

Amos - sermon 9 - Awareness of Apathy - Amos 6:1-7

Intro

- 1) According to the US Dept. of Transportation - those living in rural areas have a 1.5-2 times higher risk of being involved in a fatal crash than those traveling in a city setting
 - Probably thinking - no way, how could that be!
 - Yet - "Traffic fatalities are occurring on the nation's rural roads at a rate approx 2 1/2 x's higher than all other roads, even though rural roads carry less than half of America's traffic." - T.J. Betts
- 2) One of the leading factors for this stat is the reality that those who travel in rural areas fail to recognize the real dangers of the road
 - "The lack of apparent danger with less traffic on rural roads seems to be a factor in a number of fatalities because people become more relaxed and take higher risks." Betts
 - Whereas - city drivers tend to be more alert due to the perceived danger and increased volume of vehicles
 - Interpretation - rural drivers have higher risks of crashes due to the temptation to grow complacent when driving
 - There is a correlation between dangerous situations and driver complacency
- 3) In Amos 6, we see a very similar scene - the people Amos is addressing have grown dangerously complacent in their spiritual life
 - Actually - they've gone past complacency to flat out spiritual apathy
 - Israel's self-satisfaction, arrogance, and spiritual apathy have led them to a spiritual dichotomy
 - on one hand - They desired the Day of the Lord - (5:18)
 - on the other hand - They believed that day was not actually going to arrive - (6:3)
 - The picture before us in chp 6 is a people unconcerned with the day of Judgment - most not even believing it would happen

4) In chp 6 - we meet a people who have made self-indulgence their god, they let injustice go unchecked, they are unconcerned with God's Word, as they are pulled up with nationalistic pride.

- All of this developed into spiritual apathy.

- Therefore - Amos informs the social & cultural leaders in Israel that they are leading the people into exile.

5) Complacency + Apathy are terms that should never be used to characterize the life of a believer.

- There is specific danger attached to these character traits.

- Some we will read in this very text.

6) Rather - The Bible describes the life of a believer with words like:

- Ferment - Rom 12:11

- comes from - to boil, to be hot, to burn

- Zealous - Titus 2:14

- Earnestly desiring - 1 Cor 12:31

- Filled - Eph 5:18

7) Q - What happens when a follower of the God of Scripture drifts into spiritual apathy rather than spiritual fervency?

- This is what Amos is addressing here.

8) Sermon: An Awareness of Apathy

- Text - Amos 6:1-7

Spiritual Apathy Creates False Confidence - VI

- 1) A danger of spiritual apathy is that you grow over-confident in your own abilities + begin to trust in things that are not God
 - The people Amos is addressing here carried a seemingly care-free attitude believing their future was set
 - They lived a life of ease, being self-confident because they believed they were safe from any harm
 - They believed themselves to be: militarily, economically, and spiritually secure
 - To the point where they overlooked their nation's true situation + the prophets' judgment pronouncements
 - Amos was addressing the spiritually apathetic leaders of Israel as they lead the people away from God

2) Amos addresses their false peace

- Notice how Amos starts his message - Woe!
- Funeral mourning terminology - anticipates destruction + death
- Note who Amos speaks to - Zion + Samaria
 - Zion - Judah's capital area
 - Samaria - Israel's capital area
- Q - Why does Amos address both Kingdoms?
 - Mentioning Judah keeps his audience from claims of bias - saying he overlooked the sins of his home area while denouncing Israel's sin
 - Southern Kingdom was sinning as well, heading toward the direction of Israel
 - 2:4
- Both Kingdoms, Israel specifically, were living in the "time of their life" when Amos reveals the reality that - "life was over"

3) Amos addressed their false protection

- Notice how Amos describes the Kingdoms
 - ease - complacent, proud, secure - Rest - to be secure
 - trust - to confide, to feel safe & secure, to attach oneself
 - trusted - put confidence
 - Word used to describe trust in God (2 King 18:25)
- What was this false confidence based on? False protection
 - Zion - ref to Jerusalem - situated on a mountain range, considered impenetrable
 - Samaria - built on a hill - 300 ft above surrounding valley
 - makes it hard to battle against
- IOW - Israel was trusting in what God had given them rather than the God that gave it
 - The object of their faith & confidence shifted from the One True God to what He provided

4) Amos addressed their false prestige

- The leaders in Samaria viewed Samaria & themselves as elite
 - They believed their position & wisdom made them untouchable
- named - to declare distinctly, to specify, to be called by name
- Chief - 1st, best, the choicest
- Nations - Gentile peoples, non-Israelites, the surrounding nations
- IOW - They considered themselves the finest, the best
- The phrase indicates what the leaders thought of themselves
 - Israel was the best & their leadership was the best
- note - 1c
 - People would come to the leaders for wise advice & direction in life
 - irony - They were actually being led astray

- 5) The leaders of Israel were too busy being important & too enthralled by power to be bothered by God's Word
- 6) Problem - Their self-confidence blinded them to the ungodly advice & instruction they were receiving by Israel's elite
- Prov. 13:20
 - Prov. 14:7
 - Prov. 19:22

Spiritual Apathy creates False Comparison - v2-3

1) The struggle with spiritual apathy - you end up comparing yourself to the wrong metric

- You get falsely convinced you're doing alright
- Here - Amos is pointing out that Israel is deceived about their status as "Chief" because they are not comparing themselves accurately

2) In a statement of word play - Amos is giving these "leaders" some directions they need to hear - v2

- In v2 Amos urges the people to go survey 3 diff. locations
- Reason - to expose that Israel was not actually "Chief among nations"
- Amos is sending them on a humbling journey

3) Locations

- Calneath - City-State in northwest Syria
 - In Amos' day - it faced serious threats from surrounding cities
- Hamath the Great - a City-State of central Syria
- Gath - a Philistine City - close to Judah

4) Why these locations?

- Evidently Israel thought themselves greater than them
- Yet - it is revealed that they were not
 - Note Rhetorical questions - v2
 - Was Israel better off than them to fend off an attack? NO
 - Was these places larger/greater than Israel?
 - Yes - Hamath controlled a larger territory
 - Calneath - probably comparable

5) The point of these questions was to reveal these once "great" cities are now facing hardship & being conquered by foreign enemies

• Follow up Q - Why do you (Israel) believe you are safe?

• Reality - Israel was not the "Chief" like they thought

• Their spiritual apathy lead them to false comparisons

6) In their arrogance - Israel thought "that won't happen here"

• The chief/wise leaders wrongly concluded - If a day of judgment was coming - it's still a ways off

• They - "put ^{far} off away the evil day"

put far away - to put off thoughts, to appear to be far off

• Israel scornfully dismissed any thought of a coming calamity

7) Notice - 3b

• Interpret - While they believed judgment to be far off, judgment was actually fast approaching

• Their sinful living was inviting judgment

8) Israel had ignored the prophets warnings and lived as if judgment day was a farce

• Reality - The wise leaders were clueless

• The spiritual apathy had them comparing themselves wrongly & therefore concluding themselves OK

Violence - Some went on to describe the wickedness of the day

Spiritual Apathy creates False Comfort - V4-7

1) Another danger of spiritual apathy is that you tend to grow comfortable in rebellion + prioritize your life to make you feel comfortable in your rebellion

2) In v 4-6, Amos outlines the way of life the Israelites have created to make themselves comfortable in sin

• At a time when justice needs restoring, morality needs raising, and repentance needs action - Israel seeks luxury + comfort

3) L4

King Ahaz's house
1 Kgs 22:39

Solomon's throne
1 Kgs 10:18

• They langed in expensive furniture + ate at the best restaurants

• ivory - extremely rare, valuable, had to be imported

• even a small amount would symbolize wealth

• Soberly as extravagant as a bed inlaid w/ ivory would state the gross waste of resources

• Stretch themselves - to lounge, sprawled out w/ arms + legs hanging over the edge

• probably ref. to a drunken stupor

• They weren't parties - 4:1

• They drank wine in bulk - 6:6

• They ate gourmet food

4) V5 - The Israelite dignitaries had enough leisure time to enjoy the arts

• They spent time making music - considering themselves to be as great as David

• Fascinating comparison - They were writing songs while they feasted + partied - David wrote songs in worship

5) V6 - Not content to drink wine from cups, they decanted it in bowls

- explain - could be mixed wine in bowls

- Drinking it like this could indicate intent to get drunk

- Dett a ref. to extravagance

- They would wear the first lotions + ointments - making their stretch of sin smell good

6) Q

- Is being wealthy a sin? NO

- Is enjoying the wealth God blesses you with a sin? NO

- What made Israel wrong then? - V6c

- The struggle of the needy didn't bother them

- The coming judgment didn't bother them

- They padded their life w/ so much comfort - they were no longer gripped by sin

7) "Joseph" - ref to the whole land of Israel

- Introsy imagery:

- Joseph became rich & sought the benefits of his riches

- Israel grew wealthy by exploiting their brothers then ignoring their struggle

8) Therefore - V7

- With no hint of repentance in the air - God sends judgment

- Introsy - Israel thought they were 1st

- God made them 1st → to captivity

Spiritual Apathy Commands a Conversation

1) Blessings become stumbling blocks the moment we let them take God's place in our lives

• Israel's geography, military, wealth, and influence at one point were all blessings from God

• Yet those blessings became idols because the people rested in the gifts not the Giver

• Sentences - One of the greatest dangers in American Christianity + Your life - is not adversity - it's unchecked prosperity

• Unchecked financial prosperity - we can trust our bank accounts over God's daily promised provisions

• we can over anticipate security outside of the Lord
• with its little or much

• unchecked comfort - we organize our lives around conveniences rather than Christ

• we can sacrifice commitment, worship, service whenever they interfere with what we "want"

• unchecked entertainment - Israel had time for parties, music, and get togethers

• we have endless hours of streaming, sports, hobbies, preference

• Yet we struggle to be faithful & spend meaningful time in God's Word & worship

unchecked possessions - we carefully maintain:
hairs, vehicles, boots, clothes -
while we allow our spiritual life to be
neglected

2) When we compare ourselves to sinners rather than
measuring ourselves by Scripture - we will always
overestimate our spirituality

• Yes - you may look alot better than "them"
but hold your life up to God's Word

• The question here - is not - "am I better than
my neighbor"

• Its "am I becoming more like Christ"

3) Anything that makes you more comfortable w/o making
you more Christlike - its a spiritual danger

• Nothing wrong or evil about - A nice house,
a good meal, a comfortable bed

• The danger comes when we let the comforts of
this life to dull our consciences & cause us
to be indifferent

• or replace our dependency on God

• or cause us not to act lest we lose
our comforts

• Sentence - Comfort is a wonderful servant, but
a terrible master

4) Who you listen to today shapes who you become tomorrow

'Be discerning when it comes to the voices that shape your life
- LC

'Israel's downfall began long before the Assyrians arrived - it began when they trusted in leaders who affirmed their sin rather than ~~confront~~ confront in by God's Word

5) Don't Delay - U3 - Come to Christ now