

(Amos) Raising Up the Ruins

by David Guzik

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer, faithfulness, and originality in ministry, using the example of the prophet Amos and his reluctant call to be a prophet.

Duration: 1:02:09

Scripture: Proverbs 1:28, Zechariah 9:12

Topics: "Gods Judgment", "Spiritual Restoration"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the judgment of God is inescapable. He compares God to a boss of a demolition squad or a commander of an invading army, showing that God's orders for destruction and capture cannot be avoided. The preacher highlights that even if one tries to hide in hell or climb to heaven, they cannot escape their responsibility before God. However, the sermon also emphasizes that when God releases blessing and restoration, fruit comes quickly and abundantly. The work is still blessed, but there is still work to be done.

Transcript

Tonight we're going to finish up the book of Amos and I hope that I hope you're enjoying it because I I certainly am There's a tone. There's a there's a just sort of a texture to the book of Amos. That's so Wonderful.

He wasn't a professional prophet as we'll see later on in chapter 7 just a working guy a farmer and that God Used him in a wonderful way Amos chapter 7 beginning here at verse 1 Thus the Lord God showed me behold. He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop Indeed, it was the late crop after the Kings mowings And so it was when they had finished eating the grass of the land that I said, oh Lord God forgive I pray Oh that Jacob may stand for he is small The Lord relented concerning this it shall not be says the Lord The Prophet Amos is going to relate to us now a vision that he saw from the Lord Do you want to know how you know, it's a vision because it was something that the Lord showed him pretty simple They're verse 1 thus the Lord God showed me behold He formed locust swarms So in this vision that the prophet Amos has he sees a swarm of locusts arise and descend Upon the land of Israel now, he's seeing it in a vision Before it actually happens and nobody has to tell Amos what's going on here the message of God to the prophet is this is what I'm going to do in judgment to Israel I'm going to send swarms of locusts and I'm going to do it at the beginning of the late crop it's late in the harvest and Amos sees a swarm of locusts coming to devour the crops of Israel notice it came after the Kings mowings And what that means

is that the king the the royal house would come and he would take his cut first from you land the Taxes, you know, the taxes had to be paid first and then afterwards Came the locusts. Well when the king takes his cut and the locust takes the rest what's left for you? nothing and This incredible devastation.

This is why the prophet Amos is so It's so distressed by this if you notice it says in verse 2, this is all that Jacob may stand for he is small You see at this vision of terrible judgment the prophets heart is moved It's moved with pity and compassion for Israel and he asks God to consider Israel's frailty Lord I know we deserve this. I know you promised to send this but but Lord look at us. We're small.

Oh Jacob may stand for he is small. He says Oh Lord God forgive I pray and that's a good prayer to Forgive means, you know that you have something that you need to be forgiven for means, you know that you're in sin So the prophet here sees this vision of locusts coming upon the land and he knows it would absolutely Devastate the country and so he pleads before God God, please don't do this Relent forgive and take a look at us God and have mercy upon us And look at what the Lord did at verse 3 So the Lord relented concerning this That is something in response to the prophets prayer the Lord relented Is it really that simple I Mean God shows Amos. I'm going to send judgment and Amos at home Lord, please.

No have mercy on us God relent because we're small and God says Okay You know, we want to complicate this We want to say well now, okay God never really intended to send the judgment to begin with He was just sort of tricking Amos into thinking that he would to draw prayer out of him. I Don't think so That would make God manipulative. It would make God a deceiver and our God is not a deceiver Well, we say well they couldn't be then because what if Amos didn't pray What if he didn't pray with earnestness like he seems to pray here when he said Oh Lord God forgive I pray.

Oh that Jacob may stand for he is small you sense emotion behind that He didn't just casually pray. Oh Lord. No, that's not a good idea.

Can we do something else? No, he was earnest in his prayer as if he was stretched out with every fiber in his being towards God So what if he didn't pray or what if he didn't pray with the same earnestness? You have to believe that good God would not have relented and the locusts would have come And this is a another amazing example, I say another because scripture is sprinkled liberally with them It's another amazing example of how much rests upon prayer Now, I know I know we could endlessly debate tonight how this incident reflects on the issues of predestination and human responsibility Well did God predestined to send the swarm of locusts or not? Well, if he did then he changed his mind and and what about that God then man can change God's plan Well, if he didn't then why did he say he would go debate back and forth? I think he just got to clear all that away and say listen, this is what the scriptures say We're clearly left with the impression from this that the plague either came or was held back based upon the prophets prayer Friends, that's exactly how Amos prayed Amos prayed as if the welfare of the nation depended upon his prayer Now here's a question for you for me for all of us tonight When's the last time you prayed that earnestly for something? No, and I don't mean that earnestly for something selfish Like when the lottery was up to about a hundred million a few weeks ago. I Mean when's the last time you prayed for somebody's soul with that kind of earnestness? When you prayed for somebody's salvation Believing in your heart that heaven or hell depended upon the passion of your prayer And you know, my prayer doesn't really matter. It's not well, then why even praying at all? If it matters at all, then it's worth your passion Then it's worth an investment of your mind and your heart and your effort and your earnestness If it's real if prayer really does move the hand of God And it deserves more than what we give to it You see the same point reflected again.

Look at verse 4 here Thus the Lord God showed me behold the Lord God called for conflict by fire And it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory then I said Oh Lord God cease I pray Oh that Jacob may stand for he is small So the Lord relented concerning this this also shall not be Said the Lord God You see after the vision of locusts now Amos sees a vision of a great Consuming fire upon the land of Israel and in response. He does what he did before he pled for mercy Again this is beautiful Because this adds another dimension to the prophets ministry and prayer now. He's persisting in prayer And saying well look man.

I did it once you know if it's going to keep coming then Lord. Okay, whatever God He says no, I'm gonna keep this passion in my heart up, and I'm gonna pray again I'm gonna keep praying because I believe that my prayer matters As it happened with the vision of locusts God relented at the prayer of the prophet Listen, we can try to make prayer far more complicated than it is. I Don't think you can read this passage or many other passages in the Bible where in dramatic ways Men and women move the hand of God with their prayer without coming away understanding That God wants us to believe That our prayers affect him That he moves in response to our prayer That's how God wants you to go to prayer To believe that that God is ready and willing to act Upon our prayers now.

I could go on and qualify that endlessly You know it means that we have to pray with the passion for God's will and for God's glory and not for our own Selfish lust or not just according to our wisdom and all that and all of that said Still God wants it deeply impressed in our hearts I want to move and I want you to work in partnership with me You know the great thing about this and the great thing about prayer is that it brought the prophet Amos into such a beautiful alignment with the heart of God and That's what God longed for from the prophet to have his same heart But what if the Lord would have given this sort of scenario to Jonah about Nineveh? The plague of locusts as a vision the great consuming fire Jonah would have gone. Yeah, Lord send it That's why God didn't do that with Jonah. He knew his heart He knew you know there's a lot of work to do in Jonah before I can give him this sort of thing But Amos was at a different place.

He was more in sync with the heart of God And that's what prayer demonstrates And here's another vision verse 7 Thus he showed me behold the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line With a plumb line in his hand and the Lord said to me Amos. What do you see and I said a plumb line? Isn't that great? Amos is so simple, you know, he didn't say Lord. I see that you're measuring Israel morally according to the absolute standard of your holy justice Which is true.

I mean, that's what the whole scene is about. He says I see a plumb line. It's just great Amos is just so straightforward Then the Lord says behold.

I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel I will not pass by them anymore The high places of Isaac shall be desolate and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam See a plumb line measures if a wall is built straight. You know how a plumb line works, don't you? It's a String with a specific weight at the end and it's held up from something up there And you know the great thing about gravity is gravity makes that plumb line straight You don't have to do anything special to it at all it just goes straight because of gravity So when you're building the wall, you just keep yourself at the proper relation to the plumb line and the wall goes up straight Well, you see what God's doing here to Israel. He's looking at the wall of Israel here He's got the plumb line against it.

He goes, you know what this walls crooked They're not measured up You see God's holding his straight edge his standard against his people and seeing how they line up You see because Israel is chronically

Crooked against the plumb line of God Israel and her leadership They're going to be judged with the sword and that's the simple message here my friends This is really pretty awesome when we think about it. Isn't this something that our age our generation needs to hear? God has a plumb line He has a level he has a straight edge God has a standard Now I Say that in full recognition that I don't live up to God's standard, but I should Now if I stand before you tonight and say that God Has a standard and we should all live up to it. And then I tell you that I don't live up to it Does that make me a hypocrite? I? Don't believe so for this simple reason what makes a person a hypocrite is if they pretend to live by that standard Friends if we're going to throw out every standard that we don't perfectly live up to Then our world is in complete chaos and actually we're rushing towards it right now.

I Mean think about it. We teach our children that they shouldn't lie, right? Mommy and daddy have you ever lied? Well, yes you have Well, does that make you completely morally bankrupt and unable to tell your children that they should never lie, of course not Now what makes you not a hypocrite is if you tell your child, you know Mommy and daddy sometimes lie too and we have to repent and get it right before God We are wrong when we do it, too That's the standard we all have to strive for it. God has a plumb line.

Oh Man desperately wishes that he could get out some magic scissors and cut God's plumb line So that God has nothing to measure us against but it'll never happen God has a standard God has his plumb line. I Wonder if it was being written today if Amos wouldn't say God has his you know laser-pointed level, you know out there You know because the technology today people don't use the same measuring things, but you get the point, right? Some God has a standard his straight standard and he measures mankind against it. He's not grading us on a curve There's no curve to a plumb line It lies straight Now in the midst of all this pretty heavy pronouncements of judgment, right? The people don't like hearing these So it shouldn't surprise us that some opposition comes up against Amos.

Look at verse 10 here then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam the king of Israel saying Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words For thus Amos has said Jeroboam shall die by the sword and Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land Now I want you to notice here. This is Amaziah's words against Amos Amaziah was a priest of Bethel now that tells you something right there.

He was a corrupt man He was a wicked man Because there was never supposed to be a priest at Bethel Bethel was not a God-approved center of sacrifice only Jerusalem was But Bethel was one of the centers of pagan worship that the kings of Israel Set up as rival cities of worship to the gods appointed city of Jerusalem After the civil war in the days of Rehoboam when the northern kingdom of Israel divided from the southern kingdom of Judah And so here you have this wicked man this priest of Bethel He doesn't like what the Prophet Amos is saying. He's saying hey, wait a minute here. You can't do this Why after all first of all notice what he says he says this to the king Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel.

The land is not able to bear all his words See he's just spreading flat-out lies about Amos, isn't he? There's no conspiracy Amos is in part of some kind of conspiracy against the king of Israel or the house of Israel Now it may be true that the land is not able to bear all his words, but that's the land's problem. It's not Amos's problem And then he says thus Amos has said Jeroboam shall die by the sword and Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land Then Amaziah said to Amos notice this here Verse 12 Go you seer Flee to the land of Judah there eat bread and there prophesy But never again prophesy at Bethel for it is the king's sanctuary and it is the royal residence Hey, mr. Prophet You're bugging the king You're

bugging me Get out of here. Go back home.

We don't want to hear it See Amaziah was offended that Amos came to Bethel and prophesied So he does his very best to send him back to Judah go back home. We don't want to hear it here By the way by his threats, he's letting Amos know I'll slander you I'll lie against you I'll do whatever I have to do to set you up. This is how I'm coming against you Amos Now look at the answer from the Prophet Amos in verse 14 Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah I Was no prophet nor was I a son of a prophet But I was a herdsman and a tender of a sycamore fruit Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock and the Lord said to me go prophets I to my people Israel now therefore hear the word of the Lord You say do not prophesy against Israel and do not spout against the house of Isaac You see what he's saying Amaziah tells Amos knock it off.

We don't want to hear it You your prophetic office is closed down and this basically comes back and he says hey listen man. I didn't ask for this I Didn't volunteer for this duty. I was just a farmer I was out there tending the sheep and and in the the sycamore tree orchard.

That's it man I didn't ask was God came to me Amos replies to Amaziah saying listen. I'm not a professional prophet. I'm a reluctant prophet.

I'm a farmer by trade I'm hardly the type to go out and launch a conspiracy. I don't need this. I'd rather go back to my sheep I'd rather go back to the sycamore trees But he says no the Lord took me as I followed the flock See like many others in the Bible God called Amos as he faithfully performed his present calling Such an important principle in ministry Do you want God to use you in more wonderful ways? Well, you should I think that should be said to everybody every person should say as much as God may be using me right now I want him to use me in even a more wonderful way Let me tell you one key to that.

Not the only key but one key to that is for you to be absolutely faithful with where you're at You know God I'd like to have this position in the church You know, I'm kind of wondering when they'll come and ask me to to be an elder or be a pastor or be this Well, are you being faithful where you're at? That's the question Any wise leadership will first look to that Are you being faithful right with us and Amos was faithful as a sheep breeder and a tender of the sycamore fruit Then God made him an honorable prophet, but notice he was an honorable farmer before he was honorable prophet He didn't say well Lord, you know, if you make me a prophet then I'll be honorable. No start out by being an honorable farmer And if God chooses to raise you up as an honorable prophet, then he'll do so. I Think it's also precious that God used Amos as a sheep breeder and a tender of sycamore fruit What I want to get across is God was using him even when he was breeding the sheep and tending the sycamore fruit If you were out to buy wool from somebody wouldn't you like to buy it from the prophet Amos You would know he wouldn't cheat you You would know that he would give a good deal and that he'd work hard and when you buy the sycamore fruit from him You don't have to worry about him putting his thumb on the scale You know, it would be pleasant dealing with him and he'd take a concern with you.

You see he was serving God where he was as a farmer and Then when God called him to be a prophet He was still being used as a farmer all throughout the book of Amos are all these agricultural allusions Everything is like the sheep or like the field or like this or like this He's just the dumb farmer boy out there seeing everything through the eyes of a farmer But you know, that's how God uses men and women Every prophet every minister they have or they should have a style all their own. I Mean God speaks to them all and moves them all yet. They don't lose their individuality their originality It's like the the breath that

causes the music is the same But the two instruments aren't alike the breath blows through at the same, but the instruments are different Each voice should have its own special tone its own special cry even when God is eminently seen Still man is not lost Does God wants to use man not make him completely invisible but use him? It's funny about that I I think that if anybody aspires to be a teacher or a leader or Especially somebody who would speak before a congregation.

It's really something to think about God What if you called me to be in the pulpit or as I teach? You know, I think when you're just starting and when you're learning how to teach when you're growing in these things You're impressionable and you will consciously or unconsciously Model yourself after those you admire Have you ever bumped into that? You you go and you you're maybe listening to a pastor who's on staff at a prominent church and and the the pastor of the prominent church has a Distinctive style and you listen to the guy who's on a staff and he sounds just like him Well, it's just a natural thing. It doesn't have to be deliberate It's not like the guy woke up in the mornings that I want to be just like him. There's a natural modeling that goes forth but I Think it's very important that even though it may begin that way and then something may develop that way It's very important for everybody who teaches everybody who preaches to be able to say Lord help me to be myself in the pulpit It's not easy You would think it would be easy to be yourself in the pulpit.

Well, you just go up there and you'd be yourself Actually, it's very hard. I think it takes a long time. I Before I felt like I really started becoming myself in the pulpit and It's something that God wants to use in each individual But it just takes time But it takes a heart to want to be like that, too God wants to use you you Do you sometimes think that God made a mistake when he made you? You look at somebody else that you really admire anything.

Oh, look at they're really used of God You say, you know Lord what you should have done. You should have made two of them and none of me No, no, no. No God knows exactly what he's doing.

He made one of them and he made one of you and You have a work you have a ministry You have a life that you can live for God that nobody else can live. I can't do it You can do it and I can't So you need to do it Paul said that he wanted to run the race that God set before him Will you have a race that God has set before you it's not my race You run your race with everything you have before the Lord and I'll run mine And we'll see the work of God accomplished beautifully So that's what aim is simply replied to Amazon He said listen, you're telling me verse 16 You say do not prophesy against Israel and do not spout against the highest house of Isis. That's what you're telling me But this is what he responds verse 17 this is impressive from the prophet Amos just after he received this rebuke from the establishment from the Authority verse 17 Therefore thus says the Lord Your wife shall be a harlot in the city.

Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword Your land shall be divided by survey line You shall die in a defiled land and Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land That's gutsy folks Amos is being accused of bringing down the national morale You know, he's saying we're going to be led away to captivity. We say baby saying bad times are coming. Look things are great There's prosperity and abundance under the reign of Jeroboam the second and here comes this guy spoiling the whole party Fresh from that criticism Amos looks and I think when the Lord put that word in his heart and in his mind He gave him those exact words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

He had to swallow hard And say well if you think that's bad, let me spell this out to you Amaziah let me tell you what's going to happen to your wife and to your children If you think Amaziah wasn't happy with him

before wait until he said this He says you're going to die in the defiled land and Israel shall surely Be led away captive now, you know, it's very interesting. Look back to this at verse 11 This is what Amaziah accused Amos of saying Jeroboam shall die by the sword now. There's no reference to Amos saying that maybe he did and it wasn't recorded But there's no reference to him saying that and then it says and Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land There's no record of Amos saying that before this point again, maybe he did but there's no record of it Let's say he didn't Then I picture Amos in verse 17 saying oh, yeah, and just for the record.

You're exactly right Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land You're absolutely right Amaziah Well friends, this is Amazing that Amos would have the courage to stand up and speak for the Lord in this situation And I'm sure Amaziah was very offended I'm sure lots of people didn't like it and they spoke out and said well, no, you can't say that you're a lying prophet Well, you know how you tell the difference between a lying prophet and a true prophet proofs in the pudding If it happens then Amos was speaking truly That's where you say anybody can stand up and say well, you know the Lord says this is going to happen The Lord says that's going to happen. Well, does it happen? It certainly did in Amos's case Every one of those things was fulfilled and Israel was led away captive Friends if it doesn't happen, well, then it certainly doesn't happen and the person shouldn't be regarded It doesn't slow down Amos one bit look at it here verse 1 of chapter 8 Thus the Lord God showed me behold a basket of summer fruit and he said Amos. What do you see? And I said a basket of summer fruit Again, so simple and this isn't out there trying to spin an interpretation Lord I think the fruit represents Israel in its ripe character before God because that's exactly what it did See, that's summer fruit Summer fruit is fruit that you need to eat right away.

It doesn't keep very long It doesn't necessarily mean that it's spoiled, but it means that it's ripe and it doesn't have much time left That's the idea. This is fruit that doesn't have much time left. But instead of answering back to the Lord Oh Lord I see a picture of the tardiness of Israel's hour and how they must hasten to repent because their time is ripe Just like this representation says no I see a basket of summer fruit and then the Lord said to me verse middle of verse 2 here the end has come upon my people Israel and I will not pass by them anymore and The songs of the temple shall be wailing in that day says the Lord God many dead bodies everywhere They shall throw them out in silence Now there's something here that I'm not really privy to having not studied this passage in the original Hebrew but I could read commentaries written in English that tell me about the original Hebrew and they tell me that there's a very significant and striking word play in this passage between the term for summer fruit, which is something like chaos and The term for easy which is something like or excuse me the term for end not easy Which is a kiss and Basically the word play coming together It's something like this.

So when Amos replied to the Lord that he saw a basket of ripe chaos God said kiss It's a word play in the Hebrew. That would be very striking to the person who read it What it means is an end is going to come upon Israel Just like ripe fruit is ready to be thrown out a similar judgment is going to come upon rotten Israel Look at for some of the reasons why beginning here verse 4 here There's you who swallow up the needy and make the poor of the land fail saying When will the new moon be passed that we may sell grain and the Sabbath that we may trade wheat? Making the ephod small and the shekel large falsifying the scales by deceit that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals even sell the bad wheat See here Amos is returning to his familiar theme of social justice Decrying those in Israel who make their money from the unjust treatment of the poor and the vulnerable These people are so money-hungry that when God says what you need to take the new moon feast off You need to take the Sabbath off.

There they are.

They're watching their clock. When's the Sabbath over? When's the Sabbath over? I got to go out and make a buck Instead of honoring God by the Sabbath. Oh, they couldn't wait until it was over And they cheated even worse.

They made the ephod small It's like saying you made your pound small and your dollar big There's chronic corruption and cheating in the business world and God saw it and he was angry When you cheat at business God sees it and he's not pleased Don't cheat Say oh you don't know my business and Everybody else is cheating. And if I don't cheat right along with them that I'm gonna get swallowed up I have to just to stay afloat in the corporate or in the business culture that I'm in Then make a stand for God and trust him to make it up. Don't cheat Don't go and make your ephod small and your shekel large God sees it and even if it's totally accepted in your marketplace, even it's totally accepted if it's still cheating then don't do it Cheating and dishonesty in business.

It's not a small sin And I don't think God takes it as a sin that can be excused by what we think of as necessity God sees it and he takes account. So judgment is certain look at it here in verse 7 The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob Surely I will never forget any of their works Shall the land not tremble for this and everyone who mourns dwells in it and so shall switch I'll swell like the river and heave and subside like the River of Egypt You know anything about geography and that part of the world, you know that the Nile River in Egypt is very famous for the way that it floods and then recedes every year and It's a remarkable difference I mean yards and yards of difference in height in the flow of the Nile between flood stage and it's receding stage and Just as much as that goes up and down like this. God says I'm going to do this to the land Possibly meaning an earthquake and I'm going to do it to your lives That's the kind of trembling I'm going to bring Just like that Nile River goes up and down that radically That's how I'm going to shake this land and I'm going to shake your lives.

Why look at the parent verse 7 I will never forget any of their works and might I say that this reminds us that time Can never erase sin? You know oftentimes we feel that if we have forgotten the sins of our youth Or if others have forgotten all about the sins of our youth then God must have forgotten about him also He hasn't Remember those terrible things you did as a teenager terrible Some of them you may laugh about now or think, you know, well, you know, it's just teenage You know, it was flat-out sin, wasn't it? flat-out sin And do you think that just because it was a long time ago and for some of us longer than others? Because it was a long time ago. You think God's forgotten about it Time does not erase sin We somehow think it does because we forget about it You know time heals all wounds time passes by it's all water under the bridge not before God Time does not atone for sin only the atoning work of Jesus can cover sin not time So think about it when he says surely I will never forget any of their works Is that a positive statement in Amos chapter 8 verse 7? No But how about this one? Compare it with Hebrews 6 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love Which is shown towards his name and that you've ministered to the Saints and do minister Just as much as God doesn't forget the evil works of the wicked He doesn't forget the good works of his people and he doesn't forget them for one moment All some of you get discouraged You get discouraged because there you are you're in the service of the Lord or maybe you're at a place in your life We're honestly you can't serve You're just busy with other things right now and God has your focus on other things And so you're serving diligently in whatever spirit you can but you remember fondly the days when you could be more actively involved in Christian service And you're all depressed because you can't do that the way you want to right now. God's not forgetting what you did before And if you'll be faithful to him, he'll open up doors for you to go back and even a better opportunity to serve him So don't

think about that.

God is unjust to forget your work. He remembers it's still before him. He's still happy about it You've forgotten about it.

It's just kind of a distant memory for you not before God He still looks at that thing and he smiles and if you notice here God says again all of it shall swell like the river and heave and subside like the River of Egypt Again, he's drawing this dramatic point about how he's going to shake up the land and look at how extensive the judgment will be verse 9 And it shall come to pass in that day says the Lord God that I will make the Sun go down at noon And I will darken the earth and broad daylight I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentations I will bring sackcloth on every waist and baldness on every head I will make it like mourning for an only son and it's end like a bitter day Notice here because all this reference to celestial catastrophe Many people think that Amos is now looking forward to the ultimate day of the Lord But it may be just as well that he's speaking of his own day and speaking of an eclipse of the Sun or something like that You know astronomers go back and they can figure out that there were two Total eclipses of the Sun in the lifetime of Amos and maybe he's referring to those This is going to be a day of deep mourning like the mourning for an only son Now look at the word he speaks in verse 11 behold The days are coming says the Lord God that I will send a famine on the land Not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water But of hearing the words of the Lord they shall wander from sea to sea from north to east They shall run to and fro seeking the word of the Lord But shall not find it in that day the fair virgins and strong men shall faint from thirst Those who swear by the city of Samaria who say you as your God lives, O Dan And as the way of perceiving lives they shall fall and never rise again Most people think that the worst kind of famine is a famine of bread, you know on the news Sometimes you see horrible pictures from distant lands about the terrible calamity of malnourishment and famine sweeping across a Country and that is terrible indeed Prophet Amos reminds us that the worst kind of famine is a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. I Want you to notice the nature of this famine This is not a famine of a lack of God's Word No, look at it there. It's a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

It's a famine of hearing The condition he's describing here is someone who is deaf to the words of the Lord He's not able to hear those words. It's not a case of God withholding his revelation But if people being in such a state that they don't see it, they don't hear the words of the Lord Friends it's true that there may come times where there is a famine of God's Word Sometimes it's through neglect Men in the pulpit are unfaithful men. They don't preach the Word of God The people in the pew are lazy and they won't read the Word of God for themselves Sometimes there is a famine of the Word of God sometimes by neglect or sometimes it's by unfaithfulness.

Oh Yes, the the man in the pulpit is preaching the word, but he's twisting the Scriptures He's being unfaithful to the Word of God So the the true Word of God isn't going forth, but there may be times like that But that is not what Amos is speaking about here This is a problem with the hearer not with the preacher You know you could be going to a wonderful Bible preaching and believing in word exalting church and yet there's a Famine of the Word of God in your life because it's a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord And the preacher may have plenty of his own problems The hearer may have their own problems and that's what Amos is addressing here I'd like 1st Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 13 It describes the right way to hear the Word of God Paul says of the Thessalonians when you receive the Word of God which you heard from us you welcomed it Not as the Word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which also effectually works in you who believe Well, that's how you receive it. If you would receive the Word of God as The Word of God. Oh what a difference it would make Sometimes we just need to be shaken out of our

apathy and lethargy concerning God's Word, you know, we feel like what? You know, sometimes you hear it from your kids.

Oh I've heard it before dad. I know that Bible story I'm thinking you know here I am I've dedicated the last 20 years of my life to study in God's Word that has been the major Occupation of my life over the last 20 years the major focus to study and teach God's Word And I'm more in love with God's Word now than I ever was before I think it's richer and deeper and more wonderful than ever I think here's the kid who's been going to Sunday school for a few years and they think they know it all Absolutely amazing Well, what would correct that if they did what it says in 1st Thessalonians 2 13 if they would receive the Word of God as the Word of God If you think about it, this is God Speaking to you He's not silent It wouldn't be any more God's Word Than if a fiery pillar appeared on this platform and a voice spoke out from the fiery pillar It would not be one bit more God's Word than it is right there on the page It would not be one bit more God's Word if an angel came down with the very Tablets that God inscribed with his finger on Mount Sinai and said here they are It wouldn't be one bit more God's Word to you Sometimes you just need to be shaken out of that lethargy. I remember hearing of a man He had just come to Christ and he wanted to learn the Bible and he was a businessman So what he had a secretary do was type up the letters of Paul just get out of Bible type up the letters Paul But every time where it said you or Paul referred to you or the truth He had his secretary put his name in there and then she typed it up She put an envelope and she mailed it to him So he would open up his mail and here it was a letter from God to him Now when you realize hey, this is God's Word for me.

It's for me. He's speaking to my heart But they they shall wander. He says there.

Did you notice that? It says in verse some 12. They shall wander from sea to sea From north to east they shall run to and fro Seeking the word of the Lord You see when we push away God's Word for a long time when we close our ears to hearing it Then we may find ourselves in the place where we won't find it. Even if we wanted to Please remember this friends the ability to hear God's Word and to benefit by it is a gift from God and It's a gift not to be despised Listen if you're getting anything From our time in the word here tonight.

You should thank God for it Should thank God that he would use such a one as me You should thank God that your heart is open enough for him to speak to it Friends let me tell you if you come to a place And the Word of God is open and the Word of God is taught and you don't get anything anything You need to do is you need to get down on your knees before God and say God speak to my hardened heart The word was open. The word was at least read There should be something there for me something on now to the last chapter I saw the Lord standing by the altar and He said strike the doorpost that thresholds may shake and break them on the heads of them all I will slay the last of them with the sword he who flees from them shall not get away and he who escapes shall not Be delivered though. They dig into hell from there My hand shall take them though they climb up to heaven from there I will bring them down and though they hide themselves on top of Carmel from there I will search and take them though they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea from there I will command the serpent and it shall bite them though they go into captivity before their enemies from there I will command the sword and it shall slay them and I will set my eyes on them for a harm and not for good Friends if it could get any heavier from the previous chapters.

It's coming up to a crescendo of heaviness in chapter 9 You see this it's as if God is at the temple standing at the altar That's what Amos is seeing God himself. Perhaps he saw vision and without knowing that it was Jesus Christ He saw Jesus himself standing there at the temple and the Lord proclaiming. He's like a

general sending out the troops He's directing a conquering army to destroy this get them go after them.

I'm here to bring judgment He's like the boss of a demolition squad or the commander of an invading army He's snapping orders for the destruction of the temple and snapping orders to capture everyone This is showing us that the judgment of God is inescapable He who flees from them shall not get away. He says This is God's way of saying you can run but you can't hide Even if you try to dig into hell or climb up to heaven, you can't escape your responsibility before God There's not a mountain high enough. There's not an ocean deep enough to hide you from the judgment of God And then God says I will set my eyes on them for harm and not for good Friends you don't want that set of you.

Do you? No No, instead we want to come to God under the new covenant We want to come to God under what he says in the book of Romans if God before us then who can be against us? We want to know that because of our standing in grace God is for us and all the harm that we deserve was perfectly poured out upon Jesus Christ in whom we trust The judgment continues on here in verse 5 the Lord God of hosts He who touches the earth and it melts and all who dwell there mourn and all of it shall swell like the river and subside Like the River of Egypt he who builds his layers in the sky and has founded his strata in the earth Who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth? The Lord is his name Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to me? Oh children of Israel says the Lord Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt the Philistines from captor the Syrians from Kerr? Behold the eyes of the Lord are on the sinful kingdom and I will destroy it from the face of the earth yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob says the Lord But surely I will command and will sift the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is sifted in a sieve in a sieve Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword who say the calamity Shall not overtake us nor confront us. This isn't just a flowery Introduction when it says there in verse 5 the Lord God of hosts who touched the earth and it melts This is announcement from the God who means business the God who has all might and glory And they didn't act in a way that brought God glory So Amos is saying listen, you got to understand who God is Maybe you can correct your ways and start acting in a way consistent with that But but God is mighty God is powerful and he sees the sinful kingdom Isn't it terrible to hear Israel describes as the sinful kingdom? Oh Isn't that Egypt Oh Lord, isn't that a Syria isn't that Babylon God says no Israel you're the sinful kingdom God wants all his people to be deeply impressed that they cannot presume upon his mercy or upon their own Chosenness. Oh I'm chosen.

Yeah, I don't anything to worry about You know what God says look at it here. It's very striking He says in verse 7. Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to me? now the Israelites considered the Ethiopians a distant and remote people when they wanted to talk about people on the edge of it far away. It was the Ethiopians and So in this but are you distant remote and so therefore to the lives of Israelites insignificant? Cut this.

Well, aren't you like the Ethiopians to me? You're insignificant. You're distant. You're remote and then he said this is even more striking.

Look at it here. He says Yeah, I brought you up out of Egypt, but I also brought the Philistines from Kaftar and I brought the Syrians from Kerr Oh, you think your exodus was so special, huh? Oh, I brought the the Philistines out from Kaftar. I brought the Syrians from Kerr What about that? Don't think you're so special that you become proud and presumptuous.

You're a sinful kingdom Is it but I'll say what I'm not gonna destroy Israel. No, not completely. No, I want to keep you around so I can sift you Yes, I'm gonna sift him not to destroy them But to purify him because notice in at all not the smallest grain shall small fall to the ground God sifting only eliminates the chaff not the grain It's only the sinners of my people as he says in verse 10 That'd be guilty under judgment and those are the people who presume too much and never humble themselves.

So there he is judging sifting Breaking the presumption and the pride of Israel was Israel a chosen nation Absolutely had God given them great gifts and a great calling no doubt about it When they took pride and presumption in those things. Oh God had to break them of it now. It's been pretty heavy, right? In verse 11 you come to one of the most radical gear changes in the whole Bible I mean, we've we've reached this summit peak of judgment and then now look at verse 11 On that day, I will raise up the tabernacle of David which has fallen down and repair its damages I will raise up its ruin and rebuild it as in the days of old that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the Gentiles who are called by night my name says the Lord who does this thing You see long before the days of Amos the northern kingdom of Israel Rejected the royal house of David and here God promises to take and to restore Israel's was David's royal line He's going to do it through the son of David the Messiah Jesus Christ Very abrupt change you sense the difference between verse 10 and verse 11 But you see without this last passage without this chain of stone the book of Amos would be complete He's not going to leave his hopeless.

He's gonna say I'm gonna bring restoration matter of fact, that's why I brought the judgment That's why I brought the sifting so that I could bring about this new world under the son of David God says I'm going to raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old God promised to take what was ruined and to repair it and to rebuild it Now friends, let's remember that there's a couple different ways that the Lord God can work Sometimes God works by doing a new thing a completely new thing and he says of the old let it die I'm gonna make a new creation. I'm gonna do something new and some works of God are like that But there are other works of God where he looks at something that's wrecked and and desolate and he says I'm gonna rebuild that Now in a way we would prefer God just to do a new thing all the time Because the new thing is always just God's work. There's nothing man.

Doesn't it? There really is nothing God man, doesn't it? He just does it But not not with the rebuilding work Invariably with the rebuilding work. God says come my people. Let's work on this together We're going to work in a partnership here Israel was ruined but God says I'm gonna raise it up.

It's going to be a glorious work of the Lord including even the Gentiles Look at the last several verses here of the book verse 13 Behold the days are coming Says the Lord when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sow seed and the mountain shall drip With sweet wine and all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of my people Israel They shall build the way cities and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them I will plant them in their land and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land.

I have given them says the Lord your God There's farmer Amos giving us the picture of everything beautiful and restored For farmer Amos when everything's restored It's like crops everywhere and the mountains dripping with wine and everything's beautiful and just everything's abundant You think if God would have called Amos if he was a you know, if he was a skier He would have described, you know, and everything will be like a day with ten-foot powder and beautiful conditions He was a surfer he would have said oh, it'll be eight feet and glassy, you know with an offshore wind every day You know just like that No, but he says I'm going to restore all this abundance all this beautiful abundance under this the days are

coming Under God's inspiration the Prophet ends the book of Amos on a very high note He's looking forward to the great prosperity and abundance in Israel now under the reign of Jeroboam 2nd in Amos's day. They had material prosperity things are doing pretty good economically for a lot of the people The poor were being cheated and ground under the boot, but a lot of people were enjoying high times But listen all that prosperity it wasn't from the Lord. It wasn't in the Lord God says no, I'm going to restore prosperity from me and in me and it's going to be different The Lord says it's going to be so great.

Look at it there that the plowman shall overtake the Reaper In other words that the Reaper is not even going to be done when the plow where it comes lunches we got to do more The ground is so rich. There's so much rain. It's so beautiful, man.

I'm gonna be plowing before you can even reap Let's get busy with the work. I Think this shows us some wonderful principles about what it's like when God really restores and blesses How about this four principles about God's restoration and blessing number one when God releases blessing and restoration fruit comes quickly And that's where is you know, there's just times when God's pouring out of spirit and fruit comes quickly. What can you say? It's just falling off the trees man in the plowman says the Reaper get busy here.

Let's go. I you need to keep up I'm gonna overtake you Secondly when God releases blessing and restoration fruit comes from unexpected places Well, look at it there. It says verse 13 the mountain shall drip with sweet wine and all the hills shall flow with it Now Mountains are not places where you grow grapevines.

They grow down in valleys But God is going to bless so Israel so much in those you're going to be growing the mountains are going to drip with wine You see fruits going to come in unexpected places And isn't that how it is when God's is pouring out of spirit man God's pouring out fruit in places You'd never look people You never thought would receive Christ are receiving him people who you thought would never get serious about their walk with the Lord all of a Sudden they're passionately in love with Jesus It's just thrilling Number three when God releases blessing and restoration fruit comes with great quality The mountains are going to drip with sweet wine. They thought that was the best kind and so it's not just wine man It's the best and that's how the fruit is when God's really pouring out of spirit man. It's just wonderful It's not just a lot of fruit.

It's good fruit You ever see strawberries around strawberry time which is about now do you see those huge? Massive strawberries. They're like the size of apples and for the most part you bite into one of those and it tastes like nothing And it's so big. It's so pumped up.

That's no good Now if you come to Sweden with us in the summer You get those small little Swedish strawberries, and they're small. Oh, but they're good Oh, they have more flavor and one of those in one of those little ones and an old dish of big ones But here's the trick God says in his day of blessing the big ones are going to be just that sweet Not only will you have a lot of fruit. It's going to be quality fruit and Finally this is the fourth principle when God releases blessing and restoration the work is blessed, but it's still work Did you notice it you still have the plowman you still have the Reaper you still have the trader of grapes you still have him Who's so seed they all have their work to do now? We kind of think hey when God's really blessing.

It's kickback time Lord you just do it right on God. Yo your hands really moving no work for us to do Lord. No way Matter of fact it seems like when God's really blessing There's more work to do the plowman

doesn't just sit around he gets busy even if he starts bumping into the Reaper Let's get going So friends it's wonderful to see when God pours out just such a time and Look at it how it ends here verse 15.

I Will plant them in their land and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land So many of the warnings from the prophet Amos They're about the coming threat of captivity and exile and that captivity and exile was going to come The prophetic word that Amos spoke right in the face of his enemy Amaziah it was going to happen But God promises restoration even from that and the day when Israel will never again be pulled up from the land So how about you? Do you have a permanent place in the Lord? Can you say that where you are in the Lord you will never be pulled up from the land? You know some of us need to come to that decision point in our Christian life For some people for many years They sort of toy around with this idea if they're going to follow the Lord or not if they're going to be serious about Jesus Christ if not or not, you know, maybe maybe not run hot and cold for a while If there comes a time in your Christian life, we have to say there's no turning back none Nobody's going to pull me from the land. I'm going to be established there forever I put my hand to the plow and I'm not looking back doesn't matter who goes with me doesn't matter who opposes me Jesus I'm yours forever and always God would give us that kind of heart and we wouldn't face the kind of discipline that Israel faced so much In the book of Amos, let's pray that he does that work in us right now father That is our prayer tonight We thank you Lord for the richness of the words of this prophet How great it is God Lord right now? We want to pray together with some of the heart of the prophet Amos when he interceded for the people Lord tonight we don't have before us a vision of judgment as if it were locusts or Or if it were fire or a plumb line in front of us Lord, we do hunger to see more of your work among us We want to see the kind of outpouring that that is shown at the end of the book of Amos Lord Where blessing and restoration is poured out so beautifully from heaven father send times like that among us send workers ready to work Lord willing to expend themselves send the plowman who's going to overtake the Reaper and The treader of the grapes who's going to overtake the one who's sowing the seed Send us people to work with energy Lord Send us men and women of faith Lord raise them up from among us change us to make us into those people Father we recognize that such blessing that such beautiful restoration We can plead before you for we we can ask you for it We can set our hearts in the right place where but Lord we can't make it come we can't manufacture It has to come as a gift from heaven or tonight. We acknowledge our utter dependence upon you Lord unless you pour out your spirit.

It will not be poured out Lord we ask that you work with us that you forgive our sins that you pardon our lethargy our coldness our Preoccupation with the things of the world Lord pardon our excuses Pardon our small vision and our lack of faith Raises up as leaders Lord people have a passion to impact our community our world in a lasting way God. Oh father we're Dissatisfied With a small impact and Lord. We're not talking necessarily about The numbers of people that we touch, but Lord whoever we touch we want to touch deeply For eternity God not a pleasant service and an inspiring thought Lord a life-changing encounter with you in worship and the word Transforming power of the gospel Let it pour forth God We come to you Lord in the heart and the passion of Amos, but we come in the standing of Jesus Christ Your beloved our Savior lift up our hearts before you God as individuals and as a congregation We thank you for our time together in your word praying in Jesus name Amen

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11038.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-guzik/amos-raising-up-the-ruins/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net