

November 3, 2013 Sermon Application handout

“It’s Crouching at the Door”

Amos 4

I. Introduction

1. Before you begin, take time to pray and ask God to help you to guard your heart by helping you to place your focus not on the things of this world but on Christ, who is seated at the right hand of the Father. Ask God to help you guard your heart by remembering that your life is now hidden with Christ in God, you are no longer your own—you’ve been bought at a price.
2. Review your lesson in Amos from last week. What was the social and economic climate at this time? What were some of the transgressions Israel was indicted for? Did Israel repent of those transgressions? What eventually happened to Israel as a consequence?
3. Read Amos 4. Make some general observations. Who is Amos addressing now? What had they done? What phrase does Amos use that indicates whether or not these people had repented?

II. Sin is Self-D_____ (vv. 1-3)

4. In verse 1, Amos uses the phrase “Cows of Bashan” to describe a certain class of women who lived in Bashan, just east of the Sea of Galilee. Read Jeremiah 50:19; Micah 7:14; Ezekiel 39:18; and Psalm 22:12. What can you discern Bashan was known for? In light of that, who are the cows of Bashan—rich pampered ladies or poor widows?
5. How did the “Cows of Bashan” treat the poor and the needy? What role did their husbands play in order to support their wives lifestyle (cf. Amos 2:6-7; 5:11-12; 8:4-6)?
6. Amos uses the Hebrew word ‘*adon*’ which means master or lord? Is that the behavior they were exhibiting with their wives? Why or why not?

7. Israel was exhibiting a mindset known as “hedonism” which argues that pleasure is the only intrinsic good.¹ According to Philippians 3:19, how is this described? What is its focus on? What is its god? What is its shame? What does it have its mind set on? What is its aim?

8. How were the people of Samaria succumbing to hedonism or the sin of self-indulgence? In what specific ways are you tempted to succumb to the same thing? What have you done about it?

9. What did God declare to these people in Amos 4:2-3? Was this declaration enough to put the fear of God in these people? Did they repent and begin to pursue a righteous lifestyle? Did this judgment come to pass (2 Kings 17:5-6)? How does Amos describe them leaving the city of Samaria, joyful or...?”

10. It is amazing to think about what one will give up for their sin of pleasure. What are some observations you have made with regard to this? Do you recognize the strong grip sin can have on one’s life? Do you think sin is something we all have a tendency to underestimate? Why or why not?

11. Read Proverbs 4:20-27; Colossians 3:1-5; and 2 Timothy 2:22. In light of what we have learned so far, how might a Christian begin to guard their heart against self-indulgent sin? What should be the motivation behind pursuing a righteous path (Matt. 22:37)?

III. Sin is Self-D_____ (2:4-5)

12. Do you know what a parody is? Read Psalms 95:6; 96:8-9; and 100:2-4. What would the priests in that day call the worshippers to do? In like manner what is Amos calling Israel to do but with mockery?

¹ Hedonism, 2—4—4-20, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

13. Why in the world would Amos call these people to come to a place of worship and enthusiastically call them to transgress? Especially in light of the fact that everything in their life looked clean on the outside? After all, Israel was very religious (they celebrated the festivals) and they also went to the temple on a regular consistent basis. According to Amos 4:5, what was the heart motive behind Israel's religious activities? What was it that God is trying to bring to their attention?

14. Did this attitude and behavior change much by the time the Lord tabernacled on the earth (Luke 11:39-44)? What about today; is this attitude and behavior exhibited in churches today? What is this sin and why is it dangerous and deceiving?

15. Note that all of the offerings listed in verses 4-5 were required of Israel. For example, tithes of produce were set aside every three years to help the poor (Deut. 14:28-29). So if they were doing what God called them to do, why was God angry at them? What was it about their sacrifices, tithing, and thank offerings that were such an abomination to Him? (See Isaiah 1:10-20; Micah 6:6-8).

16. Thomas Watson once wrote, "The sin of a justified person is odious, because it is a sin of unkindness; it goes nearest to God's heart. The sin of others angers God but the sins of the godly grieve Him! The sins of the wicked pierce Christ's side but the sins of the godly wound His heart!"² When you take this to heart Beloved, who are you really sinning against? Whose heart are you breaking? Who paid the price for that sin? How must you respond? Sadly, how did Israel respond to their sin according to the last part of verse 6?

IV. Sin is Self-D _____(6-11)

17. Read Amos 4:6-11. Amos reminds Israel of six different events that took place in their history. He mentions instances of famine, severe drought, infestation of locusts, plagues, and pestilence. Why do you think God brought judgment; what is he anticipating the people would do back then?

² Watson, Thomas, *A Godly Man's Picture*.

18. Did Israel return to God (4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11)? Why do you think this is?

19. Does it dumbfound you that God gives so many chances for Israel to repent? Do you think they deserved a second chance? What is it about God that he would even extend the opportunity?

20. Sin is so stubborn! Once it gets locked on to something, it will not let go. What areas in your own life do you see your own sin as stubborn? What do you think might happen if you don't deal with those areas? What gets in the way?

V. Sin is Self-D_____ (vv. 12-13)

21. Since Israel resisted the chastening of the Lord and did not return to Him, what did God pronounce? What was Israel commanded to get ready for?

22. In this context, was this something Israel should be excited about? Do you think they were excited and cheering?

23. How does God describe their judgment in verse 13? Do you see any escape for Israel now?

24. Do you believe at some point God says enough is enough? What does Romans 1:18-2:1 tell us?

25. Let this serve as a reminder that everyone must prepare themselves to meet their Maker (Matt 25:31-40). The question we all need to ponder is this: will Jesus say to you, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"(Matt 25:34). Or will He say, "Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devils and his angels" (Matt 25:41)?
26. This has been a sobering lesson. Spend some time in prayer right now.
- Confess any sin that you are aware of and were convicted of.
 - Pray repentance for those who have heard God's message of the Gospel over and over again and still ignore the warnings.
 - Pray that this lesson today will drive you and others to Christ. Allow the love of Christ to compel you toward repentance and obedience.

"To feel our sins, and know our sickness is the beginning of real Christianity. To be sensible of our corruption and abhor our own transgressions is the first symptom of spiritual health. Happy indeed are they who have found out their soul's disease! Let them know that Christ is the very Physician they require, and let them apply to Him without delay!" (J.C. Ryle, commentary on Mark 2:13-22).

RESOURCES

Specific Resources for Amos

Amos by Reed Lessing

Joel, Amos, Obadiah by Thomas Finley

Amos by T. J. Betts

General Resources for the Minor Prophets

The Minor Prophets by James Montgomery Boice

The Minor Prophets by Charles Feinberg

The Prophets of Israel by Leon Wood

Major Points from the Minor Prophets by John Blanchard

A Survey of Old Testament Introduction by Gleason Archer

Interpreting the Minor Prophets by Robert Chisholm Jr