

# *Jilted Love*

*Bible Reading:*

*Amos 2: 6-16*

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They began to notice that she just wasn't the same.

Sue had been pouring their coffee for the last 10 years every Thursday morning at the neighborhood bar & grill. But the last two weeks she was so quiet, mouth pulled tight. Didn't she even seem to walk a bit slower between the closely packed tables? During a lull in business, while topping up with a splash, Freda asked - "You ok?"

And out it came - Sue's boyfriend had left. They'd been together almost 5 years, and had been making noises about getting married. She'd begun to dream of building a home together, maybe even children. Till the phone call - he didn't want to see her anymore..... at least not for now.... needed space..... to think.

No matter how hard she tried to hide it - no doing. It was devastating.

Some of you can identify.

Perhaps because you've been dropped, hard, somewhere along the way.

Or let down.

Disappointed.

By someone you love dearly.

And you know, oh so desperately well how you know, that the worst hurts a person can experience, the deepest disappointments, the most devastating betrayals are the ones committed by those closest to you.

We don't lose even a wink of sleep over the fact that the Prime Minister never calls us.

It may bother us for 3 minutes when the gas bar attendant snarls at us.

We have no connection of the heart with them.

### **BUT**

When someone crosses you or lets you down, and you have invested yourself in that person, it cuts deep.

If no strings have been tied from your heart to someone else's, then there are none that can be broken, none that can be ripped out and cause great pain.

But when your heart *is* tied to someone else's, for them to wrestle against that tie, or to try and sever the connection,

or burn it,

can hurt like almost nothing else in life.

When I talk with senior citizens, people that have lived through a lot -  
the Great Depression,

War,

Immigration

what strikes me again and again is that the thing that cuts deeper and hurts longer and leaves a bigger scar than anything else....

.....is when their children lash out against them, rebel, or disown them.

Now -- why make this point?

Because this whole dynamic of relationships gets right at the heart of the passage we read.

If you understand how treachery between those who have loved cuts far deeper than treachery between strangers --

– if you understand that -

then you will understand the motivation for Amos 2 - actually, for all of Amos.

The cry through the lips of the prophet is the cry of One who has been wounded in this deep, inner, very personal sort of way.

It is the cry of God;

the cry of the Heavenly Father  
Father of Israel  
who is slapped in the face,  
disowned,  
scorned,  
rejected by **His** spiritual children.

Israel's story is one of Amazing Grace, chapter after chapter of amazing grace..

Want to read about it in poetry? Read Psalm 104 and 105..

Rather read the story version - the account? Read Exodus, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles.

There are the blessings of daily care – a well-watered creation, animals, food in the fields – the common daily graces of God.

Beyond that -

Extracting a rag-tag group of foreign slaves out of the Egyptian empire, and applying to them blessings that had been promised to their forefather Abraham.

As Psalm 105 says:

*“He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no one faltered....  
He spread out a cloud as a covering, and a fire to give light at night. They asked, and he brought them quail and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and water gushed out.... He gave them the lands of the nations, and they fell heir to what others had toiled for....”*

Samuel, Saul, David, Hezekiah.....

As you read through the Old Testament and take in the history of the nation of Israel you can't help but be struck by the number of times, again and again, that God comes through for them in the pinch.

You can't help but be struck by the amazing opportunities and blessings with which God deluges his people.

Generation after generation He keeps on coming through for them.

He remains, as it were, like a faithful bridegroom committed to the marriage covenant.

He gives, and gives and gives and gives.....  
again and again and again.

*for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. (Lev 26)*

That was the original promise God made.

And He stuck to that promise.

But now, in the face of that kind of stick-with-it, determined, from-the-heart, deep divine Love flooding from Heaven's Throneroom onto the Hebrew nation, still

- for some bizarre reason -

they kept ripping at the heart strings that tied them to the Lord.

They kept stretching and bruising them; breaking trust; committing spiritual adultery by directing most of their energy, passion, attention and commitment to forces, objects, people, institutions and lifestyles

.....to just about **anything**, it seemed,

anything **other** than the Living God, the Supreme Lord of all Creation, the One in whose hands are eternal life and eternal death.

They snubbed **Him**, dealt treacherously with **Him**.

Till finally God says, "**ENOUGH!**"

*"For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath..."*

And the listing begins; the catalogue of sins, the multitude of times that Israel had violated the love covenant, the heart-to-heart relationship that God in his amazing gracious goodness had gone out of His way to establish with them.

- *They sell the righteous*
- *They trample on the heads of the poor*
- *Father and son use the same girl*
- *They drink wine taken as fines*

So the accounting begins, chapter after chapter of it.

It's important to notice that for each one of the seven nations who had been on the receiving end of God's judging prophecy in chapters 1 & 2,

for each of them there is only **ONE** great sin mentioned. Just one. Even though there must have been many more, only one is brought to the forefront.

But for Israel it is different. Everything is dragged out and laid on the table.

Notice that difference.

Let it sink in.

Because it's important.

Can you figure out why the difference between the treatment of Israel and the other nations?

It has everything to do with the dynamic I explained earlier.

While the sins of the other nations were serious and would result in devastating judgement from God, it didn't have the same searing effect on the heart of God as does the sin of Israel --

for here was the people of His choice

the apple of His eye

His covenant family

and **they** behaved just like all the others.

**They** behaved as though they had never known Him;

Like a child treating her parents as though they were strangers in a crowd - ignoring and spiting them.

And God cries out through the prophet's voice -

*"How could you do this?! How could you?!"*

*Look at it. This... and this... and this... and this...*

*Wake up!!*

*How could you?!"*

*"I destroyed the Amorite before you....*

*I brought you up out of Egypt....*

*I led you forty years in the desert...*

*I raised up prophets....*

*Is this not true, people of Israel?"*

Understand the point -- while God takes exception to sin no matter where it is found, and will judge it, it is **most** painful and treated with **greatest** severity when it comes at home, within the community of faith.

When those within the household of faith, those who have tasted the new wine of the Love of God in their life --

– when **they** deliberately misuse that relationship, treat God and His amazing grace love as so much flea market jewelry  
-- **that** is treated with double seriousness.

For God looks down, aghast, and says, "**How could you?**"

Is it that God can't forgive?  
Are we seeing a divine vindictive streak at work in Amos 2?  
Absolutely not.

The Bible is very blunt about the sinfulness, time and again, of Israel.  
It is **also** very blunt about God's response to sinful ways repented -  
When someone screws up, sins – and then turns back in repentance God shows Himself always, I repeat **always**, willing to forgive --  
– actually, more willing to forgive than they were to repent!

God won't squash people the moment they fall into sin.  
God doesn't condemn people going through intense but real spiritual conflict or confusion or pain, and who in that time temporarily wander away. He's got all kinds of patience and time and care for such.  
Remember this other prophecy:  
*"A bruised reed he will not break;  
a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.."* (Isa 42)

But when we wander away deliberately, and live a lifestyle that flaunts and misuses the love and blessings which God sends our way;  
when we have tasted the fruits of forgiveness in Jesus Christ, and have been accepted into the family of God, when we claim the name "child of God" but don't show that in the way we live;  
when instead our behaviour drags God's name through the mud, and our supposed faith makes no discernable difference on our lives - on our thoughts, words and deeds -  
and this goes on week after month after year

When **this** happens,  
we had better not kid ourselves.

We had better be clear, very clear about what is at stake.

We are not dealing with some senile old grandfather figure;  
He's not some "man upstairs" who just sits back and watches our lives with a senile smile on His face.

God is passionate.  
God is powerful.  
God has plenty of love to give us...  
God will, however, not tolerate anyone invading the space in our lives that was meant to be filled by Him.

And for those who deliberately flaunt His love, there is going to come a time when His divine fist will come down on the table  
- hard -  
and He will declare, "**ENOUGH!**"

God's love isn't anything like that cheap, anemic form of love that has been popularized in Western society today -  
- that sort of here today, but tomorrow fading out because of distractions by someone else who sends a slightly higher voltage shooting down the spinal column.  
That's **NOT** God's love.

The love that comes from heaven to earth, that seeks us out and attaches itself to us, that envelops our lives and calls to us is a powerful love, a stick-with-it love, an eternal love.

It is serious, passionate love.

How serious?

Serious enough that the Son of God, was willing to leave heaven and all His security and honour and splendour,

become a human being

and take on His shoulders our sins.

How passionate?

Passionate enough to leave heaven for a manger.

Passionate enough to abdicate a holy throne for blood sweat in a garden.

Passionate enough to endure nails ripping flesh.

Passionate enough to remain firm, even when abandoned by heaven.

The serious, passionate love of Jesus.

The love that sent tears rolling down holy cheeks:

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! (Luke 13:34)*

Are we?

Willing, I mean?

Consider your wallet - spending priorities.... what comes first?

Consider your daytimer - who gets your best moments?

Consider your relationships - does a person's faith matter when you or your children consider potential life partners?

Consider what your work associates, classmates or neighbors see - can they tell that Jesus is your first love?

Or you fade into the masses?

Would the picture of our response to the Lord be best drawn as a huge yawn?

....."Whatever....."

The serious, passionate love of God in Jesus Christ now stares us in the face

beckons us

wooing us

as we prepare to head out into a new week.

The love that promises to envelope us and care for us.

The love that will settle for nothing less than everything;

every part of us.

The love that will **NOT** play second fiddle to anyone or anything.

Not in the life of Israel.

Or in your life.

Or in mine.

It is this love that swallowed up John Wesley, and led him to write this prayer.

As we prepare to head into a new week, I challenge you to make it your prayer.

*I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
Exalted for thee or brought low by thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
Let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.*

- John Wesley's Covenant Prayer