

2020.08.30 Sunday Sermon <The Reason for The Disasters>

Psalm 55:16-17

¹⁶ *As for me, I call to God, and the Lord saves me.*

¹⁷ *Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.*

Amos 4:12-13

¹² *"Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, Israel, prepare to meet your God."*

¹³ *He who forms the mountains, who creates the wind, and who reveals his thoughts to mankind, who turns dawn to darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the Lord God Almighty is his name.*

***Map Image #1** - 760 B.C. Map of Israel, God has brought disaster onto Israel and the seven neighboring nations

***Map Image #2** - Current map of the world, God has brought Covid-19 onto the entire world

In today's scripture, the Lord released His Words to Israel through Amos - showing the reasons why He brought disaster to Israel. Let us meditate through Amos chapter 4 and apply to the current disasters we are going through now.

1. We Are Accumulating Sins

- **Amos 2:6 Judgment on Israel**
This is what the Lord says: "For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals.
- **What were the sins of Israel?**
At the time of Amos' prophecies, northern Israel was enjoying their military success, but they were spiritually bankrupt. Worshiping local pagan gods had twisted their moral perceptions, and they became infamous for cheating, stealing, and selling their poor into slavery in foreign lands. God is grieved by the evils he sees from Israel, but because of his mercy, he gives them a chance to repent. Amos is tasked with warning the Israelites of their coming judgment and urging them to turn back to God.
- **Amos 4:1 Israel Has Not Returned to God**
Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, "Bring us some drinks!"
 - Shown on this versus, we are shown more about the sins they have made - focusing on materialistic pleasures, oppressing the poor, etc. All leading to corruptions and injustices
 - **Proverbs 21:4**
Haughty eyes and a proud heart—the unplowed field of the wicked—produce sin.
- **Image of Masks** - An Israel-based jeweler set the internet abuzz after releasing pictures of what it claims to be the most expensive face mask in the world. Worth around \$1.5 million and it is made up of 3,600 diamonds & gold.
- **Image of Cops Shooting Jacob Blake (August 23, 2020)** - Three months after the death of George Floyd at the hands of police spurred national unrest and widespread reforms, America's racial reckoning exploded when Jacob Blake was shot seven times in the back by a white officer.
- **Amos 4:4-5**
"Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more. Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years. Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings—boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do," declares the Sovereign Lord.

Through Amos 4:4 - 5, Israelites increased the number of worship and sacrifices - only to please them and boast about their wealth. Amos is exposing the religious hypocrisy in these verses.

- **Let us look back at our lives and the way we worship the Lord. Are we accumulating sins in our daily lives? Are we worshipping the Lord with righteous hearts?**
 - **Matthew 6:2**
"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full."
 - **John 4:24** *God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."*

2. We Are Not Repenting

- **Amos 4:6-11**
⁶ *"I gave you empty stomachs in every city and lack of bread in every town, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord.*
⁷ *"I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town, but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up.*
⁸ *People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord.*
⁹ *"Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards, destroying them with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord.*
¹⁰ *"I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with the sword, along with your captured horses. I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord.*
¹¹ *"I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, yet you have not returned to me," declares the Lord.*
 - The Lord has repeated "yet you have not returned to me" several times in above verses.
 - The Lord also repeated these words right before He placed disasters to His people.
 - And through verses 6-11, seven different types of disasters are shown:
1) famine 2) drought 3) blight/mildew 4) locust 5) pestilence 6) war 7) earthquake
- **Amos 3:7**
Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.
- **Aside from accumulating sins, have we forgotten to repent our sins? Are we avoiding the wake-up calls the Lord God has been releasing to us?**

3. He is Giving Us Warnings to Prepare

- **Amos 4:12-13**
"Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, Israel, prepare to meet your God." He who forms the mountains, who creates the wind, and who reveals his thoughts to mankind, who turns dawn to darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the Lord God Almighty is his name.
- **Our Lord God is the creator of this earth and He is the greatest of greatest. We cannot avoid Him. We need to listen to the warnings He provides and be prepared to meet the Lord.**
 - Hurricane Laura made its landing on Louisiana (8/26) - some did not make it as they were hanging onto trees, some faced death through generator fumes, and some were on boats that sank due to heavy winds.
 - During 8/14 - 8/27, Bucks County had total of 361 cases. Leading to total of 585 deaths as of 8/29

- **The Lord God is watching us from above as we are going through these difficult times. As the Father sends us these warnings from Heaven above...are we ready to face Him?**

(A) Are we ready to meet the Lord without fear?

John 14:1 & 27

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. **You believe in God; believe also in me.**
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

(B) Are we ready to meet the Lord without shame?

2 Peter 3:14

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

Romans 14:12

So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- **A Christian's Dream** - He was standing in front of God being questioned after his death. The Lord asked the Christian, "Have you always told the truth?" The Christian replied, "No, I have not." After several questions, he realized that he will be sent off to hell. At that moment, Jesus came and knelt down in front of the Lord Father. Jesus said, "Father - this Christian may have not told the truth all the time...but he lived for me and I want to help him." The Christian was sent to heaven...at that moment he woke up and realized it was all a dream.
- My brothers and sisters, it is already August 30th. It is back to school season, which means fall is very near. During the fall, I could hear sounds of different insects at night. Now, as we are suffering from the pandemic, the sounds of insects seems like the insects are crying for help right before they die.

As we close this sermon, we need to ask ourselves the following questions

- Are we accumulating sins?
- Are we repenting our sins?
- Are we prepared to meet the Lord Father as He gives us warnings?
 - Do we believe in Jesus Christ Our Savior?
 - Are we free of fear?
 - Are we free of shame?

Let us all pray

Come, Holy Spirit, to influence me and to fill my heart to repent.

I am weak, but I pray that you will come to me and fill my heart.

Jesus, I pray that you will listen to my cries and my prayers... come and fill my heart with repentance.