

November 24, 2013 Sermon Application handout

“The Silence of God”

Amos 7-8

I. Introduction

1. Before you begin, take time to pray and ask God to help you grow in your thankfulness toward God and for His Word (Matthew 4:4).
2. Review your lesson in Amos from last week. What were the 5 ways complacency showed up in Israel's life? What was at the root of Israel's complacency? How did God react to Israel's complacency and sinful heart attitudes? What did you learn about proper responses toward good things that God gives us like money, good health, jobs, and any other blessing that comes to mind? How were you changed for God's glory as a result of that lesson?
3. Read Amos 7-8. Make some general observations. List out the visions that Amos used as a warning to Israel. How does Amos begin each section before describing the vision? How often does Amos use the title “Yahweh” (Lord)? Who are some of the other people mentioned in this section by name? How does each vision end?

II. The Heart of the M_____ (7:1-9)

4. According to Amos 7:1, what was God forming (cf. Amos 4:9)? When did this swarm appear on the scene? What was the time of year? The participle indicates that this was a continuous action; do you think the people should have been a bit concerned? Why or why not?
5. For a better understanding of Israel's Covenant with the Lord, read Deuteronomy 28:1-38. Why would God send locusts as a particular judgment?
6. As Amos watched this devastation played out in his vision; how did he respond? What did he beg Yahweh to do and why (7:2)?

7. In verse 3, God didn't realize He had made a mistake and then suddenly change his mind. Rather the Old Testament is just expressing to the reader that God "relented" in judgment in response to Amos' prayer. How does knowing that intercessory prayer was effectual give you hope when dealing with the unbelievers you have been praying for, for years, sometimes decades?
8. According to Amos 7:4-6, what is the second vision? What is the extent of this vision and how would it affect the people?
9. Instead of asking God to pardon Israel, what does Amos ask God to do? What was God's response to this request? How does this give you hope and encouragement when you consider the waywardness of a child, the unfaithfulness of a spouse, or the injustice that seems to permeate through the country that you live in?
10. According to Amos 7:7-8, what did Amos see? Do you find this odd? Do you recall anyone in the Bible ever seeing God at any time in heavenly glory? What do you think Amos most likely saw in his vision (cf. Gen 18:2-3; 19:1)?
11. What was the device Yahweh held in His hand (v. 7)? What is the function of one of these as you know it especially in relationship to a wall?
12. Now, if the wall symbolizes Israel, and the plumb line which aided the building of that wall is God's law, what is it that God would be measuring for? Israel's *what* compared to *what*? And if it is discovered the wall is tottering or crooked, then *what* according to verse 8?

13. In the book of 2 Kings, a measure of a king's godliness was indicated by whether or not he got rid of the high places? What does verse 9 indicate about the kings during this time? Was their worship system upright or crooked (cf. 2 Kgs 14:24)? What did God say will be desolated? What will be ruined? Did Amos intercede for the people at this point? Why do you think this might be?

14. Let's just step back from this scene for a moment and put ourselves in Amos' shoes. Here we have a herdsman who isn't even from Israel, pursuing a crooked people with a message of warning from the Lord. What does this tell you about the heart of this messenger? Does this bring conviction to your heart, why or why not?

15. Does this characterize your actions when it comes to those who are heading down a path of destruction? Do you find that you respond with a heart of compassion like Amos or do you seem more like Jonah who concludes that they get what they deserve? How can thinking through and contemplating on the future judgment motivate you to pursue the lost more eagerly with a message of hope?

16. Take time out right now to list out at least 5 people you know who either need to hear the Gospel or other believers you know of who need a message of admonishment because they are heading down the road of destruction due to unwise choices. Now Pray! **Beg** God to show them His Mercy and Compassion. **Plead** with God to give you courage to speak to these 5 people out of a heart of mercy and compassion for them. Are you willing to be like Amos who is brave enough to confront sin but also burdened enough to bring a message of hope?

III. The Response to the M_____ (Amos 7:10-17)

17. What is the narrative in Amos 7:10-17 all about? Who is the antagonist? How did the recipient of Amos message seek to discredit him according to verse 11?

18. Pay special attention to Amos' response to this confrontation (v. 14); it is an interesting one and a great reminder to all of us. Notice that he tells Amaziah that he was "not a prophet", meaning by profession and he was not "born a prophet", meaning he had no formal training. What does that tell you about Amos' motivation for bringing this message to these people? What does this teach you about what your motivation should be when sharing the Gospel with others or serving in ministry?

19. How does having a proper motivation in sharing the Gospel or serving in ministry help you to:
 - Have wisdom when faced with resistance?
 - Have strength when faced with rejection?
 - Have encouragement when words are twisted and character is questioned?
 - Have joy when being persecuted for your faith?

20. Ironically, Amaziah, whose name means "Yahweh is Strong," dared to silence the Living Word of Yahweh. As a result, what terrible personal judgment did he face according to verse 17?

21. This lack of belief in the Word of God still holds true today. But whether people like it or not or believe or not, the Word of God is as true, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient today as it was when being presented to Amaziah. Bottom line, God's purposes and promises remain unchanged! How does this give you hope when the world around is going from bad to worse? How does this encourage you as you walk through your own trial? What are consequences that you might experience if you take this for granted or fail to believe?

22. Notice something really important in Amos' message toward the end of verse 17; even though he was being ordered by a very influential leader to leave town, did Amos message to Amaziah and Israel falter? Did Amos message have any tone of personal self-interest whatsoever?

23. Like Amos, there are thousands of Christians in the world who are harassed, tortured, imprisoned, and sometimes killed for their beliefs. But their message does not waver because they are committed to preaching the Gospel to a dying world without thought to their own physical comfort. Take a moment and explore Voice of the Martyrs (www.persecution.com) and sign up for their newsletter. Then make it your aim to pray for these precious saints on a regular basis.

IV. God's Reaction to the R_____ (Amos 8:1-14)

24. How does Amos redirect the reader's attention (8:1)? What is the next vision that the Lord showed him (8:1-3)?
25. Summer fruit is symbolic of the last crop before the growing season is over. And just as the harvesting is coming to an end, so is God's patience with Israel. How does Amos express this in verse 3? What will happen to all of their prosperity, security, and comfortable lives?
26. According to Amos 8:4-6, why was God so resolved in bringing judgment to these people (cf. Amos 2:7)? What had Amos exposed in verse 5?
27. Read Matthew 22:36-39. What was the root issue with the heart of Israel? Knowing this, does it surprise you that God told them, "It's over?" What kind of judgment were they facing as a result (vv. 7-10)?
28. After shocking news was delivered about the Day of Judgment for Israel, what additional punishment would Israel suffer according to verse 11?
29. In verses 12-14 Amos pictures the Israelites as wandering and uncertain, as they search for a word from the Lord but there's none to be found. Even the young will suffer because they do not have God's Word to revive them. Just imagine if this were you? Would you survive and flourish? Why or why not?

30. Beloved, do you take the Word of God for granted? Do you often forget that in a time of crisis, worldly wisdom, superstition and corrupt worship will never satisfy? End your lesson today by reading contemplatively Psalm 1 and then answer the questions below:
- a. What characterizes the blessed man?
 - b. What is the blessed man's delight?
 - c. What kind of fruit does this man yield when the storms of life come his way?
 - d. What characterizes the wicked?
 - e. In the day of the Lord, what will happen to the blessed man? What will happen to the wicked?

Holy Bible, book Divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine;
Mine to tell me whence I came;
Mine to teach me what I am.

Mine to chide me when I rove,
Mine to shew a Saviour's love;
Mine art thou to guide my feet;
Mine to judge, condemn, acquit.

Mine to comfort in distress,
If the Holy Spirit bless;
Mine to shew by living faith,
Man can triumph over death.

Mine to tell of joys to come,
And the rebel sinner's doom;
Holy Bible, book Divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine.

—John Burton, Sr. (original lyrics)

Blessed Bible, sacred treasure,
Precious book, of all the best,
There is comfort never failing,
And a calm abiding rest.
Read with reverence, and commit it,
Verse by verse, and day by day;
'Tis the Word that God has spoken,
And it cannot pass away

-Fanny Crosby

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

Famine in the Land by Steve Lawson