

## **November 10, 2013 Sermon Application handout**

“Seek Me and Live”

Amos 5

### **I. Introduction**

1. Before you begin, take time to pray and ask God to help you worship Him with a whole heart, and express a loyal love and an undivided affection for the One True God.
2. Review your lesson in Amos from last week. Who were some of the specific groups of people that Amos addressed? What was their lifestyle like? How had they treated the poor and the needy? What mindset was Israel exhibiting? What did God use to bring further indictment to Israel of their waywardness? What had God declared to Israel? What will Israel encounter at Judgment should they not repent?
3. Read Amos 5. Make some general observations. What was the overall message the Lord was communicating to the house of Israel? What were some of the warnings that accompanied the overall message should Israel not heed God's appeal? What four charges does Amos make against Israel to demonstrate further need to repent? What is the sad conclusion?
4. Amos begins his message in 5:1 rather strangely by giving a funeral dirge (or lament). According to verses 1-3, what is Amos alluding to and mourning over? What was the reason for this, as we learned in the previous chapter?

### **II. Be D \_\_\_\_\_ to God Alone (4-7)**

5. What is the first appeal Amos makes to Israel in verse 4? Look up the verb in that appeal. What did you learn? What are some synonyms to describe this word?
6. Read Deuteronomy 4:29 and 2 Chronicles 31:20. What is the picture that comes to mind when you see the word “seek” in those verses? Would you say Amos had more in mind than just a casual investigation?

7. How about you? Do you “seek” the Lord with all your heart? Is your devotion to Him wholehearted or without distraction? List out ways in which you are distracted from giving the Lord your undivided heart this week. Then list out ways you can begin to “seek” God in the manner to which He is calling all believers today, not just Israel back then.
  
8. Amos extends a strong warning to Israel in verse 5. He exhorts them not to “resort to Bethel” and “not to come to Gilgal” nor “cross over to Beersheba.” Read 1 Kings 12 and take some time to study the history behind this. It will help to give you some important context in Israel’s history and why Amos extended this warning. You can also cross reference with Genesis 28:10-22; 35:1-15; Joshua 4; 1 Samuel 7:15-16; Judges 20:26-28.
  - a. Who was the King over Judah (16-19)?
  - b. Who was the King over Israel (20-24)?
  - c. Where did the King of Israel build their new capital (v.25)?
  - d. What did this King say in his heart (26-29)?
  - e. In lieu of going to Jerusalem, what did the King of Israel decide to do and where did this take place (v. 29)?
  - f. Whose words had this King repeated (See Exodus 32:4)?
  - g. Why was this a sin (1 Kings 12:30-33)?
  - h. At the end of 1 Kings 12, you are given a good summary of this King’s religion; where was it devised?
  
9. Now that you know a little more history, why was the Lord not advocating worship in Bethel and Gilgal in verse 5? By going there, what commandment were they violating (cf. Ex. 20:1-3)?
  
10. To further underscore the divided worship at Gilgal and Bethel, what was Amos predicting would happen in verse 5?

11. What does Amos repeat in verse 6? What has changed in this directive when compared to verse 4? What is God emphasizing? What is He fiercely jealous for? (See also Hosea 6:6 to help formulate an answer).
  
12. In the same way God is faithful and loyal to his people (Heb. 13:5), shouldn't His people return that same undivided loyalty and love toward Him? Think for a moment what destroys loyalty and love in any relationship? What damages trust in a marriage? Have you been faithful and loyal to the Lord? In what way? Have you been faithful and loyal in your other relationships? In what way? How have you been disloyal in these relationships? What were some of the consequences? What will you do to make sure there is undivided commitment and care in these relationships as you go forward?
  
13. The core reason why God hated Israel's worship was because it came with divided affections. Believers today may not carry around a carved image in their hands, but they still may carry one in their hearts. So allow God's strong reaction toward Israel's pseudo-worship to serve as an important lesson to all believers today; their allegiance needs to be to Christ and Christ alone. There should never be any room for any other gods or loving anything more than Christ. If you are not clear as to where you're at, take a moment to examine your heart and ask these key questions.
  - Is there anything in my life right now that is competing for my affection more than Christ?
  - Is there anything in my life right now that gets me more excited than Christ?
  - Is there anything that is competing for my time with Christ?
  - Is there anything that is getting more priority than Christ?
  - Where am I most tempted to sin? To be disloyal to Christ?

**III. Ponder God's G\_\_\_\_\_ (vv. 8-9)**

14. Read Amos 5:8-9. What is the second principle that the reader is encouraged to ponder? What are some reminders that we are being encouraged to seek? What is Amos trying to draw our attention to?
  
15. When is the last time you have taken a step back to seriously consider God in this way? Read Psalm 8; how did David express this? What is one great way you can incorporate this into your own life? How might this fix any worship problems you might have in your own life?

16. We worship what we are in awe of and give praise to what we admire. If you were to truly grasp the unfathomable power of God and the amazing force behind His creation, how do you think it would affect your singing? Your prayer life? Your obedience? Now contrast that with what's going on with Israel. Based on what you have learned so far, why did these people not worship God with a "whole-heart?"

**IV. Love Thy N\_\_\_\_\_ (vv. 10-15)**

17. Read Amos 5:10-15. Where does Amos return in this passage? What are the injustices mentioned? Who were the indictments against? Who were the ones who were unjustly treated?
18. Read verse 14 once more. As the injustice and the exploitation continued, what did Amos declare? What does true repentance look like?
19. How is "loving thy neighbor" intertwined with worshipping God? Skip ahead to verse 24 to help you answer this question.
20. Read 1 John 4:19-21. How did the apostle John connect treatment of others with worship of God? In what specific ways do you see this in your own life?
21. Notice in Amos 5:14 that Amos declared to the Israelites that they are to be "seeking good" versus "seeking Yahweh." Both directives are interchangeable and both are essentially communicating, "To fix your relationship with God is to fix your relationship with one another." How did Jesus make this connection in Matthew 5:23?

22. I hope you haven't missed a very important principle. God not only cares how you treat Him but He deeply cares how you treat your brother or sister in Christ. Your worship is hypocritical if you do not consistently seek to be right with those whom you might think there is an offense. Think over your week...have you offended or wronged your spouse in some way but have not sought forgiveness and reconciliation? Have you gossiped about anyone? Have you been harsh or sinfully angry toward your children? Take time right now to pray and confess your sin to God. Then do as Jesus says, "be reconciled to your brother!" In other words, move toward your brother or sister in Christ, ask for their forgiveness, and reconcile with them. Then come and present your offering to the Lord.

**V. Don't Rely on Religious A\_\_\_\_\_ (18-27)**

23. Read Amos 5:18-27. Why does Amos begin the next part of his message with 'woe' or 'alas'? How was this word used in verse 16? What do you think these "chosen" people were expecting when the Lord returned? What did they not understand?
24. What word picture does Amos use to describe this day of judgment? What was the point of sharing this with the people of Israel?
25. As we learned last week, the Israelites in Amos' day were very active in their religious activity. They were faithful to celebrate the feasts, faithful to bring their offerings, faithful to give their tithes, and faithful to sing their praise songs. But how did God feel about their worship? List out what God says about this in verses 21-24.
26. Based on what you have learned, what do you believe was Israel's root problem? What was behind their cruel treatment of the helpless in their society at the time? Why had they committed violence and injustice? They didn't love people because they didn't love...? In light of this, where did God send them (v. 27)?

27. Read Deuteronomy 10:12. What did God require from Israel and believers today? What would this look like in practice?
  
28. Read Matthew 11:28; John 14:6; and John 11:25. How is it even possible to be made into a true worshipper?
  
29. We end Amos 5 with an admonition and an encouragement. The admonition is “not to participate in the activities and ceremonies of the church while harboring rebellion against God the rest of the week.” The encouragement is “God does truly desire for the believer to worship Him in Spirit and in truth.” The question is what kind of worshipper are you?

## **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

*The Ultimate Priority on Worship* by John MacArthur

*Knowing God* by J.I. Packer