



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Amos 5: 1-27

Amos

“Let Justice Roll”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] It's a little after 7:00 so we may as well begin with a word of prayer and then we'll look at Amos chapter 5. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for this day and we thank you for your blessings to us, thank you for your constant care for us and for giving us the opportunity this evening to look into your word and to study a chapter out of the Book of Amos. Lord, as we do that, we pray that you would give us understanding and not only that, but how this text applies to us because it certainly does. And the prophecy given many, many centuries ago, even before the church and yet it has application to the church, it has application to the church today and to each one of us as believers in Jesus Christ.

And so we marvel at that in one sense because a message and an occasion that seems quite different from our present situation is yet very applicable to us and it shows the supernatural character of your word, it shows the inspiration of it and so we praise you for it and praise you for this chapter and pray that you would open it up to us and apply it to you and give us a good time of study together tonight. We pray for those who may be traveling and for those of us that will be traveling home in a short time that you give all of us safety. Bless us now, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] Well, we are in Amos chapter 5. I think this is our fourth lesson. Let me begin with a few words of introduction. Hate is a harsh word. In fact, when I was growing up I was taught not to say that word. If I said it, I got scolded for that. I remember getting a lecture on how bad it is to say the word hate. But even so, God uses that word.

In Proverbs 6:16, he says, or the Proverbs says that there six things God hates, seven which are an abomination to Him. “Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”

All of those vices were a problem in Israel and would figure into accusations that Amos makes against the nation here in chapter 5 of his book. He condemns the nation for its injustice. In fact, we find that repeated in the chapters that follow. But there’s something else that we could add to that list of the things that God hates and it’s found in our passage too. In fact, I put it at the top of the list of the things that God hates and that is religion.

God hates religion. He said so in Amos 5:21, “I hate, I reject your festivals.” It was religion without righteousness. It was hypocrisy. They practiced rituals while victimizing people, that’s the problem. So God tells them to repent. Repeatedly, He tells them to do that or judgment would come. Verse 4, “Seek me that you may live.” Verse 6, “Seek the Lord that you may live.” Verse 14, “Seek good and not evil that you may live.”

And then in one of the really majestic statements of the bible the Lord says, “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” That’s the message of Amos chapter 5, a message for Israel, but a message also for the church today. We have our festivals and solemn assemblies. We may not call them by those terms, but we do. We meet. We’re meeting here. We meet Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings. We have our religious festivals, so to speak.

But they can be religious routines. And when they become that, then they become hypocrisy. And God doesn’t hate it any less than He hated what Israel did. So this chapter, like every chapter in this book, is a lesson for the church today. It begins the way many of the oracles in Amos begin, with a call to attention. “Hear this word which I take up for you as a dirge, O house of Israel.”

What is a dirge? You’ve heard the word. What is a dirge or a lament as the New International Version translates it? Well, very simply – it’s more than one thing, but very simply, and I think as it applies here, it’s a funeral song which makes this an ominous beginning to a sermon or an oracle or a prophecy. Amos was speaking as though Israel were already judged and dead. He’s ready to sing a dirge over them.

Now that’s how He describes Israel in verse 2. “She has fallen, she will not rise again – the virgin Israel. She lies neglected on her land; there is none to raise her up.” The word used here for fallen is the word that is used typically of those who die before their time as we put it. Those who don’t die a normal death in old age. It’s used of soldiers, for example, dying on a field of battle. David used this word of Saul and Jonathan when they were killed on Mount Gilboa, how are the mighty fallen. In fact, his song there in 2 Samuel 2 is called A Lamentation or a Dirge.

The image of corpses on the battlefield is carried over to verse 3 where Israel is described as going forth 1,000 strong and returning 100 or returning 10. Not many survive. What he’s describing there is a remnant. There’ll be only a remnant left when judgment finally takes place. So Amos wants Israel to listen up. He wants the nation to hear what he has to say. He’s a man who’s not really prophesying like Jonah did. You’ll remember Jonah goes to Nineveh and he was hoping God would blast them and destroy the whole city. And he was very disappointed when God didn’t.

But this prophet is deeply concerned for Israel. They’re not his nation, he’s from Judah, but nevertheless he cares very much about them. They’re his brothers nonetheless. And he wants them to listen up. Hear this word he’s saying. It’s urgent. He’s warning them with a warning that is one of death and decimation. It’s a warning of divine judgment. But judgment is not God’s great work. Judgment is not His preferred response to the sinner.

And in verse 4, Amos calls for repentance. He has spoken to them as though judgment is so certain that it’s already happened. So this is a very urgent plea that he’s making to them, but until judgment actually comes on the people, they have an opportunity to repent. Now we’ll see later on in chapter 8 there comes a point when a people become forsaken, as it were, God forsaken. When He turns His back on them, so to speak, when He stops speaking. When He becomes silent.

In chapter 8 He speaks of famine of hearing the word of God. And that means when God doesn’t speak anymore. He saw it in the reign of Saul. He couldn’t get an oracle. And so there is that. There comes a point, it seems, as you read the scriptures, there comes a point when God’s patience runs out and God’s silent and it’s over. But that is not the case here and until that happens, the door to God turning away His judgment is open. There’s an opportunity. He’s long-suffering.

And He’s leaving that door open and the prophet at this point in His ministry is pleading with the people to turn. God is a God who is long-suffering and He’s a God of grace and that’s what He wanted to give to this people, this undeserving people. So Amos invites them to come back in verse 4. “Thus says the Lord, ‘Seek me that you may live.’” These people had long practiced idolatry and wickedness. They were deserving of divine judgment. These are sinners. We all are. These people had willfully sinned for a long time and engaged in idolatry, but God continues even when His wrath seems inevitable to open the way of hope.

That’s the kind of God we serve. He is long-suffering. He is patient. Where or how they were to seek Him is not said directly, but I think we know by implication because from the context it seems that Amos is suggesting that they do that at the temple in Jerusalem. Now that fits the historical context. It fits the context I think of this chapter. That would mean they had to humble themselves because Jeroboam, to begin with, as he began his reign, set up two places of worship you’ll remember, one in Bethel in the south and one in Dan in the north to make it easy for people to worship and keep them from going back to Jerusalem.

And by the time of Amos’ ministry, there’s a sense of pride in their places of worship and there’s a disdain for Jerusalem. And so that would be very difficult for them to do that, but that’s the only place of worship, of true worship. And so to seek the Lord they had to do it the right way and they had to do it at the right place. Today it would be seek the Lord in His word, seek the Lord in the bible.

Go back to John 4, you’ll remember He talks to the woman at the well, the Lord does, and she wants to know where’s the right place to worship, then he says, “The day is coming when it won’t matter where you worship. You worship everywhere. God is spirit and those who worship Him worship Him in spirit and truth,” and we’re living in that day.

And so where do we do this? Where do we repent? Where do we restore our relationship with the Lord? Well, you do it – where do we find the Lord in the first place if we’re an unbeliever? It’s not just anywhere. It’s certainly not in a false book or a false ministry. You go to the bible, you go to a place where the bible is taught, not to a Mormon temple or to a liberal Protestant service.

The way to the Lord is open always, but it is narrow. The only way to seek him and find Him is by seeking Him His way which means submitting to His

authority. And that’s true for us at every moment of our life. Now it seems clear that Amos was directing them to the true worship at the temple from what he warns in verse 5, not go into the false shrines. “Do not resort to Bethel, and do not come to Gilgal, nor cross over to Beersheba; for Gilgal will certainly go into captivity and Bethel will come to trouble.”

Where we worship matters to the Lord. We’re to put ourselves under His authority. So again, in verse 6, Amos urges the people to do that very thing. He urges them to repent, seek the Lord that you may live, otherwise, he says, fire would break forth and a fire that no one could put out. This is divine fire. Amos identifies – he uses this word fire a lot in the book. It can mean military action, it can mean other things, but it certainly is a picture of judgment and it’s a terrible kind of judgment, whatever it means. That’s certainly his meaning. No one will be able to put out or quench those flames.

And he identifies the problem that was behind so much of this in verse 7. The people turned justice into wormwood, that is into poison and they cast righteousness down to the earth. In other words, they threw it away, they abused it. The nation needed to repent of injustice. Now repentance basically is a change of mind. It is a turning of the mind and often in the bible, the Old Testament the word *shuwb* is used which means turn, and that’s the word for repentance. You turn in your thinking, turn in your mind. It’s turning, very basically, from unbelief to belief, from wrong thinking to correct thinking. It’s the matter of the mind or the soul, but having said that, it inevitably affects behavior and where there’s repentance it will produce fairness in our dealings with others.

When revival occurs in a nation, society as whole is affected for the good because people are changed and they change in their thinking. They begin thinking differently. They have new affections. They have an affection for the Lord. They have a desire to do His will. It may not be perfect and never will be, not in this life. But there will be a basic change and that will affect society as a whole, even where there are unbelievers because there will be order and justice that occur.

When men depart from the Lord and the light of His revelation, then the opposite occurs. That’s reflected in lawlessness. Eventually God judges that. That’s the threat here. Fire will break forth on the nation for its lawlessness, its injustice

which is rooted in this lack of belief and repentance. And God’s will able to bring this fiery judgment that He’s speaking of here on the nation.

His great power is described majestically in verses 8 and 9, “He who made the Pleiades and the Orion and changes deep darkness into morning, who also darks day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the Lord is His name. It is He who flashes forth with destruction upon the strong so that the destruction comes upon the fortress.”

The Pleiades is a star cluster that’s also known as the Seven Sisters in the constellation Taurus. And Orion is a winter constellation, probably all familiar with Orion. God made them. The word made here’s actually the word for create. God is the creator and sustainer of the stars and constellations just as He is the creator of the mountains and the wind that was referred to in the previous chapter. He’s the God and governor of all things.

He regulates the times and the seasons day and night and the annual rainfall. He makes the land fruitful which is the very place where they perverted justice and they threw down righteousness. They polluted His earth and He’s the one that gives that earth fertility and makes things grow. He regulates everything.

And so He’s able to cause the earth to dry up and not produce its fruit if they’re going to abuse it. He’s able to destroy the strong. This is the God who created the universe, the great galaxies are His creation. There’s no fortress that a man could build that could protect against His judgment. No, this is the warning that Amos is giving to these people who are – remember, they’re living in a time of great prosperity during the reign of Jeroboam II, they’ve got large houses, they’ve got fortresses, they feel very secure in Samaria and the other cities that they have built. But what Amos is saying is that’s nothing. No obstacle to God’s power.

Now He’s able to take away their prosperity and their strength in a moment. That’s what he’s saying here in verses 8 and 9. Now none of this is what his audience wanted to hear. Probably they’re at Bethel, that’s what many commenters think where most of this is taking place. They’re speaking to them, they’re speaking to this audience of people who worship falsely and they don’t want to hear what he’s saying.

They’ve actually heard it before. Amos says that in verse 10 where he again condemns their injustice. Those who went to the gate, the place where the courts met, remember they didn’t have courthouses so much as a gate. You’d go to the gate of

the city and there the judges would meet and they'd make their judicial rulings. And when people would go there, righteous people and rebuke the unjust judges, which evidently were plentiful in Israel and condemn their injustice, those who went to the gate were hated by the judges and the people.

And I think as you think about that, that's pretty natural, pretty common to human nature, isn't it? I mean people don't like to be corrected ever. Certainly when they're not wrong, when they need to be corrected. When they need to be corrected, when they're wrong, they don't want to be corrected. That's when they don't want to hear it. They don't want to have their sin and unrighteousness exposed, especially at that. And that's what was happening. These righteous people had been there, this message that Amos is giving had been heard to some degree before and they didn't like it. And especially when people have a vested interest in injustice, when they're making money off of it, which was the case in Israel.

And we'll see that again later in the later chapters, in chapter 8 in particular. They certainly reject the rebuke or the correction. And that's what Amos says in verse 11. They imposed heavy rent and taxes, tribute on the people. Then with the money they made, they built lavish homes and vineyards. And that may refer to tenant farmers who rented land, kind of like sharecroppers in the American South.

It was a system that could help the poor. So it wasn't a bad system in and of itself, but it did lend itself to abuse so that what could happen in a situation like that would end up being virtual slavery. The one who owned the land and rented it out could charge very high rent and high prices for other things that were needed to farm and the result was people couldn't get ahead and they ended up in debt and they ended up really being enslaved in effect.

And this was evidently happening in Israel and the Lord knew it. He sees it all. He knew how they oppressed the righteous, how they took bribes and denied justice in the courts and they oppressed the poor. In verse 13 Amos says that in such times, which are times of injustice and injustice at every level, when men can't get justice, he says the prudent person keep silent.

Now that's not advice that he's giving. He's stating a fact. This is what happens. This is quite natural, really. People of wisdom and understanding don't speak up and they won't speak up because they don't think that it will do any good or

they know that if they do speak up they'll bring attention to themselves and harm to themselves, so they stay silent.

It's not the moral thing to do, it's not the courageous thing to do, it's the natural thing to do. It's what people will do when they know that if they speak up their government's going to destroy them for doing it. They just stay back. They just stay silent. That is inevitable in times of injustice and that really itself is a form of judgment on the land because when that happens, when the wise don't speak up, when the righteous keep quiet and don't expose evil, they don't give direction. And so things only get worse.

And then the Lord will be deal with it. Then in good time the Lord's patience will run out. So again, Amos tells the nation to repent in verse 14. “Seek good and not evil, that you may live.” Turn from all of this. And in verse 15 Amos explains what that means to seek good and not evil. He says, “Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate!” In other words, be active in upholding the law, be active in protecting the poor in the courts or just in society as a whole and be equally aggressive in eliminating injustice.

If they do that, Amos says, God might be moved to withhold judgment. Might be. That's the idea when he says, “Perhaps the Lord God of hosts may be gracious.” He's not under any obligation to spare the guilty. Grace is not about merit. It's not what we deserve. You don't earn grace. It's blessing for the undeserving and Israel was undeserving. The threats of judgment are coming after a long period of unbelief and rebellion.

So the nation is undeserving of God holding back His judgment and giving them opportunity in receiving them back, so to speak. But He's sovereign. He does what He wills. He can be merciful to them. He's under no obligation to do that. And so I would say what Amos is saying here is it's not at all certain that He's going to do that. Maybe He will repent and you may be given leniency by the Lord but what's certainly true is if they do not repent and seek good and establish justice, they will not be spared, judgment will come.

And verses 16 and 17 indicate that the nation will not seek good. They will continue or would continue committing injustice because the streets were filled with mourning. “There is wailing in all the plazas, and in all the streets they say, ‘Alas! Alas!’” The Lord of Hosts has said this. That's what Amos says. He's quote the

Lord God who's saying this, so what is being stated here when he says there's wailing in the plazas and in all the streets, they say alas, alas is God's saying, "This is what's going to happen." He's revealing the future. He's telling them that what's going to happen when judgment comes. And it's going to come. And the calamity would be so great that everyone would be called to mourn, farmers would, he said, professional mourners would, everybody's going to be mourning.

They would wail because, as Amos says, God would pass through the midst of them. Now if you're reading your bibles through this year, maybe you're in Exodus now, passing through them recalls Exodus chapter 12 verse 12 when God announced that He would go through the land of Egypt and strike down the first born. He would pass through the land. Well, it was that kind of calamity that's being prophesied here. And the wording may have been designed to make them think about that great day of judgment in Egypt. Judgment would come.

So the dirge of verse 1, a funeral song would be sung. God was giving them opportunity, but he's also revealing they're not going to respond to it. Then in verses 18 through 20, Amos announces that very thing, that judgment will come and it will come in a completely unexpected way, that those hoping for the day of the Lord will discover that the day of the Lord is actually a day of dread. He begins the announcement with alas. That alerts them that he's about to tell them something very bad, something that's going to be an occasion of judgment.

The King James Version and I think also the New International Version gives the literal Hebrew here with, "Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord!" You wonder what's wrong with longing for the day of the Lord? That's a great, glorious day. They thought so. They were looking forward to the day of the Lord because it would be the day of rescue, the day of the coming of the kingdom of light and the Messianic Reign is a hopeful day.

And it is that for the righteous, something we look forward to. But there's another side to the day of the Lord and it's a side that applies to the unfaithful and that is a day of darkness and Amos rebukes the nation's conceit for thinking that it was right with God while worshipping falsely and behaving badly. He asks, "For what purpose will the day of the Lord be to you?" In other words, you're looking forward to this day of the Lord, you're putting your confidence in all of that, for what purpose is that going to be for you?

It will be darkness, not light. You're not going to get this relief and this great, glorious golden age that you may be thinking of. It's going to be a day of judgment. And then in verse 19 he illustrates the surprise and the doom of this coming disaster. Remember, they're thinking the day of the Lord is going to be a day of deliverance, of wondering things for us and he says in verse 19, it's going to be like this, "As when a man flees from a lion and a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against the wall and a snake bites him."

In other words, I'm safe here in my house, I lean against the wall and a sudden there's a snake bites. And that's what the day of the Lord will be like for these people. The very thing that they think will save them is what will destroy them. They have false confidence in their religion. So Amos says in verse 20 that it will be darkness for them, not light. And that will be true of multitudes that reject the word of God and trust in a false gospel.

They'll find that their faith and their trust and their hope was misplaced and it will come suddenly, unexpectedly. And if they didn't trust in Christ, they didn't trust in Christ by faith alone or whatever. They trusted a false gospel and trusted it confidently. And it's like that man who runs into the house, thinks he's safe, puts his hand against the wall and the snake is there to bite him.

Israel's problem in all of this was unbelief. And unbelief that manifested itself in false worship. Injustice in the nation was only a symptom of that. It is one of the consequences of rejecting the Lord and His revelation. So the chapter ends with additional reasons for judgment which are spiritual. They are, again, an accusation of hypocrisy in Israel's worship.

Verse 21, "I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; and I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from me the noise of your songs. I will not even listen to the sound of your harps." I would imagine that if you were to ask people at random at work, at school, just on the street, if they believe that religion is good, that religion is a benefit to a nation, I would bet most of them would answer yes. And I've heard people say that kind of thing.

You've probably heard that as well, that there's a war on religion and this kind of – I think there is. But most people think that religion is good. It's good for a

nation and a society. But God has a very different response to that. He’s speaking here and He’s using very strong language as I said at the beginning. I hate. I reject your festivals. God hates religion when religion lacks righteousness. There was nothing wrong with feasts and assemblies with offerings or songs. All of those things were prescribed by the law, but when they were lifeless ritual, forms without substance, He hated it. He hates it now.

God’s unimpressed with the great stone cathedrals or beautiful chapels with choirs and pipe organs and lots of activities. We go to those places. I’ve been to lots of cathedral, not lots, but I’ve been to some cathedrals, some famous ones and they’re impressive. I mean they’re interesting from the standpoint of architecture and you can sense the spiritual aspect to them I guess. And I’ve seen lots of ritual that didn’t impress me but does impress people. They look at that and it seem so religious and so right. And there’s lots of activity and all of that in lots of religion.

But God’s not impressed with it. He’s not impressed with magnificent choirs. It may move you and me in some ways, it doesn’t move Him if there’s no reality to it because then it is nothing but empty works. That’s the religion that God hates. That was Israel’s religion. It was motions without faith, it was inauthentic. God had nothing good to say about these people. God had nothing good to say to these people. Only rejection.

What He wanted wasn’t there. What He wants is given in verse 24 in again one of the most memorable statements in the bible, “But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” Judges would deny people justice, landowners would oppress tenants, merchants would swindle buyers, rulers would lay heavy taxes on people, then they’d go worship. God hates that. He wanted justice for the people which would be repayment for the defrauded and righteousness which would be mercy for the helpless.

God cares about society. Christians of all people should be the ones who treat others fairly and kindly wherever we are within our families, within our church, within society as a whole. We should be the ones that are known for righteousness, fairness in our dealings with people. And I think it’s as simple and as small as you go to a restaurant and when you leave, you leave a tip. It’s not a bad thing to leave a generous tip. It’s not a bad thing for people to know Christians are generous people

even though you may never see that person again. God sees you do that. He knows what's taking place. And that pleases Him.

But justice and righteousness are more than all of that. They're more than good behavior. Good behavior is really an evidence of life. Goodness and righteousness as it's spoken of here is the fruit of something within. It's the fruit of repentance and therefore, it's the proof of life. It's the proof of salvation, and that's what He desires, the inner reality. He desires a change of heart.

One of the best examples of that is Zacchaeus in Luke 19. Jesus came to Jericho and Zacchaeus became very interested in seeing Him. He climbed up in the tree, you know, and responded. And he was a dishonest tax collector, but one who humbled himself and trusted in the Lord. And he said, “Half of my possessions I will give to the poor and I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” That's justice and righteousness.

That's responding as the prophet said in this outward expression of justice and righteousness and Jesus said, “Today salvation has come to this house.” Not because he did good things, but because he believed and his response of making things right was a response of faith. It was the evidence of faith. It's the evidence that salvation had come to him and his house.

There's no such thing as faith without practice. Israel had no faith and also had no practice. And its religious devotion had blinded it, anesthetized the people to their condition. They didn't even see how unrighteous they were. And so the chapter ends with God exposing the hypocrisy of their religion, exposing it as nothing more than idolatry and exposing them as idolaters.

Verse 25 and 26, “Did you present me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel? You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves.” Now the point of the comparison here between Israel and the wilderness and those there gathered at Bethel in Amos' day is that in the wilderness they practiced idolatry while making sacrifices to the Lord and that's what they were doing at Bethel.

They were talking about the Lord and thought they were worshipping Him while also worshipping false Gods. And we know that, how that happened in the wilderness wanderings with the golden calf, the most famous incident of idolatry in the Old Testament. But also it's interesting, that generation died and the faithful

generation entered into Canaan with Joshua and yet the end of Joshua’s life when he calls for the people to commit themselves to the Lord, they all say, “Yes, we’re going to serve the Lord.” And so Joshua’s response to them in Joshua 24:23 is, “Then put away the foreign gods that are in your midst.”

Now I’ve read that so many times, I never cease to be shocked by that. This is the righteous, the faithful generation. They entered Canaan, they conquer it, they’re believers whereas their parents were not and they’re carrying idols with them. Well, you can see the comparison then between what was happening at Bethel and what was happening previously.

And so what Amos says is judgment’s going to come just as the dirge indicated and he gives the sentence in verse 27, “Therefore,” in order words because you’re carrying false gods and you’re not really worshipping me, “I will make you go into exile beyond Damascus,” says the Lord, ‘whose name is the God of hosts.’ He’s the one who controls all of the armies of heaven and earth. He can bring it to pass.

Well, what are the lessons for us? I think there are a few. First, what James said in James 2:20 and 26, faith without works is dead. As the Puritans used to say, “We’re not saved by faith plus works, but by faith that works.” In other words, a faith that’s real, it has life. We’re saved by grace through faith, but genuine faith is living and it has fruit and the fruit of that is righteousness. The fruit doesn’t save us. It’s the product of being saved.

But faith without that he says isn’t real faith. Again, we could say works without faith is dead too. And there’s lots of works that are not the product of faith. In Matthew 12 Jesus told a parable about an unclean spirit that left a man. And the man cleaned up his life. He swept his soul, as it were, clean and put everything in order and then later the demon came back and found everything swept and put in order and you remember, he goes and gets seven more demons seven times as terrible.

And what Jesus said then is the last state of that man has become worse than the first. That’s the moral man. That’s the Pharisee, that’s Mr. Legality. Outward, he seems like the right kind of person, but what the Lord is saying, he’s the worst kind of person. He’s self-righteous. That’s genuinely satanic. And secondly, for us who have believed, and that’s – the first lesson is for the hypocrite.

For us who have believed, we can see ourselves in this somewhat. We can get into a rut about church going. You ever sense that when you come on a Sunday night and you sit there and think this is getting a little bit of a routine with me. I'm here because I need to be here and it's right to be here, but it can be very shallow. It can be simply a routine.

That is true of any meeting that we have at this church. That's what we need to guard against. That's the danger. We're not pleasing the Lord when we're here but our mind is on the football game. That's a confession. Or something like that. And finally, there's hope. God does care about society. He cares about social issues. He cares about justice and fairness and kindness. You see that all through this prophecy, all through this book. But men will never establish that on earth.

I'm not saying we shouldn't try, but we're never going to succeed in doing that and we'll never succeed in the church itself, we always fail. But Christ doesn't. And He will establish that society on this earth in the Millennial Kingdom when righteousness will be as a mighty stream. It will be a time of refreshment, of life and joy. That day is coming.

In the meantime, we as God's people are to be fair and we're to be helpful and we're to be those who do all that we can do to let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. And we can do that by the grace of God and that's what we should seek. And we will by God's grace. Well, let me close with a brief word of prayer and then we'll continue before the throne of grace. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for the time that we've had together this evening and that time of study and consideration of this great fifth chapter of the Book of Amos. And we pray that you would apply it to us. It's so easy to read about things such as this, that we should be righteous people, that we should be fair with one another, we should be people that deal honestly with those around us and are generous and all of that and then go away and not really live the kind of life that Amos was telling the nation to live. Help us to do that, Lord. Help us to be men and women who are obedient to you and not out of a sense of obligation but out of a sense of love.

May we be here because we desire to be here and want to hear your word. And may this place always be a place that offers your word and nourishes the people who attend. Well, we look to you to bless us to that end. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.