6)*

1. It looks complicated but it's not really.
2. Amos, has come to Israel to announce impending doom. God will judge Israel. They are in deep trouble.
 - a) Their leadership is crooked and corrupt. Their top officials take bribes. The wealthy take advantage of their positions. Most have cheated their way to the top. They suppress the working class. The culture is sophisticated on the surface, but if you look inside, it's lonely, it's isolated, it's unforgiving, it's emotionally dangerous, it's exploitative, it's cruel. The whole system has been taken over by greedy people, and the whole system crushes the life out of everyday people. The leaders have done this.
 - (1) Financially, they are crooked.
 - (2) Morally, they are evil.
 - (3) Sexually, they are perverted.
 - (4) Religiously, they are idol worshippers with multiple false gods.
 - (5) Spiritually, they are demonized.
 - (6) Emotionally, they are dysfunctional and addicted. They have no idea what love is.
 - (7) Salvation-wise, they are not saved because they are righteous in their own eyes.
3. They don't think they need saving.
 - a) The lion roars, and they go on like nothing has happened.
4. So Amos gives them 7 questions. He's leading them like a lawyer. Everything is obvious and true.
5. I won't go through the 7 questions one by one, but all of them have one thing in common.
 - a) **The Logic of Cause and Effect**
 - b) If this happens, then that will happen.
 - c) If A happens, then B will happen.
6. And he also runs it backwards.
 - a) If B has happened, that must mean that A has happened.
 - b) We live in a world of Cause and Effect.
7. That's the message of Amos.
8. And then he applies that to the coming destruction of the nation he's talking to.
 - a) Why did the little bunny get eaten? Because the lion roared, and the little bunny didn't run away.
 - b) Why is Israel about to be destroyed by Assyria? Because God has warned them about the storm of judgement, and they refused to get inside the house.

D. When the lion roars, run.

E. When the storm comes, get in the house.

III. The Justice of God

A. I would like to put on my professor hat for a minute, and I would like to do a little teaching on the justice of God and how it works. This is theology. Theology is how we organize our thoughts about God. Theology is how we organize what the Bible says topic by topic. So let's do some theology on the topic of God's justice.

1. **Definition**

- a) **God's justice means he always does what is right and good and fair. He is morally perfect and requires moral perfection in all he has created. (Psalm 50:6, Acts 17:31, Hebrews 12:23)**
- b) God is good. God is holy. God does no evil. God does not tempt anyone with evil. God does not accept evil into his presence.

2. **Simplicity**

- a) **God's simplicity means that God is not like a puzzle with a lot of pieces. He's just one big piece of awesomeness. God is not made of an assembly of organs or parts; God is made of one thing: deity. (Exodus 3:14, 1 Timothy 1:17, Deuteronomy 6:4)**
- b) When we consider God, we have to think about him by dividing up his character into parts. Our minds are too small to really wrap around him. So, right now, we are thinking about the justice of God, one part of his nature.
- c) The truth, however, is that the justice of God is not one part of his nature, it is all of his nature. Everything in God is pure and infinite justice, just as everything in God is pure and infinite love.
- d) In God, these are not separate things. If you like getting philosophical, you can say: "God is without parts; he is one metaphysical entity" (CARM.org).
- e) No element of who he is clashes with any other element of who he is. He is God.

- f) When God relates to us, he is like a fair referee in a game. He gives out rewards or penalties based on how people play the game.
- g) In other words, God's justice does not remain an abstract concept. This is not just a bunch philosophical mind-games. There is a built in action-end to the justice of God.
- h) Justice means that everybody, in the end, gets what's coming to them. God makes sure of it.
- i) This happens in two ways: rewards and punishment.

3. **Rewards (Remunerative Justice)**

- a) **God's justice makes him like a fair coach who gives you a trophy when you play the game the right way, just like the rules say you should. (Psalm 58:11, Revelation 22:12)**
- b) This is called the Remunerative Justice of God. God rewards that which is righteous according to his standards. He cannot do otherwise.
- c) This is automatic with God. It's his nature. Birds sing. The sun shines. And God rewards people who are good. That's what justice does.
 - (1) By the way, are you good?
 - (2) Are you good enough for God?
- d) This was always a struggle for me, especially when I was a student growing up. I never felt good enough for God. If God was handing out rewards, I knew for sure that I was standing in the wrong line.
- e) I was standing in the next line...

4. **Punishments (Retributive Justice)**

- a) **God's justice makes him like a fair judge who gives out punishments that match the seriousness of the bad choices people make, to show how important it is to do the right thing. (Romans 2:6, Galatians 6:7, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)**
- b) This is what Amos is warning about. There is a coming storm of judgment. You've made bad choices, Israel, and the storm is on it's way. Get yourself into the house of grace.
- c) I have to say, God's punishments are fair. He never loses his temper. He never punishes out of his own emotional insecurities. God is not like that. God is emotionally healthy; he's not taking out his problems on you! Whatever punishments come down from him, they are right and perfect and exactly what is needed to balance the scales of justice.
- d) The Bible is super clear. I don't have permission to change it. God punishes sin. I don't have permission to soften it. God punishes evil. God punishes people who do wrong. I only have permission to teach it, say it, declare it.
- e) There is a verse in Amos that is really familiar to me. It's Amos 4:12. When I was a kid, my little church had a window air conditioner. Then shoved some cardboard and stuffing around it for insulation. Really low tech. On one piece of cardboard, there was a sign. It's out in that window for years in years and I saw it every week. It said prepare to meet thy God. Amos 4:12. It scared the snot out of me.
- f) All I could think about was judgement day, and it scared me.
 - (1) This is the lion's roar.
 - (2) This is the warning of judgment.
 - (3) This is what Amos was preaching about, and what I'm preaching about and what I'm asking you to deal with today.
 - (a) Don't just listen to the lion's roar and do nothing.
 - (b) Run. Run into the arms of your Deliverer. That's coming.
- g) God did not wake up one day and say, "I will reward the righteous and punish the guilty."
- h) All God ever said was, "I will be God." All the rest follows from that.
- i) Therefore we have big truth number five, which I think will help you see why we're talking about this:

5. **Cause and Effect**

- a) **God's justice is built into the way he created everything. In the original creation, good choices have good consequences and bad choices have bad consequences. Just as there is cause and effect in the physical realm, there is also cause and effect in the moral realm.**
- b) In the realm of physics, Isaac Newton said that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Cause and effect.
- c) In the realm of morality, God said,

- (1) *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”*
(Galatians 6:7-8)

d) That is cause and effect, too. Only this one exists in the moral sphere. In the world of good and evil, right and wrong, truth and deception.

- (1) Are you beginning to see what Amos was getting at? Are you beginning to see the profound logic in his series of questions?

e) God has so constituted the universe that that which is right gets rewarded, and that which is evil gets punished.

f) But you say, Bill it doesn't always work out that way. There are plenty of good people who are suffering and there are plenty of bad people who are thriving. Just look at Washington DC!

6. *The Curse of Sin*

a) **Due to the original sin that entered the world, there are times when the moral laws of cause and effect seem to break down. However, these breakdowns are both temporary and relatively minor in the grand scheme of things. God's ultimate plan remains intact. (Genesis 3:14-19, Romans 8:22, 2 Corinthians 5:2, 4:17).**

b) This fallen world is a morally broken pain machine. Underline, morally broken. There is a distortion in the moral realm. This is caused by sin. This is caused by the curse of sin.

c) So good people suffer. And evil people thrive.

d) But don't worry, because God has both a present and future solution for this.

- (1) In the future, Jesus will come and usher in a kingdom of righteousness. In the future, God will convene the Supreme Court of heaven, and will judge all ungodliness and all unrighteousness. No one gets away with anything in the end.

(a) But, thankfully, we don't have to wait until the end.

- (2) That is because, in the present, the justice of God continually distributes consequences on those who do evil. You may not see it, but they do. You may think they are getting away with it, but they are not. You may think they have it all together, but they don't. God makes sure they don't.

e) And God continually distributes blessings to his righteous ones. That just means saved people. We're coming to that.

- (1) The moral laws of cause and effect are still in operation. People still reap what they sow.

(2) Outside the house God's justice is raining down judgment. Inside the house, God's justice is setting a table of overflowing grace.

(3) Where will you choose to be?

f) So here's the good news I promised at the beginning of his message.

7. *Saving Grace (Redemptive Justice)*

a) **When you accept Jesus as your Savior, something incredible happens. God bestows upon you His own perfect goodness. This means He can now bless you with overflowing abundance without going against His own nature. This is what we call 'Redemptive Justice,' and it's another way to understand God's saving grace. (Romans 3:26, Romans 5:1, Galatians 2:16, Titus 3:5)**

b) God rewards the righteous. But if your standard is God's perfection, then, who is righteous? No one. God rewards the good. But if your standard is the perfect goodness of God, then who is good? No one.

c) So here's the good news.

d) When you get saved, God makes a trade.

- (1) You give him your faith.

(2) He gives you his righteousness.

e) When you put your faith in Jesus, for the first time ever you will become perfectly adjusted to the justice of God.

- (1) For the first time ever, you are qualified for heaven.

(2) For the first time ever, you are good enough for God.

f) This means God can bless you, care for you, protect you, heal you, provide for you, comfort you, and make you whole, because you are qualified for it. And you are qualified for it by the redemptive justice of God in Christ.

- (1) Redemptive justice is a synonym for saving grace.

g) And if you have never received God's grace... I'm about to walk you through it.

h) So, let's bring it all back to Amos.

IV. Amos

A. *"If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?"*

(Amos 3:6)

1. In those days when an enemy came, the guards on the city wall blew a trumpet. That was their version of a warning siren. Bombs are falling. Enemies are coming. Everybody scrambled.

a) Amos is blowing the trumpet.

b) He says a lion is roaring.

c) I'm saying a storm is coming. Same thing.

2. The simple truth is that God is raining down his justice all the time. Outside the house. It is justice in the form of punishment. Retributive justice. Inside the house. It is justice in the form of blessing. Remunerative justice.

a) The only question is where will you stand?

b) Where will you station your life?

3. So I am blowing the trumpet to say there is a way of salvation. There is a way back to God. There's a message of reconciliation.

4. When the lion roars, run!

5. But where? Where do you run?

6. **When this lion roars, RUN TO JESUS.** And he will welcome you and embrace you.

7. Run to Jesus. Ask him to save you, and he will.

V. Invitation

A. I want to dedicate our closing moments to you today if you are here without Jesus as your savior. At this point, the justice of God is against you. But if you receive Jesus, it will be for you.

B. We want you to know that Jesus had you personally in mind when he died on the cross. And then, when he died, all your sins were laid on him. He paid for them in full. He died for you. And he did this because he loves you. Therefore, you can be saved. Therefore, you can have eternal life.

C. How? It is so simple a child can do it. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life.

D. I want to help you tell God that you are believing in Jesus right now. So I'm going to ask you to bow your head and close your eyes. Do this to create a quiet and private space for you and for the people around you. I'm going to lead you in a simple prayer. I will pray one line at a time. I will pause after each line, and during that pause you can echo that prayer to God. This is your privilege. This is your opportunity. It's time to run to the lion of your salvation.

1. ADMIT. God, I admit that I have sinned. I have unrighteousness on my record. I do not measure up to your righteous standards. I am under your judgment. I deserve your judgment. There's nothing I can do with my own strength to fix this.

2. BELIEVE. I believe that Jesus did everything to fix this. He did this when he died on the cross. I believe he paid for my sins there. I believe he did everything to bring me back to you. I do not understand how all this works, but I'm telling you that right now I believe in Jesus as my savior, and my only hope.

3. CHOOSE. Right now I choose to receive him as my savior. I choose to trust in him. I choose to put all my faith in him. Only Jesus. So I ask you God right now, because of Jesus, please save me. Please forgive me. Please make me your child forever. Amen.