

I. Introduction

- A. I have some good news for you today. Are you ready for some good news?
- B. Here it is: I have an offer for you so good that you'll feel stupid saying no.
- C. Actually, it's not my offer, it's God's offer. And it comes from a book in the Bible. It happens to be the book we have been studying this whole season.
- D. Welcome to our series called A Maverick Spirit. My talk today is part of 10 in the series. It's also the last part. We're going to wrap up Amos today by looking at the last chapter in the book.
- E. For nine long chapters, this book has been a message of judgment. But finally, at long last, in the last five verses, there is really great, really beautiful news. There is an offer of grace. That is the offer I want to show you today.
- F. My talk today is called:
 1. **The Best Offer You'll Ever Hear**

II. James in Acts 15

- A. We are here in the year 2023. If you wind back about 2000 years, you'll be in the days of Jesus. If you wind back about 800 more years, you'll be in the days of Amos. This is when he is preaching, and this is when he is writing his book.
- B. But now I want to go back forward to the days of Jesus. Shortly after Jesus died on the cross and rose again, the message of his salvation and grace had spread like wildfire. Crowds of people were getting saved left and right. It was a true revival.
 1. I really would love to see something like that happen in our day. Wouldn't that be incredible?
- C. But this also created some problems. The early Christians had to figure out a lot of things, solve a lot of problems, and answer a lot of questions that Jesus did not directly address. They would do this based on the Bible interpreted how Jesus interpreted it, plus the teaching of the Apostles.
- D. One of the biggest questions was whether or not the new Christians had to obey all the requirements and laws of Moses. Sincere Christians were divided. Some said yes. Some said no.
- E. For the ones who said yes, one of the biggest issues was circumcision. Under the law of Moses, Jewish men had to be circumcised. Now you have thousands and thousands of uncircumcised Gentiles flooding into the church, and many of the Jewish Christians were demanding they had to be circumcised.
 1. If you were going to announce the way of salvation to a bunch of uncircumcised men, how well do you think that idea would go over?
- F. But it was a sincere issue, so the leaders of the church had to deal with it. And they did. They had an official meeting of the leaders of early Christianity to figure this out. This meeting is described in the Bible in Acts, chapter 15. Here is some of that meeting:
 1. *"While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: 'Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.' Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question."* (Acts 15:1-2)
- G. There is the set up. The discussion goes back-and-forth for a while. Finally, Peter stands up. He starts talking about how in place after place Gentiles are being saved. He goes on to say that they are being saved not by obeying the laws of Moses, but by grace through faith in Jesus.
 1. *"God made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith. So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus."* (Acts 15:9-11)
- H. Peter speaks. Paul and Barnabas speak. Everybody gets their say. Finally it is time for a decision. The leader of the church in Jerusalem is the half brother of Jesus. His name is James. James stands up, and says, "The Bible says XYZ, and that settles the debate. Here's how that went down."
 1. *"When they had finished, James stood and said, 'Brothers and sisters, listen to me. Peter has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for himself. And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted. As it is written: 'Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house of David. I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, so that the rest of humanity might seek the LORD, including the Gentiles—all those I have called to be mine. The LORD has spoken...'"* (Acts 15:13-17)
- I. I won't read all of it, but that's all it takes to settle the argument. The conclusion is NO. That's what James says, and that's what all the leaders of early Christianity agreed with. No, you don't have to obey the laws of Moses to be saved. You don't have to become a Jew. No, Gentiles don't have to be circumcised to be saved.
- J. But what I want to focus on is the verse that James quoted. He quoted this verse, and the argument was over. What did he say? He literally quoted the prophet Amos. He was quoting Amos 9:11-13:
 1. *"In that day I will restore the fallen house of David. I will repair its damaged walls. From the ruins I will rebuild it and restore its former glory. And Israel will possess what is left of Edom and all the nations I have called to be mine.' The LORD has spoken, and he will do these things."* (Amos 9:11-12)
- K. Honestly, I look at that and wonder how on earth that quote from Amos would ever settle an argument about circumcision 800 years later.
 1. How does that happen?
 2. First we have to understand **The House of David**.

III. The House of David

- A. God says he will restore the fallen house of David. He says that in the book of Amos. James quotes that in the book of Acts. What does this mean?
- B. David was the teenage shepherd in the Bible. He was the one who toppled the giant Goliath. He went on to become the greatest king in the history of Israel.

- C. But there are three gigantic truths connected with King David.
 - 1. The first one is that from David's royal line (the house of David) will come a king that will rule the world. This is the Savior and Messiah and King that the world is waiting for... which is Jesus. **So the kingship of David represents THE COMING OF THE SAVIOR.**
 - 2. The second gigantic truth is that the kingship of David was not a kingship based on any principle or idea of LAW. Above all else, **the kingship of David represents THE RULE AND REIGN OF GRACE.**
 - 3. The third gigantic truth is that all the nations, Gentiles as well as Jews, would be united under the Savior's rule and reign of grace. **So the kingship of David also represents THE WELCOMING OF OUTSIDERS INTO THE FAMILY OF FAITH.**
 - a) [You can dig all this out for yourself in 2 Samuel 7.]
- D. So saying the "House of David" is a shortcut way of saying three things: **Savior, Grace, Everyone's Welcome.**
 - 1. You might be able to see where this is heading.
- E. That's how important King David was. And that's why it was such a tragedy when the kings who descended from David were mostly idiots.
 - 1. They forgot it was their job to point to the Savior.
 - 2. They forgot it was their job to keep on pointing to the rule and reign of grace.
 - 3. They forgot it was their job to welcome the world to salvation in Christ.
 - a) Instead, these kings became greedy, power-hungry, idol-worshiping fools.
- F. It had gone on this way for so long, then, by the time of Amos, everybody knew that the house of David was morally fallen; it was theologically fallen, and in just a few years, it would be politically fallen too.
 - 1. One, two, three:
 - a) Savior, Grace, Everyone's Welcome.
 - 2. The Amos generation flipped it upside down.
 - a) This is what is meant by the Fallen House of David.
- G. Do you get this?
- H. So when you have sincere church leaders trying to pound new Christians over the head with rules and regulations and duties and obligations, including requiring them to be circumcised, so that they can become Jews, James stands up. "No," he says.
 - 1. He reminds them of Amos in the Bible. Amos says that God is restoring the fallen house of David. And in an instant, everybody remembers Savior, Grace, Everyone's welcome.
 - 2. So no to the laws, no to the rules, no to the regulations and duties and obligations, and no to circumcision because the gospel welcomes in outsiders too. Be free. That's great.
- I. And they got that from Amos.
- J. Because Amos is offering The Best Offer You'll Ever Hear.

IV. The Offer

- A. *"In that day I will restore the fallen house of David. I will repair its damaged walls. From the ruins I will rebuild it and restore its former glory. And Israel will possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations I have called to be mine [outsiders]. The LORD has spoken, and he will do these things. 'The time will come,' says the LORD, 'when the grain and grapes will grow faster than they can be harvested. Then the terraced vineyards on the hills of Israel will drip with sweet wine! I will bring my exiled people of Israel back from distant lands, and they will rebuild their ruined cities and live in them again. They will plant vineyards and gardens; they will eat their crops and drink their wine. I will firmly plant them there in their own land. They will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them,' says the LORD your God."* (Amos 9:11-15)
- B. This is a prophecy of what will happen when Jesus returns. He will usher in the Millennium. It will be Paradise on earth. The prophets describe it as the end of war, the end of poverty, the end of injustice and violence and despair. It will be the most perfect and beautiful kingdom imaginable. The lion will lie down with the lamb. Perfect peace. Perfect prosperity. Perfect joy, when King Jesus takes his rightful throne. That is what Amos is prophesying.
 - 1. No human ruler, no human government, no human group can ever create this heaven on earth. It is impossible. But that hasn't stopped the devil. Satan has tried for thousands of years to create his own utopia, only he's trying this without God.
 - 2. But the world is too dark a place, and Satan is too weak and unintelligent a Prince, to ever bring that about. Without Jesus, there is no utopia. Only dystopia. Only Hunger Games and Mad Max.
 - 3. Only Jesus, and only Jesus in person, the Son of David, sitting on the throne of David, in Jerusalem, will ever have the power, and the wisdom, and the authority, and the love to ever bring this about.
 - 4. That is when God will restore the fallen house of David in the fullest sense. When Jesus returns. He will rebuild it and restore its former glory a thousand times better.
 - a) Only Jesus will unite the nations.
 - b) Only Jesus will end all wars.
 - c) Only Jesus will solve poverty and homelessness.
 - d) Only Jesus will end hunger.
 - e) Only Jesus will bring people together.
 - f) Only Jesus will heal the wounds of this world.
 - g) Only Jesus will heal the wounds of your heart.
 - (1) There is a millennium coming. There is a better world coming when Jesus comes back.
 - (2) Only Jesus can do all this, and, when he comes back, he will.
 - 5. That is the big giant blessing that is going to come some day—we don't know when—when Jesus comes back in clouds of glory.

- C. But that's for the future... **"in that day"** when Jesus returns.
- D. But what about now? What is the offer God is making now? What about me and you and all of us?
- E. This book, and this chapter, ends with the good news that the king is coming.
- F. But this book, like this chapter, begins with something else. It begins with the bad news of a nation that has been spitting in God's face for generations. Now, the days of God's patience are done.
 - 1. Here's what that sounds like. This is Scary Vision number 5 in the book.
- G. *"Then I saw a vision of the Lord standing beside the altar. He said, 'Strike the tops of the Temple columns, so that the foundation will shake. Bring down the roof on the heads of the people below. I will kill with the sword those who survive. No one will escape!'"* (Amos 9:1)
 - 1. That temple was a false temple. It should have never been built. It was a giant insult against God.
 - 2. Therefore, it's Judgment Day for them.
- H. I want to zoom out, and show you what's going on.
 - 1. So, here, up at the **top** of the chapter, we have God's **judgment** on the nation.
 - 2. Down there, at the **bottom** of the chapter, we have the coming reign of **grace**.
 - 3. And what do we have in between?
 - a) In between judgment and grace, what do we have?
 - 4. In between, we have **The Great Sifting**.
- V. The Sifting
 - A. *"I, the Sovereign LORD, am watching this sinful nation of Israel. I will destroy it from the face of the earth. But I will never completely destroy the family of Israel,"* says the LORD. For I will give the command and will shake Israel along with the other nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, yet not one true kernel will be lost. But all the sinners will die by the sword—all those who say, 'Nothing bad will happen to us.'" (Amos 9:8-10)
 - B. God doesn't punish the good with the bad. Everywhere in the Bible, he sorts things out. The believer with the unbeliever. The righteous with the unrighteous.
 - 1. Are you righteous?
 - 2. Are you the righteousness of God?
 - 3. Doesn't God bless the righteous?
 - a) How could he punish them if he blesses them?
 - C. Everywhere in the Bible, God can separate. God can sift. God can sort it out. He knows the difference. He sees the heart.
 - 1. Jesus said he separates the sheep from the goats.
 - 2. He separates the wheat from the chaff (chaff is the inedible part of the plant).
 - 3. He separates the grain from the tares (tares are weeds but they look like wheat).
 - D. God can sort things out.
 - 1. Even though his nation was destroyed, God still blessed Daniel.
 - 2. Even though his brothers betrayed him, God still blessed Joseph.
 - 3. Even though she was an orphan living under a bad king, God still blessed Esther.
 - 4. Even when the fires of justice are raining down everywhere, God can still rain down Grace on the spot where his child is.
 - E. **Not one true kernel will be lost.**
 - 1. Prison bars can't stop the blessing of God.
 - 2. A bad economy can't stop the blessing of God.
 - 3. A dad who is drunk, or a mom who is stoned, can't stop the blessing of God on your life.
 - 4. The bullies and the mean girls can't stop the blessing of God on your life.
 - 5. Bankers, Lawyers, Doctors, Judges, Democrats, Republicans, Socialists, Communists, Deviants, Wokesters, Liberals, Politicians, Judges, Preachers, Teachers, Thugs, Bugs, Gang members, Dealers, Legalists, the IRS, and your -Ex... cannot stop the blessing of God on your life.
 - F. Not one kernel will be lost.
 - 1. Where you are doesn't matter.
 - 2. What you look like doesn't matter.
 - 3. Your money... all of that. It doesn't matter.
 - G. God is sifting the nations. He is sifting the people. He knows you. He sees you. He loves you. He cares for you. You never get lost. He never loses you in the crowd.
 - H. And here's the offer he makes to you. It's the best offer you'll ever hear.
- VI. The Offer
 - A. It's in the last verse of the book.
 - 1. *"I will firmly plant them there in their own land. They will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them,"* says the LORD your God." (Amos 9:15)
 - B. This is a promise for the future, for the millennium.
 - C. But it has an application for today.
 - D. It's all grace. That means God does it for us.
 - 1. I will firmly plant them in the land.
 - 2. I have given them the land.
 - 3. They will never be uprooted.
 - E. That's God. That's Grace. That's eternal security. That's the end of the book.
 - F. Amos started with judgment and he ended with grace.

- G. In between was the the sifting.
- H. What's God sifting for?

VII. Sifting

- A. **God is looking for believers who stand out because they take their stand in the righteousness of Christ.**
- B. Most of the time, everybody's the same. We look the same. Sound the same. Do the same stuff. I'm talking about Christians here. We all live in our groups. In our fellowships or networks. And we all do pretty much what everybody else does. We dial it in to medium because anything else makes us different.
- C. Well, shouldn't we be a little weird?
- D. And I don't mean like being a weird person. I mean weird as in you have not let the world around you squeeze you into his mold. And I wanna push this even harder. God is looking for people who have not let the church around them squeeze them into its mold.
- E. This is what God is sifting for.
- F. And I wish I could make this clear, and I had a better way to say it.
 - 1. **The thing that makes a child of God outstanding is not that you are doing stuff for God.**
 - 2. **The thing that makes a child of God outstanding is that you are diligently, passionately, recklessly, shamelessly, taking hold of all the good things that God is doing for you.**
- G. God is not an athletic scout looking for first round draft choices to help his team win. He's already got Jesus. The team is gonna win.
- H. He's not looking for people to work for him.
- I. He is looking for people with an unstoppable faith in his work for them... eternal security, their riches in Christ, their new identity, their powers, their privileges, their riches in grace. All of it. That's the promise. That's the promised land of the abundant life.
 - 1. And I am saying that that is the best offer you will ever hear in your life. You have to be stupid to say no to an offer like this.
- J. What is God sifting for?
 - 1. *"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is [fully leaning on] Him."* (2 Chronicles 16:9)
 - a) [note: the word translated "loyal" in the NKJV and other versions does not mean loyal. It means whole, entirely. It is translated "perfect" in the KJV and YLT. In v 8 of this chapter, we are given a living illustration of what is meant here. Asa found victory "in thy leaning on Jehovah" (YLT). That is what God looks for.]

VIII. Conclusion

- A. I want to finish this series the way I started it.
- B. Everyone has a religion of doing stuff for God. Every church is about more prayer, more service, more giving, more doing. Where is the grease? Where is the love of Calvary's cross?
 - 1. **We have received the Spirit of God, "that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." (1 Corinthians 2:12)**
- C. We need to stand out. We need to be different.
 - 1. We need some Jesus freaks.
 - 2. We need some "peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9 KJV).
 - a) I'm looking at you college students. I'm looking at you high school students. I'm looking at you.
 - 3. We need some non-conformist, unconventional, Jesus-loving, born again renegades.
 - 4. We need holy rebels against this soul-eating, heart-crushing, demon-infested society.
 - 5. We need some radicals who will show up the apathy and complacency of a church that has forgotten grace, and doesn't know the Cross.
 - 6. We need some believers who believe.
 - 7. Some saints who radiate a confidence and joy in a God, who is better than the mind can conceive, and more generous than words can ever tell.
 - 8. And we need some grace-addicts who grab hold of God daily to boldly say, *I will not let you go, unless you bless me.*
 - 9. Oh, God, raise up an army of Maverick Spirits who diligently, passionately, recklessly, shamelessly take hold of all the grace that Jesus paid for when he shed his blood on the Cross. Lord, if we're going to stand out for anything, in this dank, dark world, let the message of our lives declare:
 - a) His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.