

Question 1:

From the video, how would you define the biblical word transgression?

Question 2:

Let's take a moment to reflect on our own experience of being betrayed or having someone break our trust. Is there a particular moment or situation that comes to mind? What is the feeling associated with this experience?

AMOS 2:4-10 NAS

4 Thus says the Lord, "For three transgressions of Judah and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept His statutes; Their lies also have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked.

5 So I will send fire upon Judah and it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem." 6 Thus says the Lord, "For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they sell the righteous for money and the needy for a pair of sandals. 7 These who pant after the very dust of the earth on the head of the helpless also turn aside the way of the humble; and a man and his father resort to the same girl in order to profane My holy name.

8 On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar, and in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined. 9 "Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, though his height was like the height of cedars and he was strong as the oaks; I even destroyed his fruit above and his root below.

10 It was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, and I led you in the wilderness forty years that you might take possession of the land of the Amorite.

Here the prophet Amos accuses the Israelites of "three, even four transgressions" against Yahweh their God. Notice that the behavior he describes is a violation of the covenant terms that Israel agreed to at Mount Sinai. They reject the Torah, fail to keep God's laws, and allow injustice against the poor and oppressed. Amos is not just saying these are bad things, though that's true. They are acts of betrayal against the promise they made to God. In the wider context of Amos 1-2, he targets violent war crimes of Israel's neighbors, and he calls these "transgressions." In Amos' view of God and the world, acts against other people are actually acts against God himself.

QUESTION 1

In what way do you think betrayal of trust against another human is transgression against God?

QUESTION 2

Prophets like Amos often stood up and called out the breaking of trust that they saw in and around them. How does this idea resonate with you?

PSALM 32 NAS

A Psalm of David. A Maskil.

1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!

2 How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!

3 When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.

6 Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him.

7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; you surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

9 Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you.

10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness shall surround him.

11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

This poem is a celebration of God's mercy and forgiveness for people who have broken his trust. Along with many other biblical words for sin, David uses the word "transgression" two times to describe how he betrayed God (vv. 1 and 5). But he also knows that God will never reject someone who is willing to name their failures and acts of betrayal and ask for forgiveness. Owning up to our failures is one thing, but to confess how we have violated someone's trust--that's pretty humiliating. But David warns us not to be like a stubborn mule who resists anything difficult. God's mercy and love are available to those who are willing to trust him to forgive, even those who betray him.

QUESTION 1

Take a moment to reflect on the ways you have broken someone else's trust, whether it's a friend, a family member, or someone you don't have a relationship with but failed to honor as someone made in the image of God.

QUESTION 2

Read Psalm 32 as your own meditation, confessing your transgression and choosing to trust that God forgives those who betray him.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21 NAS

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Paul explains to the Christians in Corinth that it is the generous love of the Messiah that wakes him up every day and compels him to travel, talk to people about Jesus, and start new churches. He's convinced that following Jesus is how we begin to experience the power of the new creation. And it's all a gift! He describes God as someone who doesn't hold our acts of betrayal (that is, our transgressions) against us. Rather, God wants to be reconciled to those who have wronged him, and that's what God accomplished through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

QUESTION 1

What could it look like for love of the Messiah to compel us to share God's message of reconciliation?

QUESTION 2

How else could you play a role in healing the violations of trust that have happened in your city or in your family?