

Amos – Sermon 12 – The Wrong way to Respond to God’s Right Word – Amos 7:10-17

Intro:

1) Extreme weather Warning – take shelter now!

- a. Increasing sudden storms around us – have received this warning recently
- b. However – you look outside, the sun is still partly visible – there’s no tornado or massive storm in your yard or neighbors
 - i. So you shrug – “That must be a warning for someplace else”
- c. Truth is – shrugging off the warning doesn’t change the path of the storm
 - i. Example – Port Deposit Farmer’s Market storm

2) A warning doesn’t become irrelevant simply because you don’t currently feel threatened by it

- a. It’s the same with God’s Word – God’s Word doesn’t become less true simply because you don’t believe it applies to you
- b. We must realize – there’s a wrong way to respond to God’s right Word

3) Up to this point in the text, the prophet Amos has been issuing warning message after warning message

- a. Yet – we haven’t really heard much response from the audience
- b. The lingering question – How will they receive this?
- c. Chapter 7 gives us the answer
 - i. Showcases a temple priest named Amaziah who gives Amos a response
 - 1. Not surprising - The response was one of rejection
- d. Problem – that rejection came with real consequences

4) Amos 7 gives us the truth about the men who received the right warnings yet made the wrong response

- a. God told them exactly what was wrong – He showed them exactly what was coming
- b. Amaziah’s response wasn’t “How do we get right” it was “Amos, get out!”

5) In Amos 7 we read of the rejection of God’s message and messenger

- a. It concludes with drastic consequences
- b. Sermon – The wrong way to respond to God’s right Word
- c. Text: Amos 7:10-17

6) There’s no doubt you’ve heard preaching in this very church that has: confronted your life, challenged you, called you to repent, Invitation into Godly peace, called you to action

- a. I wonder how you have responded
- b. Truth is – it is easy to minimize the message God has for us
 - i. There are many ways we do this
- c. The text we are looking at today gives us a couple ways we are tempted to minimize the message of God for our very lives

Distorting the Truth – V10-11

1) V10 introduces us to the priest of Bethel – Amaziah

- a. Here is a person you would expect would be welcoming to the truthful proclamation of God's Word
- b. However – what we read is the opposite
 - i. Amaziah took God's merciful warnings, twisted them, misrepresented them to the king, and sidelined the truth
 - ii. Since Amaziah couldn't disprove Amos' message, he sought to distort it
- c. The distortion was subtle because it contained enough truth to sound believable, but it changes Amos' message entirely

2) Reality – one of the most dangerous ways to respond to Scripture is not by open denial, but by reshaping it so it no longer confronts our lives like God intended

3) Amaziah's Character

- a. Unique character – appears suddenly with no genealogy or much details
- b. He's an ironic figure – Amaziah = YahWeh is powerful/strong
 - i. His name honors the Lord, yet his conduct opposes Him
- c. Notice his office – priest of Bethel
 - i. Doesn't necessarily mean he was the only priest, but the immediate context indicates he was probably the high priest or chief priest
 - 1. He spoke with authority to Amos
 - 2. He had direct correspondence to the king
 - 3. His office of ministry was located at/near the palace (7:13)
 - 4. He wasn't a Levite – 1 Kings 12:31
 - a. Low – fringe, edge, corner – root – to cut off, to scrape off
- d. Ministered at Bethel
 - i. A place originally set up as a rebellious rival to the worship at Jerusalem
 - 1. 2 Kings 12
 - ii. Contained shrines and idols
 - iii. It was set up as an affront to the proper worship of God and was immediately seen that way – 1 Kings 13:1-3
- d. Amaziah served in an illegitimate religious system
 - i. He was religious, influential, and highly connected – yet he was not faithfully submitted to the Lord
- e. Application – Amaziah reminds us – a person occupy a religious position or hold a religious title but that does not necessarily mean they are standing on Biblical truth

4) Amaziah's conduct

- a. Amaziah's allegiances are clearly seen as submitted to the king rather than the Lord
- b. Notice his response to Amos' preaching – V10
 - i. Amaziah represented Amos to the king in the most unlikable manner possible
 - ii. He accused Amos of inciting insurrection and instigating conspiracy against the throne
 - 1. It is true that Amos preached against the sins of the nation as well as the leadership – but there was not even the slightest call for insurrection
 - a. He preaching was a call for repentance
 - iii. Amaziah was purposely distorting the message to fit his narrative
- c. Notice how Amaziah spoke about the preaching of Amos
 - i. “the land is not able to bear all his words”
 - ii. This phrase gives us insight into the effect Amos' preaching was having
 - 1. The mere fact that Amaziah was compelled to write to the king over Amos' preaching tells us that his preaching was powerful
 - 2. If Amos' ministry was not impactful – there would be no need to address it
 - iii. Phrase could mean a couple different things:
 - 1. Able to bear – growing faint
 - 2. Maybe his preaching was annoying to the people
 - 3. Maybe it was spilling over to the surrounding nations making Israel look bad
 - a. They were supposed to be “chief”
 - 4. Maybe people were growing discouraged or fatigued at the preaching
 - 5. Maybe people were contemplating leadership change because of it
 - iv. The text is silent on how Amos' preaching effected the land – but it is clear the leader of the religious establishment had enough
- d. Notice how Amaziah described Amos' preaching – V11 – “Amos saith”
 - i. Not the “Lord says”
 - ii. More than 40x's Amos used phrases like: “The LORD says”, “the LORD has spoken” “the Lord GOD has sworn”
- e. Note – Amaziah purposely distorts the preaching against Jeroboam – V11
 - i. Amaziah says Amos has called for the king's assassination
 - ii. What did Amos actually say – 7:9
 - iii. “Amaziah was creatively paraphrasing Amos to enhance the negative impression he was giving Jeroboam” – CCE

5) Amaziah's context

- a. Notice V10 starts with "Then" – connects the previous vision to this occasion
 - i. IOW – its more than just a chronological transition – it's a living demonstration
- b. Amos just finished delivering the vision of the plum line in Israel
 - i. God just exposed Israel's crookedness
- c. Rather than repent and get back under God's Word, Amaziah gives us a real-time example of what was just exposed
 - i. A priest, using his religious authority, seeking to silence the very word God sent to correct them
- d. Amaziah attempted to point out crookedness in Amos, but in reality, was ignoring the crookedness in Israel

6) Last focus here – notice how Amaziah left out the real reason for Amos' convicting preaching

- a. There was no mention of Israel's sin to the king
 - i. No mention of God's Word being ignored
- b. Amaziah distorted the message to make it a coup

Despising Authority – V12-15

1) For Amaziah – reporting Amos to the king was not enough

- a. He took it upon himself to confront Amos

2) Amos' calling is questioned

- a. Starts by calling Amos a “seer”
 - i. The term is not inherently derogatory
 - 1. Used in the OT to describe prophets – 1 Sam. 9:9
 - ii. It may be in connection to the fact that Amos just relayed “visions”
 - iii. Context indicated – Amaziah was using is dismissively
 - 1. More like “visionary” than one who gives revelation from God
- b. Notice what Amaziah tells Amos to do – “go, flee thee away into the land of Judah”
 - i. The expression is forceful – given as an imperative – command
 - ii. Flee thee away – to run away
 - iii. Lit. Go, run away, get yourself back to Judah
- c. Amaziah's response here tells us he assumed Amos' message belonged somewhere else
 - i. Surely Israel didn't need to hear this – they were fine
- d. Amaziah dismissed Amos as a professional preacher looking for hire
 - i. “There eat bread”
 - ii. Idiom referring to earning one's living
 - iii. Amaziah views Amos' ministry through the lens of personal ministerial advancement
 - iv. He assumes Amos is motivated by gain
- e. Amaziah's words imply:
 - i. Go make your living somewhere else
 - ii. Earn your prophetic income in Judah
 - iii. In short – we don't need or want your services here

3) God's command is questioned

- a. Repeatedly Amos presents his message as coming from the Lord
 - i. By rejecting Amos, Amaziah is attempting to forbid what God has been commanding
- b. The stress of Amaziah's retort falls on location
 - i. Go to **Judah** – prophecy **there**
 - ii. Prophecy not...at **Israel**
- c. Amaziah was not simply rejecting Amos' authority, he was placing his authority over God's
 - i. V13
 - ii. Chapel – sanctuary, holy place
 - iii. Court – dwelling place, house, temple
 - iv. Amaziah presented Bethel as the official institution of the northern kingdom
- d. Irony – Bethel = House of God (Gen. 28:10-19)
 - i. Notice what Amaziah has reduced it down to – the house of the king
 - 1. Both mentions of Bethel exclude the name of God

- ii. This reveals and expresses the massive corruption in Bethel
 - 1. They have rejected Gpd
 - 2. The sanctuary and worship existed under the authority of the king, not the Lord
- e. Amaziah's rejection of Amos was not seated in the Lord, it was due to the perception that the worship belonged to the king

4) Amos confirms his commission – V14,15

- a. Amos denied that his ministry was self-motivated – rather it was a result of a commission of God
 - i. His reply made it clear – this was not his profession, this was his calling
 - ii. He takes his office higher than what Amaziah viewed
- b. I was no prophet
 - i. Amos was right – he was a shepherd, rancher, and farmer
 - ii. IOW – I'm not in this for the prestige or profit – I've already made a living
- c. No prophet's son
 - i. Refers to the religious institution of training up prophets
 - 1. 1 Kings 20:35, 2 Kings 2:3-7, 4:1, 6:1
 - ii. IOW – Amos was not claiming prophetic ancestry or institutional credentials
 - iii. His authority didn't come from:
 - 1. Family connections – formal succession – professional training
- d. Amos was telling Amaziah he was making what logicians call a "categorical error"
 - i. Placing him into a category he wasn't really a part of
 - 1. Professional prophet

5) If Amos wasn't a professional prophet – why was he preaching?

- a. V15
- b. Took – same verb used for God calling the Levites (Numb. 18:6) and David (2 Sam. 7:8)
- c. Amos' rebuttal to Amaziah is clear
 - i. I am here on commission by God – I go where He says and say what He tells

6) Contrast

The Lord's command	Amaziah's command
"Go"	"Flee"
"Prophesy"	"Prophesy not"
"Unto my people Israel"	"Into the land of Judah"

Disregarding the Warning – V16,17

1) In closing this interaction – Amos gives a word from God

- a. Now – connecting word
 - i. Because I’m sent by God – hear Him
- b. Amaziah told Amos not to prophecy – Amos responds by prophesying directly to him

2) The warning rejected, now received

- a. Because Amaziah has rejected God’s warning – he will experience the consequence
- b. Amaziah’s wife would be forced into prostitution
 - i. At the very place she once held a distinguished position
- c. Amaziah’s children will die during the invasion
 - i. Irony – he falsely prophesied of the king being assassinated, only to receive that sentence on his children
- d. Amaziah himself would be lead away captive
 - i. Notice how derogatory it would be
 - 1. Polluted – unclean
 - 2. Actually – it was just reality, he has been unclean for some time
- e. Israel would be lead away captive

3) Amaziah could:

- a. Reject the warning
- b. Resent the warning
- c. Misrepresent the warning
- d. Silence the messenger
- e. But he could not prevent God from fulfilling His Word

4) In short – we see the consequence of disregarding God’s Word

God's message Demands a Decision – Application

1) Receive God's Word Personally

- a. One of the most subtle forms of resisting Scripture is to agree that it is true while assuming it is meant for someone else.
- b. Amaziah believed Amos could preach his message in Judah, but he simply refused to receive it at Bethel.
- c. Don't just listen to Scripture asking, "Who else needs to hear this?"
 - i. Ask, "Lord, what are You revealing about me, and what must I change?"

2) Regard Preaching as a Calling, before it's a Career

- a. Amaziah viewed prophecy as a way to "eat bread," but Amos understood it as obedience to God's call.
- b. Amos did not preach for profit, popularity, or professional advancement
 - i. He preached because the Lord took him from the flock and commanded him to go.
- c. The preacher who is controlled by applause will eventually alter the message
 - i. But the preacher who is controlled by God's call will proclaim the truth regardless of the cost.
- d. Church's wrong application – "You keep him humble, we'll keep him poor"

3) Recognize God's Authority Above Every Human Authority

- a. Amaziah said, "Prophecy not," but God had said, "Go, prophesy."
- b. Amos respected proper authority, but he could not obey a priest or king when their command directly contradicted God's command.
- c. Whenever government, culture, tradition, or religious leadership tells God where He may speak, human authority has trespassed upon divine authority.
- d. The separation of church and state does not mean that the state may silence the church or that Scripture must remain silent about public sin.
 - i. When human authority contradicts divine authority, the believer's answer must be, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

4) Remember That God's Word Cannot Be Cancelled

- a. Amaziah tried to remove Amos from Bethel, but removing the messenger could not remove the message.
 - i. Truth - God's Word does not depend on our acceptance to be true or upon our permission to be fulfilled.
- b. We live in "Cancel Culture" and that mentality can creep into the church
- c. You may silence the preacher, close the Bible, avoid the sermon, and reject the warning—but you cannot cancel what God has said.
- d. Ignoring a divine warning does not make the threatened judgment disappear
 - i. It only leaves us unprepared when it arrives.

5) Remain Faithful to the Church's Commission

- a. Amos was commanded, "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel."
- b. The church has likewise been commanded, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations"
 - i. Matthew 28:19-20
 - ii. Opposition does not cancel the commission- it reveals whether we truly believe the authority of the One who gave it.