**Going through the Motions**

**(Amos 5:1-26)**

**Yearly Theme: *“Joy is…”***

**Series Title: *Joy in Correction***

**May 17th, 2020**

***Something to think about:***

We all know what it’s like to “go through the motions;” to mindlessly wander from thing to thing, activity to activity, without much thought or mental acuity. We know what it’s like to go through the morning routines and daily monotonies emotionless and robotic-like.

That is, at least we used to know.

Since we’ve been forced to stay at home, all our routines and monotonies have been disrupted. We haven’t been able to go on with business as usual. Instead, we’ve been thrown into a tailspin of worry, anxiety, and just flat out fear of the future.

Maybe that’s what we’ve needed! Maybe, just maybe, we’ve needed a disruption in our routines to wake us up to the realities of the world around us. Maybe we’ve needed an interruption into our daily life-cycles. Maybe God has been trying to get our attention for so long, that it took something like this to awaken us to the reality of His presence and purposes.

Though there is a natural tendency for the human *soul* to drift, there is also a tendency for the *church* (God’s people) to drift. It’s subtle at first. Just a micro degree off course. But, then, without notice, we’re adrift in a sea of challenges, worldviews, opinions, empty philosophies, and high-sounding nonsense that confuse and distort the truth so much that we don’t know right from wrong. It’s at this point that we’re at the mercy of a plethora of voices vying for our attention, all of whom have captivating and convincing arguments for their case.

However, the One, most important, voice we should be listening to is the One we’ve forgotten.

Today, we look at the Old Testament book of Amos. Amos is a short, 9 chapter book written by the prophet Amos to the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos is writing during a time when the nation of Israel is full of wealth and prosperity, full of military might and conquest, but also full of pride and arrogance. Having drifted so far from God, and lost their moorings as the people of God, Israel is merely living on borrowed time. God has been patient with their foolishness and sinful behavior, having warned them over and over again, but now judgment is about to fall, and Amos is God’s messenger. Let’s take a closer look:

**Turn in your Bible to: *Amos 5:1-27***

**Key Point*: “God desires our heart more than He desires our offerings.”***

What had the nation of Israel done that was so worthy of punishment and judgment by God? Let’s take a look:

1. **They repeatedly chosen the ways of the world over and against God’s way.**

The founding fathers of the United States knew what it was like for nations and people to drift; they and their ancestors had experienced this for centuries under various monarchs, but they also knew they needed to start somewhere. So, where did they start? They started by writing our founding documents, as rooted in Judeo-Christian teachings, from the Bible. They knew that the freest and most prosperous nation could only exist by a people whose faith was rooted in God and whose life was lived by His Word; without that, a nation and its people would ultimately crumble.

1. **They chose a self-pleasing worship of God rather than a God-honoring worship.**

Has this become our tendency as well? Have we forgotten the meaning and purpose of our gathering together? Has our focus drifted to what makes us more comfortable and happy rather than what honors God and truly pleases Him? Maybe it’s taken something like a pandemic to get our attention; maybe it’s taken a “full-stop” in our everyday processes to see clearly, to evaluate fully, and to check our motives in doing what we do as a church. Maybe it’s truly time to get back to the real heart of worship: *God, and nothing more.*

***Something to take home:***

Here’s the point: Until our heart and our passion is God alone, we continue to merely tread water at best, or sink and drown at worst.

I don’t want to be found by God merely treading water anymore. I don’t want to stay off course; do you? Let’s resolve today to place God, not only at the center of our hearts and attentions, but also in the center of our focus as a church.

**Key Point*: “God desires our heart more than He desires our offerings.”***