



Amos: Let Justice Roll

Meeting God

Tim Badal | July 7, 2019

Amos 4

We have been looking at this obscure book in the Old Testament, nestled in the middle of the minor prophets and written 800 years before Christ. Yet this little book has timeless truths for us as the people of God living under the grace and mercy of Christ Jesus. It's a book full of doom and gloom, with wisdom and warnings to a group of people who said they were God's people and who said they wanted to follow Him, yet they had chosen greed over godliness and prosperity over the needs of the poor. They had idols made by human hands instead of worshiping the invisible God.

All of these willful decisions were made by people who professed to have a relationship with and an allegiance to God and who presumed upon His grace and provision. As a result, God was fuming with anger and told them judgment was coming. Nevertheless, we also see His grace and mercy in spite of the doom and gloom, because God chose a man named Amos to warn them.

Amos was from a place called Tekoa, about 12 miles south of Jerusalem. This man, who was a caretaker of sheep and fig trees, found himself called to tell the people of the impending judgment of God, which meant there was still time for them to repent and turn back to God. Would they listen?

Today we're in Amos 4, where God continued His stinging indictment against the people by addressing two groups. First, He spoke to the women of Israel, and second, He spoke to the worshipers in Israel. In both contexts we'll find some truths about ourselves that can be of benefit.

"Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, 'Bring that we may drink!' ²The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks. ³And you shall go out through the breaches, each one straight ahead; and you shall be cast out into Harmon," declares the LORD.

⁴"Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; ⁵offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel!" declares the Lord GOD. ⁶"I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD.

⁷"I also withheld the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest; I would send rain on one city, and send no rain on another city; one field would have rain, and the field on which it did not rain would wither; ⁸so two or three cities would wander to another city to drink water, and would not be satisfied; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD.

⁹"I struck you with blight and mildew; your many gardens and your vineyards, your fig trees and your olive trees the locust devoured; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD. ¹⁰"I sent among you a pestilence after the manner of Egypt; I killed your young men with the sword, and carried away your horses, and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD.

¹¹"I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD. ¹²"Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" ¹³For behold, he who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name!



In 1931, Gandhi was invited to dine with the king of England, King George V. Known for his humble approach to life and his trademark dress in a loin cloth and sandals, it would cause great consternation and even trepidation for the royal officials, knowing there would be a stark contrast between the humble Indian man and the great figure of the king. They knew this would create issues in public opinion.

So the royal officials begged Gandhi to allow them to fit him with the best of English suits—of course, probably made from Indian cotton. But to pursue solidarity with his Indian brothers and sisters, Gandhi refused to wear anything but his trademark robe and sandals. When they said he should worry about how little he would be wearing, he responded with a quip that I think is very apropos. He said, “Don’t worry about what I’m wearing. I think the king will be wearing enough for both of us.”

Gandhi understood what it meant to meet someone of great importance. We too place great importance on meeting a public figure, or our future father-in-law or mother-in-law, or a new boss. When we know we’ll be meeting someone important, we inevitably ask, “What should I wear? How should I act?” We want to give them the best impression possible, something we would not consider in ordinary casual meetings.

In our text today, we see God meeting with His people, yet those people did not consider this meeting to be that important so they did not prepare themselves for it. They approached God casually and did not respect or fear Him in the way they should have. As a result, God in His holiness and power and omnipotence became angry at them.

God demands our respect, reverence and worship. When we “buddy up” to Him, acting as if we’re simply hanging out with a friend, God becomes angry. After all, as we read in Amos 4:13, God *“forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name!”*

When we recognize Who God is, we begin to realize how dreadful it is when we approach Him as if He is just one of us. But that’s what the people of Israel were doing in Amos’ day. They interacted with God as if it was an ordinary encounter with another human being. God told them, “Prepare to meet Me.”

That’s something He said in other parts of Scripture as well. The second to last verse in the Bible says, *“Surely I am coming soon.”* On a day unknown to us, God will send His Son Jesus Christ to meet us. Jesus asked an important question in Luke 18:8: *“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”* What will He find us doing? Will we be faithful when He comes, or will we be doing our own things in our own ways for our own benefit and be ill-prepared for the coming of our Lord?

The Bible is filled with warnings regarding how important it is that we be prepared for Christ’s return. Many parables speak of this. Let me give you two examples.

First, the parable of the talents. A rich man gave his servants different amounts of money. To one he gave five, to one he gave two and to the third he gave one talent. Then the man left on a journey. Not knowing when he would return, two of the servants did what they were supposed to do. They used the talents to create more talents for their master. But the third was lazy, so he hid his talent and did nothing to steward it. When the master returned, this man was called worthless. So instead of receiving the master’s blessing, he received judgment.

Second, the parable of the ten virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom. They needed to have oil in their lamps in preparation for the bridegroom to come at any time. Some of them did not have enough oil to last until he came. As a result, when he did come, they weren’t able to join him at that wedding feast.

These are both reminders that we need to be prepared for the coming of our Lord. His coming is more than just an eschatological event in the future. In a sense He comes to us each time we gather for worship. Jesus said in Matthew 18:20, *“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”*

So today, we’re in the presence of God. Today, in a unique way, we’re meeting God. Are we prepared? In our daily lives, are we prepared to meet Him? I need to tell you that if you are a child of God, the doctrine of justification means you are prepared to meet Him in the sense that you are in right standing with Him.

In Christ there is no condemnation for any Christ follower. The old is gone and the new has come. His love transcends any sin, and for that reason we stand as sons and daughters of the most high God. This means you and I can approach the throne of grace with confidence and the assurance of faith. But we must remember that on the day of judgment, many will believe they are in good standing—that they have been justified because of things they’ve done. But we read in Matthew 7:21–23 that on that day,

many will say, "Lord, Lord, did I not do this? Did I not do that?" And Jesus will say, "Depart from Me." This means the first part of our preparation means getting right with God according to His grace and mercy, not our own good deeds.

The Bible also speaks of a judgment for the children of God. We will pass before Him and He will determine if we are safe from His judgment. If we have called on the name of the Lord, our name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Then there's a second aspect to God's judgment, something we call the Bema Seat judgment. Here we will stand before Christ, not to determine whether or not we are His, but to determine what deeds we have done on earth for His Kingdom that merit reward. In other words, this will be when God will judge how we, in gratitude for His salvation, have lived out our lives. The Bible speaks of how some will be given crowns, but others will have their works passed through fire and nothing will be left. That's the day when many will hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." We all want to hear that.

In fact, that's a great prayer I have for you as the people in this church. I want to believe I will have prepared you, so when you come to the Bema Seat of Christ, you will hear those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." But that is not a foregone conclusion. We will only hear these words if we have lived our lives in preparation for meeting Him face to face.

So how do we prepare to meet Him? I see three things in our text that are needed for that preparation, which are the exact opposite of what the people of Israel were doing. So we'll look at their bad example to give us an idea of what we are to not do, to help us prepare for meeting our God.

Preparing to meet God involves hearing God's Word.

If we're going to be prepared to meet God, we've got to hear from Him. Notice the first words in Amos 4:1: "*Hear this word...*" This wasn't the first time God said that through Amos. He also said it in Amos 3:1 and will say it again in 5:1. Three times God told His people He had something they needed to hear.

In raw terms in the Hebrew language, God was saying to them, "Shut up and listen." It was like a parent calling their child who is either simply or rebelliously talking and not listening. "Shut your mouth and listen up." But why do we need to shut up so we can hear from God? God has something He wants to say. Three times in this chapter God said something very important to His people, but three times we're told they didn't listen.

I won't mention who, but a member of my family was asked to run some errands with me. Three times I called down to the basement where one of my sons was playing a video game. I said, "Hey, we're leaving in five minutes." "Okay, un huh." Five minutes later, "Hey, we've got to go. Time's a ticking." "Un huh. Gotcha." Third time, "This is your last call. I'm in the car and I'm leaving." I waited a couple minutes in the car, then left. Ten minutes later I got a phone call. Said child, "Where did you go? I told you I was coming." But he wasn't really listening to me. What caused him not to listen?

There are three things we need to consider that will help us listen to God.

Stop the noise.

I was competing with a video game. He had headphones on that didn't allow him to hear me clearly. There was noise in his world that didn't allow him to hear me. So one of the purposes of this illustration is that in the headphones of your life right now, when God speaks through His Holy Spirit, you need to listen. My son heard me through the noise, but he wasn't really listening closely enough to a "voice from above."

That was a small lesson for my son. The bigger lesson is that if we don't stop the noise, we won't hear from God. What are the noises blaring in the headphones of your life so that when God speaks through His Word or His Holy Spirit, you're not listening closely enough to hear Him?

There's a lot of noise in our world. There's the noise from our phones, from having the world at our fingertips because of technology and from the on-demand entertainment we have. All of this noise is keeping us from hearing God. He wants us to shut up and listen to Him. He has something important to say to us, but we will never hear it if there are other things drowning out His voice.

See the good.

The people of Israel might have listened the first time had they seen the good and realized, "Our God is speaking to us!" This is important, because all other gods we see in Scripture are mute. They don't speak. They don't have anything to say. Here the one true God was speaking to His people, but they had the audacity to say, "We have other things to think about."

The God of the universe is speaking to us as His people today, but we say our entertainments, schedules, and other relationships are more important than God. We don't see the good in the fact that the God of the universe is speaking His will and His plans to us.

We see this in marriages. Husbands, we don't listen to our wives. Our wives are full of details. If you ask a man how his day was, he'll say, "It was good." That's all that needs to be said. I know I'm generalizing here, so don't kill your pastor—I ask my wife how her day was, then she talks about the barometric pressure, the winds coming out of the northwest at six miles an hour, the birds chirping and so on. The problem is I begin to stop listening—and I'm wrong in this—but I don't think those details are that important. One time I told my wife I just don't have enough RAM. That wasn't the right thing to say!

We don't listen, because we don't think there's any value in what is being said. This was what the children of Israel were doing, but it wasn't with their spouse or their parents. It was with God—and this can be said of us as well.

Start a habit.

Listening to God doesn't happen on its own, just as it doesn't happen in a marriage relationship. We have to build lines of communication. Regarding God, we must carve out time dedicated to listening to Him. He isn't going to break through to our ears if we're filling them with other things.

God is going to say, "If you don't want to hear me, I'll give you some warnings. If you don't listen to them, then you're on your own." God told the people in Hebrews 5:11 that they had become "dull of hearing." There was wax in their ears. Because of that, they couldn't hear God. We need to do something to clean out our ears, giving God the proper space and time to speak to us.

Many times, God doesn't speak in the way we want Him to or on the timetable we expect. That means it's up to us to carve out time to give Him our attention. The people in Amos' day had not done this. Three times God said, "I'm speaking to you—I'm speaking to you—I'm speaking to you." He told them He had given them many opportunities to see His hand at work, but they did not pay attention. Because they didn't listen, He said, "*You did not return to me.*"

We will never repent of our sins and never return to God if we don't hear His clear leading and direction. Hearing God's Word is how we prepare to meet Him.

Preparing to meet God involves honoring God in worship.

Now that we've gotten past the first three words in this chapter, let's move on to honoring God in worship. Amos 4:1–3 says:

"Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, 'Bring, that we may drink!' The Lord God has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks. And you shall go out through the breaches, each one straight ahead; and you shall be cast out into Harmon," declares the Lord.

God turns His attention to the women and He calls them cows. I want to say here that today, to call someone a cow, is to be pejorative regarding their physical appearance, but that's not what God is implying. He's using a particular metaphorical idiom to communicate something eight centuries before Christ that we won't easily understand. Let me give you an example. Husbands, don't use the Song of Solomon today as your point-by-point way of complimenting your wife and her body parts. Remember what it says? "Your neck is like the tower of Lebanon." Offer that to your wife and see what happens. Tell her that her teeth are like doves and see how that works. Now, we understand that it worked well in that day based on the wife's response, but it doesn't work for us. Any chance of romance would be long gone.

What God is speaking of is not what today would be seen as pejorative. Rather, He was making a pointed statement in Amos' day. He calls the women the "cows of Bashan" which were important animals in the agricultural world. History tells us they were the most prized possession a farmer had. In other words, these cows were pampered darlings. They had everything they wanted at the expense of the other animals, because they provided the most delectable meat after they were slaughtered.

What God was saying to the women of Israel is that they had allowed themselves to be cared for in a way that put their needs above everyone around them, including the poor. Why does God specifically call out the women who were living in this sort of indulgence? God was using an ancient formula to make His point to the culture at large. It was known that as a culture was spiraling downward, the last bastion of right thinking was their women. Paul does this in Romans 1. As he was indicting the sinful world of their depravity, he ends his list by saying, "Even the women have traded the natural for the unnatural." This is the idea that when the women go the wrong way, culture is lost.

So in Amos 4, while it was definitely an indictment on the women, in a larger sense it drew in all of culture. It's as though the last bastion of hope—the women—have themselves become self-indulgent. So God spoke to the rich women of Israel, saying their lives were all about getting what they wanted, but the implication also is that they were being fattened for the slaughter. They did this by oppressing the poor and crushing the needy.

We can't honor God when we are self-indulgent.

This relates to worship because you and I will never be able to worship God if we're self-indulgent—if everything is about us. One of the great sins of the evangelical church today is that at some point we've made the church service about us instead of about God. In that sense we've turned worshipers into consumers. We now have people shopping for churches based on finding what they want.

Quite frankly, this doesn't happen in the Catholic faith or in the Eastern Orthodox faith. But when it comes to Protestant evangelicalism, we don't stick around churches very long, many times because we're looking for something that appeals to us. "Does the music do it for me? Does the preaching do it for me? Is the children's ministry good? Are the buildings what they should be?" We take the consumer approach, asking, "What does worship do for me?" instead of, "What am I doing for God in worship?"

The women in Israel could not focus on their worship to God because they were too occupied with themselves. We need to ask if our self-indulgence keeps us from seeing God in His proper place and realizing how He should be worshiped.

We can't honor God when we are self-righteous.

After addressing the self-indulgent women, God says the following concerning worship in Amos 4:4–5:

"Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel!" declares the Lord God.

Amos turns to the worshipers and, like the statements to the women of Israel, he has nothing good to say to them. Rather, he calls out the sham that their worship has become. He names two cities: Bethel and Gilgal. These were important cities in the land of Israel, but not places where God had commanded His people to worship.

Now, class, in what city in Israel did God call His people to worship? Jerusalem. Where were these people worshipping? Bethel and Gilgal. Their politics had divided the nation, so King Jeroboam decided he couldn't send his people into Judah to worship, even though the Southern Kingdom would have allowed them to come. Instead, as recorded in 1 Kings 12:32–33, Jeroboam built houses of worship in these two cities in his own nation, then told the people to worship there. Instead of obeying God, the people are obeying Jeroboam. They also begin to ask the king about some of the other gods they were beginning to embrace as secondary gods, wanting to add those idols to the place of worship as well.

So essentially God is telling them, "Go ahead. Go to Bethel and Gilgal, but the only thing you'll be doing there is sinning, which will make Me angry." The people brought their tithes, their sacrifices of thanksgiving, and their freewill offerings, because that's what they loved to do. But they were missing the point. Instead of loving God, they were loving their traditions and rituals.

It might be hard to illustrate in our churches now that we know Christ, but we might compare this to what we've done to Christmas. We love Christmas, but many of us have allowed other aspects of Christmas—which in themselves aren't bad—to become the main focus. We celebrate the cultural trappings of this holiday to the extent that we can miss the Christ of the holiday.

Essentially we may be celebrating our religious activities more than we're celebrating God Himself and that's what God was accusing the people of in Amos 4. As we read in Amos 4:13, He is the God Who *"forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought."* For people to worship anything other than God makes Him angry. So He warned them, "I'm going to bring judgment, because you're playing games with Me."

These people were self-righteous enough to choose how, when and where they would worship God, assuming He would be okay with that. They had a casual approach to Him: "You should be happy we showed up today. Who cares if You tell us we need to do things a certain way?" But God responded emphatically. Notice how He described their punishment in verse two: "*They shall take you away with hooks.*" In other words, they would be dragged away.

That prophecy was actually fulfilled when the Assyrians and Babylonians carried the two nations into exile, where they were forced to worship false gods. Later we'll see how they were commanded to bow down to the statue of a king. Sadly, they agreed to this. They didn't have enough time or energy to worship God as they should—the God Who gave them life and breath, Who had given them everything they needed and Who had been communicating with them all along.

We too are worshiping something. God has created us to be worshipers. The question we must answer is what exactly are we worshiping? You might be sitting there thinking, "I'm worshiping God." Are you just doing it when it's convenient? Do you worship Him when you haven't got anything better to do? Or maybe when you need Him to do something for you?

We too can be self-indulgent and still believe we're good with God, because we go to church, give some money, or participate in some ministry. But God may be saying to us, "Your worship is a sham, because it's more about you than it is about Me." If that's true, then we're worshiping ourselves. God's word to us might be, "Like the cows of Bashan, you're being fattened for the slaughter."

Preparing to meet God involves heeding God's warnings.

We need to hear the Word of God, we need to honor God in our worship and finally, we need to heed His warnings. In Amos 4:6–13, God identified five different circumstances and told the people, "I did these things. I don't want you to think these were chance happenings, or random weather patterns, or just bad things happening to good people. These are things I brought on you to warn you."

What did God do? He gave them a lack of bread. He withheld the rain. He caused famine, such that even when the people found something to drink, it didn't satisfy them. Verse nine says He struck them with blight and mildew, and their gardens and trees and vineyards were devoured by locusts. Pestilence came. War came so young men were killed by the sword or people were carried away by horses. The stench of decay and death filled their nostrils. God even overthrew some of them like He did Sodom and Gomorrah.

God was claiming to have done all of these calamities He spoke of in chapter three. Each time He brought them warnings, but they did not listen and did not return to Him. How stiff-necked could they be? Yet these judgments themselves were warnings of something worse that would come.

In the last couple days, for the first time in a long time, southern California experienced a 6.4 earthquake. Right away the geologists began to warn the people that it was a preview of a bigger one to come. I have to wonder how they knew that; that's way over my pay grade. But what in fact happened? About 24 hours later, a 7.1 earthquake came. And now they're saying it's possible that a larger one is yet to come. They're warning people to be prepared, to have a plan if it does arrive.

Similarly, these hardships in Amos 4:6–13 were like a 6.4 warning, or even a 7.1 event, but God was telling them, "There's a 10.5 coming—are you prepared? I've given you some pre-shocks so you'll get ready for the big one." But each time the world around them would begin to quake, they still would not listen and would not return to God. Even though God gave them time and warnings, His judgment was coming, because they would not listen.

How does that apply to us today? God is giving us warnings. Even though His people are now under mercy and grace, He's still giving us warnings. The book of Hebrews is a book dedicated to warning the people of God not to fall into spiritual neglect or distractions that would cause them to walk away from truth. How do we do this?

We heed God's warnings by looking at the examples of others.

We need to look to the examples of others which means we need to people watch. I love to do that. I hope it doesn't make me look crazy, but when I'm in a public place, I watch the people around me. Seeing how people interact can be better than television. What I'm referring to is watching people's lives, then asking, "Do I really want to walk where they're walking?"

For example, consider the lives of the celebrities. We see the positive aspects, but think of how many have multiple marriages. Many of them have heartbreaks and sorrows. Often they lose their riches and relationships. Is that sort of self-indulgent life what

you really want? My hope would be that as you watch them and see that they seem to be foolish, you would realize that's not what you want.

There are two reasons I follow Jesus Christ. Obviously because of God's grace and mercy to me, but also certain people in my life caused me to want their way of life.

- First, there were my parents. They weren't rich or famous or even highly educated. They were simple, hard-working people, yet I realized that they loved the Lord God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. I wanted that to be my life as well. I saw how strong they were in the face of trials. I saw the joys they experienced. I saw their ability to transcend situations that seemed hopeless with hope. I wanted that kind of ballast in my boat when the storms of life would come.
- The other person who influenced me strongly was my youth pastor at this church. He was a humble man who would never be known as someone great. But as I watched him, I saw how he loved his wife and children. I saw the joy he had as a man after God's own heart. I wanted to become that kind of guy. I saw the outcome of the life he lived and I wanted to experience that.

So as you watch how the ungodly live their lives, consider the outcome of that kind of living. Proverbs 14:12 says, *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."* Then look at those who live godly lives. While they might not experience everything wonderful from an earthly point of view, they're faithfully following God, experiencing His love, grace, and mercy on a daily basis.

We heed God's warnings through the exhortation of Scripture.

Are you heeding the warnings God is giving through the lives of people? Second, are you doing this through the exhortations of Scripture? There are many clear warnings in the pages of the Bible. "Don't go this way; head that way." There's a way that seems right to a man that leads to destruction, but there's also a narrow way that leads to God (Matthew 7:13-14). We need to go in that direction.

God is continually warning us in His Word, "I'm coming; are you ready to meet Me?" We can follow the examples of others—by avoiding the bad or imitating the good—and we'll either be ready to meet God or we won't. We must also heed the exhortations in the Bible to prepare ourselves so when the Son of Man comes, He will find faith on the earth.

How do we prepare to meet God? We know there's a day coming when we will stand before Him. We might think it won't happen today, so we have time to prepare. But I tell you, Sunday morning is the time you should do some of that preparation. God doesn't want us to forsake assembling together, because this helps us prepare for Him (Hebrews 10:24-25).

How prepared were you today to meet God? No, you didn't meet Him face to face, but you came with the specific purpose of worshiping Him and hearing His Word taught so you might be changed. How prepared were you? In the Badal family, preparation for Sunday can never start on Sunday. If it does, we'll be at each other's throats and nothing will be ready and we'll be late.

For us, preparation begins on Saturday so we can meet God and His people on Sunday. Our activities are modified based on what we know we'll be doing on Sunday. Saturday night is never a late night for us. Our clothes are laid out. We plan our breakfast. We get to bed early. All because we want to be prepared to meet God the next morning. Amanda and I want to show our boys how to meet God in the company of His people.

How prepared were you this morning? Were you ready, like the fertile soil Jesus talks about that's ready to receive the Word of God (Mark 4:1-20)? Were you anticipating hearing God speak this morning? Were you expecting to have an opportunity to speak into the lives of the people around you? Were you ready for that? Did you take some time away with God so you would be prepared? You cannot do that if you're running out the door frazzled and distracted on Sunday morning. How passionate were you this morning about seeing God, about being with His people? Were you thinking, "I don't have to do this—I get to do this!"

In the sporting world, fans are so excited for the actual event that they throw a party before the event even starts. We call it tailgating. Yet the people of God are often late. I don't just mean late in time, but we're late in developing any passion for being here. In sporting events we're wearing our gear. We're excited. But for many of us, we come here and we're cold as fish. "Okay, God, I'm here. Bless me. Change me. I'm not passionate, but do Your magic."

How prepared are you? How passionate are you? And finally, how much do you participate? Is this something you count on others to do for you, or is it something you're going to be part of? You came to meet God, but how did you participate in that meeting this morning? It's not just a matter of sitting back and saying, "Okay, God, I'm here. Do something for me."

Worship is our response to God for what He has done. That means we've got to work up a sweat. We need to lean into this. We need to come prepared. But let me say something important. In no way am I propping myself up regarding this, but the preacher, the worship team, and the elder who led communion are all pictures of what we should be doing.

What if I got up this morning, or Dave, or the worship team, and said, "You know what? I've got nothing for you today. I thought I was going to have time, but Saturday got away from me. I know we're in Amos. You can look at chapter four but I've got nothing. Okay, don't be a cow. That's what the text is saying." You would be shocked. "Tim, how dare you? It's your job to come prepared. I came expecting you to teach me something."

Yes, you're right. It's my job to come prepared. But is it not your job as well? Are we not all priests of God? The worship team and our elder Dave and your teaching pastor have all modeled for you that to do something well takes preparation and passion. It means we've got to actively participate in what needs to be done.

I'm speaking to you with love and mercy when I ask if you are prepared to meet your God each Sunday? If you're not prepared to meet Him on Sunday, then you will not be ready on that great Day to meet Him as you want to. God says with grace and love and mercy, "Return to Me. Heed My warnings. Hear My Word and honor Me in the worship I've called you to."

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Note: This transcription has been provided by Sermon Transcribers (www.sermontranscribers.com).