Amos 5:18-24
Trinity 23, November 8, 2026
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Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light, [19] as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. [20] Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? [21] "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. [22] Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. [23] Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. [24] But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Have you ever had "just one of those days"? You ask someone how they're doing, they say, "It's just one of those days." And you know exactly what they mean. You've had "just one of those days." For some reason, your alarm just doesn't go off. You're running late. You scramble to the bathroom to take a shower, you stub your toe on the way. You get dressed, you can't find your shoes. You grab your phone, you realize *why* your alarm didn't go off, the phone wasn't fully plugged in—it's dead. You get in the car, you spill your coffee everywhere. You fire up the engine, the check engine light comes on. You don't know whether to laugh or cry. It's "just one of those days."

We've all had days like that, a day when everything just seems to go wrong. A day when you wish you could just go right back to bed, and the only consolation is that at least tomorrow can't be any worse.

Well, what if that isn't true? What if you have "just one of those days," and it *never* gets better from there? That's the warning that our text presents us with this morning. Amos is describing **"The Day of the LORD"** and the way he makes it sound is that it **is** "**Just One of Those Days,"** where *everything* goes from bad to worse. Which strikes us as so very strange, since *we're* used to referring to the Day of the LORD as only *good* news!

That's what it is, isn't it? Good news? Doesn't Jesus say, ***"Surely I am coming soon."*** And we say, ***"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus"***? (cf. Revelation 22:20) Didn't we just sing, *"O Jesus Christ, do not delay, But hasten our salvation"*? (TLH #611:7) Our Epistle reading told us what that Day brings: ***"We will always be with the Lord."*** (1 Thessalonians 4:17) How could that be anything other than good news?! Of course, our Gospel reading showed us the other side of things, with half of those virgins shut out of the marriage feast, but aren't we going to be those with our lamps well-trimmed and burning, brought *into* the festal hall? This is all supposed to be *good news* for us!

Except in our reading from Amos, this is not good news at all! ***"Why would you have the day of the LORD?"*** Amos writes. ***"It is darkness, and not light."*** He goes on to describe it as "just one of those days," like you step out of the car one evening and suddenly there's a lion jumping out from behind the corner of the house. You run around the building and there's a bear there waiting for you. You scramble into the house, slam the door, and panting, lean against the wall and a serpent bites your hand. Everything going from bad to worse, and Amos says that's *exactly* what the Day of the LORD is like. ***"Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?"***

This is *not* good news. And Amos is addressing a people of Israel, who, like us, expected the Day of the

Lord to be *only* good news! But, according to Amos, it's not. It's darkness. It's judgment. And Amos is biting in his rebuke. He's got a sharp tongue, and his prophecy has a sharp edge. And so, he tells the people, "You want the day of the LORD? Yeah, the Day of the LORD is coming for you, just you wait." ***"Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!"***

Well, what's going on here? Amos is prophesying to the people of *Israel*, that is the northern ten tribes of the Kingdom of Israel, as opposed to the southern two tribes of the Kingdom of Judah. Israel had, as its great enemy of the time, the formidable nation of Assyria to their north. But at *this* moment, Assyria has withdrawn and kind of regrouped. They'll be coming back in full force in just a couple decades, but at *this* time, they're back home licking their wounds and they're *not* warring against Israel. And with the pressure off, Israel has begun to flourish once more. The people are saying that it's like the days of Solomon again, everything is so great, so prosperous, and they're certain that it is because God is *happy* with them.

But even in the midst of their prosperity, they're engaging in all sorts of treachery against their fellow man. They're using the wrong measures in the market and robbing one another. They're not taking care of the poor, in fact, they're engaging in human trafficking. They're selling the poor for a pair of sandals, Amos says. They're adding the chaff back into the wheat that they sell to bulk it up and defraud their neighbor. (cf. 8:4-6) They are acting unjustly and enslaving their neighbors.

And so, God asks, "Is *this* the family that was once *denied justice* and *enslaved* in Egypt? The family that *I rescued* from oppression and slavery?" (cf. Amos 3:1) Because if that's the case, then they must also seek to do justice for their neighbor and take care of the poor and *free* those in bondage. If they have received grace, they *must also* have grace to give! But instead, they do the opposite. They go through all the *motions* of worship, but their Sabbath life is *totally* disconnected from their weekday life. And that's why God says, ***"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offering of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen."***

So, there's the background. And again, in all of this, Israel's mindset is, "Look at how great everything is! The rich keep getting richer! Surely God is well pleased with us! Let the Day of the LORD come!" But for them the Day of the LORD would be ***"darkness, and not light."***

So, what's *our* takeaway from all of this? That *they're* the six foolish virgins who didn't bring any oil for their lamps, and *we're* the ones ready and prepared for the Day to come? No, I don't think so. Instead, I need to listen in on this stern rebuke against the people of Israel and ask, "What's *my* life like?" Is my life on a Sunday morning a total stranger to my life the other six days of the week? Do I happily receive such great grace from God and then *withhold* any sort of grace from my neighbor?

If so, then Amos is speaking to me when he says, "You want the day of the Lord? Here's the day of the Lord. It's not going to be light. It's going to be darkness. It's going to be 'just one of those days' where you're running away from a lion. 'Good, I got away from the lion.' Well, then a bear gets you. You escape to a house. You put your hand on the wall and a serpent bites you. That's the kind of day it's going to be when the Lord has His way with you, and He is not happy."

And here's the thing about this Day of the LORD as Amos describes it. When I have "just one of those days," I can easily dismiss it as a run of bad luck, as if there was such a thing. But *this* Day of the LORD, *God* is the one in control of this. That's the thing about this—God is the one who is in control of all this, and it's going from bad to worse. And there are other examples in the Bible like this, where God is in control, and the people of Israel are experiencing "just one of those days," "just one of those months," "just one of those years," where everything goes from bad to worse. In fact, He reminded them of some of those days in just the previous chapter (cf. Amos 4:6-11):

- God recalled the time He sent famine to them, a ***"lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to Me."***
- A time when He sent rain to one city yet withheld it from theirs, rain on one field yet withheld it from theirs, ***"Yet you did not return to Me."***
- A time when He struck them with blight and locusts that devoured their vineyards and their groves, ***"Yet you did not return to Me."***
- A time when He allowed their men to be killed by the sword, horses carried away, ***"Yet you did not return to Me."***
- A time when He overthrew them like Sodom and Gomorrah, ***"Yet you did not return to Me."***

All of these days, when just nothing went right, these days of judgment—the *LORD* was in control of those days. But did you catch the recurring theme? ***"You did not return to Me."*** Whenever the Lord sends judgment, it is *with the goal* that His people return to Him, humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may *exalt* them in due time. (cf. 1 Peter 5:6) And whenever the LORD warns you with strong and sharp and cutting words like the words of Amos, it is with the goal that *you* return to Him, humbling yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt *you* in due time.

Israel, they wouldn't get it. And they would eventually respond to Amos by beating him and mortally wounding him and driving him out of their country, and then he would die. And because they did not return to the LORD, dark days of judgment came upon them. Less than twenty years later, in 722 BC, the Assyrians would return, and everything would go from bad to worse. Dark judgment at the hand of the LORD, and the lights *permanently* went out in Israel.

One-hundred fifty years later, the same warnings were sent to the southern Kingdom of Judah, and *they* would fail to return to the LORD. And in 587 BC, the Babylonians would descend on Judah, and everything would go from bad to worse. Dark judgment at the hand of the LORD, and the lights went out in Judah as well.

Now, in truth, the problem for both Judah and Israel was not *just* that they were defrauding their neighbors or practicing empty worship. Those were both just symptoms of the *main* problem which is that they had ceased following the LORD in favor of other gods. Or, rather, they figured they could still worship the LORD while also serving other gods in their hearts. *Because* they had rejected the God of grace, they had no grace to give to their neighbors. *Because* they were serving other gods, the Lord rejected the so-called "worship" that they offered to Him.

And in those dark days of judgement that He sent on His people, it was to remind them of who He was. He was not to be taken lightly, and His warnings were not to be taken lightly.

C.S. Lewis, in his series *"The Chronicles of Narnia,"*—which, as you might know, he wrote as this great allegory for Scripture—he describes this conversation in one of his books that is held between the Pevensie children and Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, who are actual, talking beavers. And the beavers are telling the children about Aslan, this great lion who is the king of Narnia that they don't know anything about just yet. And the children are *intrigued* to hear about Aslan, but they're also fearful because, well, he's a lion. And they ask the beavers, *"Is he—quite safe?"* And Mr. Beaver replies, *"Safe? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe! But he is good."*

And our LORD proved all of this to be true of Himself when darkness and judgement descended again some 600 years later, in 30 A.D. On a Friday. Good Friday. That day could *maybe* be described as "just one of those days." Jesus had all these followers, they all proclaimed they would not deny Him. But when it came time for Jesus to be arrested, they all ran away. Peter was questioned in the courtyard about knowing Jesus, and three times Peter denied it. Denied *Jesus*. None of them are around during the beating and the whipping and the mocking and the scourging. And then hanging there on the cross, with His skin torn, body scraping up against that wooden cross, Jesus was forsaken, abandoned by His own Father. It was "just one of those days."

And yet, that's just it. It's "just one of those days," just one of those dark days that saves you. Of all the different judgment days that are found in Scripture, "just *one* of those days" is necessary for salvation. The day on which Jesus died is just that day. On that day, God Himself, who is bringing the judgment, entered into the judgment. Jesus entered into *God's* judgment for you and me. He plunged into that darkness. He felt the serpent's bite. And Jesus gave up His life in order that you might have life.

And you need just that one day to know that you are the LORD's, and to know that He is with you. Many think that once you become a Christian and start going to church that everything should be just great in your life. That if God is happy with you then your life should be happy too. But that's not how it works. God tells us in His Word that not everything goes the way that we plan it.

But when things don't happen the way that we think they should, when you're having "just one of those days," and you get the sense that maybe God is against you, when everything is just falling apart… when that happens, just hold on to that one day. Hold on to just that *one* day, because just one of those days is sufficient for your salvation.

And one of *these* days, Jesus will return. Having conquered that *first* Day of the LORD, He will return with "***justice roll[ing] down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."*** And so, we can wait for it, and we can even *long* for it. With repentant joy, let's look forward to that next great Day of the LORD. ***"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."*** (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) Thanks be to God, in Jesus' saving name. Amen.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) Amen.