Amos 8:1-8 God deeply loves the people we are ignoring.

Scripture:
 Amos 8:1–8 This is what 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.” Then the Lord said to me, “The end has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass by them. The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day,” declares the Lord God. “So many dead bodies!” “They are thrown everywhere!” “Silence!” Hear this, you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end, saying, “When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances, that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and sell the chaff of the wheat?” The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: “Surely, I will never forget any of their deeds. Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who dwells in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?” [[1]](https://usc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fencountertrinity-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fmcolaw_encountertrinity_com%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F407e0e689006453fac989b2f999bf6a7&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=b135c292-6765-4524-b347-2d95873fd5e6.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=en-us&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&usid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=TeamsModern&muv=v1&to=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&ats=ParentFrame&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft365.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-MAGLEV.p2p_ns.rwc.content&wdhostclicktime=1752973990673&afdflight=5&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ftn1)

At our last Sent Service, several of us committed to walk through our neighborhoods and praying over our neighbors. I have had a few conversations with people and it’s interesting how even something as simple as a walk can change how you think about the people that live in the homes you are walking by. Think of the homes up and down your street. How many others are struggling with loneliness, mental health, financial stress, parenting concerns, and even addictions? To have a heart that wants to see the people who aren’t in your sphere and care for them is so rare!

Let’s break down this text:

Amos 8:1-2a “This is what 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.”

* “Summer fruit” is a phrase representing the final harvest and the end of the growing season. “A basket of summer fruit” means you are holding the last of the produce.

Amos 8:2b-3 “Then the Lord said to me, ‘The end has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass by them. The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day,’ declares the Lord God. ‘So many dead bodies!’ ‘They are thrown everywhere!’ ‘Silence!’”

* God tells Amos in this vision of “a basket of summer fruit” that he is going to stop blessing His people. Think of a church that had spirit filled amazing days, but the “spiritual bounty” has run out and God won’t refill it. But why?

Amos 8:4-8 “Hear this, you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end, saying, ‘When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah (e-fa)small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances, that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and sell the chaff of the wheat?’ The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: ‘Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who dwells in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?’”

* Blind arrogance surrounded this ancient church. God is withdrawing His blessing and presence from their worship not merely because they failed in religious routines but because their hearts had grown indifferent to the lost, poor, and marginalized right around them. True worship always overflows into love and justice (Micah 6:8). We should always be looking around in the church and ask. Who is here? Who is welcome? Who are we making space for?

The Gospel:

Let’s look at the Gospel of Jesus as the example.

The Roman military was brutal.

Many conquered people groups had their young men forced into the Roman military through conscription or economic coercion. It was a brilliant and cruel tactic. Rome promised the families that 20-25 years of service would give them the rights and privileges of being Roman.

What did Rome do with forced soldiers? Sent them to the bloodiest and worst parts of war. Most never survived and their families were left in even deeper poverty and dependence on Rome. On the off chance that someone actually did survive they were given the worst roles to finish off their career as soldiers. One of those roles would have been torturing and dealing with the dead bodies at the crucifixion. The worst part. It wouldn’t be uncommon for an auxiliary, non-citizen soldier to be assigned to his own home area.

Ready for this… This meant the guys working the cross were forced to crucify their own people. This left the older beat-up crucifixion soldiers hated by their own people and turned into heartless monsters. It’s likely these soldiers were internally as dead as the bodies they pulled off the cross.

Though it isn’t recorded in the canonized Bible, church history says one of these soldiers was named Longinus (Long-g-nus).[[2]](https://usc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fencountertrinity-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fmcolaw_encountertrinity_com%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F407e0e689006453fac989b2f999bf6a7&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=b135c292-6765-4524-b347-2d95873fd5e6.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=en-us&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&usid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=TeamsModern&muv=v1&to=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&ats=ParentFrame&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft365.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-MAGLEV.p2p_ns.rwc.content&wdhostclicktime=1752973990673&afdflight=5&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ftn2)

It’s true the connection isn’t Biblical but plausible and based on historical documents and church tradition.

A low-ranking auxiliary soldier.

His story is likely very similar to other economically driven or conscripted into the military. History says this throwaway soldier with vision problems was given the role of finishing off the tortured victims of Rome. It’s also likely he too wasn’t Roman and was assigned to kill off the very people from the community he was in. I can’t imagine the level of ridicule, rejection, disappointment and pain this soldier felt. As church history says one day he was assigned to crucifying three criminals. Two of them were dying too slowly so he broke their legs with a hammer to cause suffocation. The third man on the cross he came to appeared to already be dead. Making sure it was true, he grabbed a spear and thrust it into the side of this man they called Jesus. When the blood and water burst from him it covered his face, restoring his vision. When he wiped away the blood of Jesus he proclaimed something that will be recorded forever in history.

Mark 15:39 “And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he[*8*](https://usc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fencountertrinity-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fmcolaw_encountertrinity_com%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F407e0e689006453fac989b2f999bf6a7&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=b135c292-6765-4524-b347-2d95873fd5e6.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=en-us&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&usid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=TeamsModern&muv=v1&to=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&ats=ParentFrame&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft365.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-MAGLEV.p2p_ns.rwc.content&wdhostclicktime=1752973990673&afdflight=5&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ftn3) breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” [[3]](https://usc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fencountertrinity-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fmcolaw_encountertrinity_com%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F407e0e689006453fac989b2f999bf6a7&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=b135c292-6765-4524-b347-2d95873fd5e6.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=en-us&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&usid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=TeamsModern&muv=v1&to=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&ats=ParentFrame&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft365.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-MAGLEV.p2p_ns.rwc.content&wdhostclicktime=1752973990673&afdflight=5&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ftn4)

Even in death Jesus was seeing, healing and calling to himself those hated and marginalized not only by Rome, but by the Jews themselves.

Next Steps:

Jesus is the fulfillment of what God was whispering into Amos’s heart. We must see the people around us! From the Old to the New Testament, this is the heart of God. It was the final act of healing Jesus did on this planet.

Let’s reflect on some questions:

Do we know the people on our church’s “doorstep?” Especially the marginalized?

Are we working to bring the kingdom of God to them?

Would the people around us, especially the marginalized, miss us if we no longer existed?

Here is the great news! Our church has a wonderful track record of continually recalibrating towards this.

Everywhere we have done this God has blessed it.

* Garfield Park downtown was a slowly dying church. When we hit pause on the ministry and re-aimed it at the community, what happened? It took on new life!
* Fall Creek, which is now our Olio Rd location, was in a huge slump. We hit pause and relaunched it fully aiming at those who live around the church. It’s now currently our fastest growing location.
* When we launched One Church in Westfield with Andy, we purposefully designed it from the ground up to reach out to those right around that location. The target demographic was literally the families at the high school across the street.
* Even when I first arrived at Trinity there wasn’t only a hunger for God, there was a willingness to hit pause and rebuild from the ground up a ministry aimed at the mission of God.
* We must always be willing to hit pause and make sure we are aiming at the people around us with the heart of God! Or we will, as Amos would say, “eat the last of the summer fruit”. Far too many churches die on the words of “what about me?”

Here is the million dollar question we must always be asking...

Do we really want the miracles, power, presence, and transformative work of God? I know where it’s at.

Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

Matthew 25:37-40 “Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

[[1]](https://usc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fencountertrinity-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fmcolaw_encountertrinity_com%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F407e0e689006453fac989b2f999bf6a7&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=b135c292-6765-4524-b347-2d95873fd5e6.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=en-us&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&usid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=TeamsModern&muv=v1&to=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&ats=ParentFrame&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft365.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-MAGLEV.p2p_ns.rwc.content&wdhostclicktime=1752973990673&afdflight=5&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ftnref1) [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/Am8.1-8;esv). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016.

[[2]](https://usc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fencountertrinity-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fmcolaw_encountertrinity_com%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F407e0e689006453fac989b2f999bf6a7&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=b135c292-6765-4524-b347-2d95873fd5e6.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=en-us&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&usid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=TeamsModern&muv=v1&to=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&ats=ParentFrame&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft365.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-MAGLEV.p2p_ns.rwc.content&wdhostclicktime=1752973990673&afdflight=5&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ftnref2) Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.7

[*8*](https://usc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fencountertrinity-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fmcolaw_encountertrinity_com%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F407e0e689006453fac989b2f999bf6a7&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=b135c292-6765-4524-b347-2d95873fd5e6.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=en-us&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&usid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=TeamsModern&muv=v1&to=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&ats=ParentFrame&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft365.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-MAGLEV.p2p_ns.rwc.content&wdhostclicktime=1752973990673&afdflight=5&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ftnref3) Some manuscripts insert *cried out and*

[[3]](https://usc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fencountertrinity-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fmcolaw_encountertrinity_com%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2F407e0e689006453fac989b2f999bf6a7&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=b135c292-6765-4524-b347-2d95873fd5e6.0&uih=teams&uiembed=1&wdlcid=en-us&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&usid=d0633267-a412-4437-90b8-df1d60ac1787&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=TeamsModern&muv=v1&to=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com&accloop=1&sdr=6&scnd=1&sat=1&ats=ParentFrame&rat=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&halh=1&hch=1&hmh=1&hwfh=1&hsth=1&sih=1&unh=1&onw=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft365.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=TEAMS-MAGLEV.p2p_ns.rwc.content&wdhostclicktime=1752973990673&afdflight=5&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ftnref4) [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Mk15.39&off=5&ctx=top+to+bottom.+39%C2%A0c%EF%BB%BF~And+when+the+centuri) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mk 15:39.