

Set The Bar Higher

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2 Donate a Gift for *a child* from our County (foster homes, group homes, Kin Care)
- B. Slide3 Xmas Eve Times.
- C. Slide4 Fundraiser Opp, Lasters.

II. Slide5 **Intro: Set The Bar Higher**

- A. A factory manager found that production was being hampered by the tardiness of his people returning from the lunch hour. When the whistle blew few were at their machines. He posted a sign by the suggestion box offering a cash award for the best answer to this question: *What should we do to ensure that every man will be inside the factory when the whistle blows?* Many suggestions were submitted, and the one that was selected solved the problem. But the manager, a man with a sense of humor, liked this one best, though he could not use it: *“Let the last man in blow the whistle.”*
 - 1. Ok, yes, that would assure every man would be in when the whistle blew but...
 - 2. How do we set the bar a little higher than that?

III. Slide6 **SET THE BAR HIGHER (1-7) (Judah, 796–767)**

- A. Amaziah was a good king. He worshipped the true God and showed mercy to the children of some who had conspired against him. Apparently he set a good moral example.
 - 1. He pleased the Lord (1-3). He punished the guilty (5). He protected the innocent (6).
- B. (3) When a person tries to justify his wrong behavior by pointing to the conduct of others, *he isn't aiming high enough.*
 - 1. This is also true if he patterns himself after someone who gives the Lord only *partial obedience.*
 - a) Who do you look at as *the bar in your life?* (the standard)
 - 2. What would you get if 99% were good enough?
 - a) No phone service for 15 minutes each day.
 - b) 1.7 million pieces of first class mail lost each day.
 - c) 35,000 newborn babies dropped by doctors or nurses each year.

d) 200,000 people getting the wrong drug prescriptions each year.

e) Unsafe drinking water three days a year.

C. (7) **Edom** was in *a state of revolt* against **Judah** (8:22).

1. He obtained a great victory over **Edom** *because* he dared to trust God, **but** he fell a victim to the idols of **Edom**.
2. *Slide7 2 Chron.25:14 When King Amaziah returned from slaughtering the Edomites, he brought w/him idols taken from the people of Seir. He set them up as his own gods, bowed down in front of them, & offered sacrifices to them!*

IV. *Slide8* **THE PRICE TO PAY FOR PRIDE (8-22)**

A. (8-14) Those who are too eager, through pride, to fight, may get what they ask for.

1. Many would have *plenty of honor and wealth*, **if** they actually knew when they had enough.

B. (9,10) **This parable** was rather humbling in its comparisons, **but** it conveyed beneficial advice. How often we are *lured* to our own ruin by our **1st successes**.

1. *The great enemy of our souls* hides the hook, with the fly, **and** hides the pit, with some branches and leaves.
2. **And so**, if a man persists, despite all of the warnings of this friends or foes, he must bear the consequences of his own folly. F.B.Meyer

C. Be content with *your sphere of victory* as the Lord gives you faith.

1. *Slide9 Rom.12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*
2. NLT *Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.*
3. When you keep your eyes on the Lord, your **victories** will **humble** you, **and** **God** will get **the glory**.
 - a) But when you **forget** the Lord, your victories will make you **proud** and lead you to **defeat**.

4. Slide10 Wiersbe said, *Beware the temptation to meddle. Learn to accept what God gives, stay at home, and do what He has called you to do.*

V. Slide11 JONAH'S KING (23-29) (Israel, 794–753)

- A. Jeroboam II reigned 41 years, during which time the northern kingdom **gained much territory** (far north) and experienced **economic prosperity** (becoming the leading nation in the region). [Syria was weak at this time. The Assyrian Empire which had been looming up out of the East, was in a state of *temporary decline*]
1. Becoming thus the most important king of Israel...reigning more than any other king of the northern kingdom.
 2. **Spiritually**, however, both the king and his land were corrupt. **Jonah began his prophetic ministry during this time.**
 - a) This shows that Jonah was **a real person** and that **the book of Jonah** is not fiction.
 - b) This also shows us in Jn7:52 that the *chief priests & Pharisees* were **wrong**, **They** (chief priests & Pharisees) **answered and said to him** (Nic), *“Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for **no prophet** has arisen out of Galilee.”*
[*Gath Hopher* was in Galilee, 3m NE of Naz]
- B. (25) Both **Jonah** and **Amos** ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II.
1. Jonah predicted the **political & military** expansion of Israel.
 2. His reluctant mission to Nineveh (the capital of Assyria) was intended to demonstrate to Israel that *if God's people would repent they too could avoid judgment.*
- C. Slide12 Interesting: Assyria carried Israel away captive in **722bc**. In 2 Kings 17:5 it says that it took **3 years**...so that's **725bc**. **When was Jonah called to give a message to Assyria's Capitol (Nineveh)?** It was in **725bc**.
1. This is why Jonah preferred God destroy Nineveh, in order to prevent Assyria from growing strong and **destroying his homeland.**
- D. **Also**, plug in *the book of* the *not-so-famous-Amos* here. **This is when he writes his rebuke to Israel for turning a blind eye to economic justice.** All levels of Israelite society were

cheating their neighbors for personal gain. They also reveled in their self sufficiency & hard-earned wealth.

1. **Slide13** Amos 2:6,7 *This is what the Lord says: The people of Israel have sinned again and again, and I will not let them go unpunished! They sell honorable people for silver and poor people for a pair of sandals. 7 They trample helpless people in the dust and shove the oppressed out of the way. Both father and son sleep with the same woman, corrupting my holy name.*
2. **Also, Hosea & Joel** prophesied at this time also.

E. (26,27) **The Political fortunes of Is. are *none other than* from *the sovereign plan of God.***

F. The mercy of the Lord is revealed even to those who have turned against him.

1. God did not forget his covenant with David and Israel.
2. He kept trying to **extend** his **love** and **mercy** to his people.
3. **Were they deserving...no way. Were they praiseworthy...no way. Were they commendable...nope.**
4. How tragic that they would not respond with their *faithfulness*.

G. **Slide14** Lam.3:22-24 *Through the Lord's **mercies** we are not consumed, Because His **compassions** fail not. They are **new every morning**; Great is Your **faithfulness**. "The **Lord** is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I **hope** in Him!"*

H. **Mercies** - "God's wrath comes by measure; his mercy without measure."

1. **Why not enough Mercy for a whole year or for a lifetime...up front?**
Once there was a **king** who had a **son** to whom he gave a **yearly allowance**, paying him the entire sum on the fixed date. It soon happened that the day on which the allowance was due was the only day of the year when the father ever saw his son. **So** the king changed his plan and gave his son **day by day** that which was sufficient for the day; and then the son visited his father every morning. How he needed his father's unbroken love, companionship, wisdom and giving! Thus God dealt with **Israel** and deals with **us**. *Rabbi Ben Jochai's parable*

I. **Compassion's** – **unending/unfailing, never ending/never failing.** *Compassion, love in action*

J. **New Every morning** - If God's compassion's are new every morning you have the right to claim them **daily**.

1. Let each day be the dawn of a new day.
2. *Start over again...no matter how many times you failed the day before.*
3. Karen Mains, **Nature** shouts of this **beginning-again-God**, this God who can make all our **failures regenerative**, the One who is God of **risings again**, who never tires of **fresh starts**. God is a God of **starting over**, of **genesis** and **re-genesis**. He **composts** life's sour fruits, moldering rank and decomposing. *He freshens the world with dew; He hydrates withered human hearts with his downpouring spirit.*
4. **The psalmist says, For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning. Ps.30:5**

K. **Faithfulness** – He is faithful, & His faithfulness will not fail.

L. The Climax...**The Lord is my Portion**.

M. **Therefore I hope in HIM**.

N. **Slide15** Trust the **past** under the **Mercy** of God.

Trust the **present** under the **Love** of God.

Trust the **future** under the **Providence** of God. [Augustine]