

At Ease in Zion

by David Legge

David Legge's sermon 'At Ease in Zion' challenges believers to confront their complacency and actively engage in their faith amidst a spiritually lost world.

Duration: 40:08

Scripture: Proverbs 22:16, Isaiah 58:6-7, Amos 6:1, Matthew 7:21-23, Luke 12:15, Colossians 1:23, James 5:1-6

Topics: "Gospel Preaching", "Hell And Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching about Christ and the gospel in churches. He urges Christians to be stirred and moved by the idolatry and sin in their land, and to be passionate about sharing the message of salvation. The preacher also highlights the decline in church membership and the desperate attempts to attract people through entertainment. He challenges believers to truly believe in the reality of hell and to actively warn others about it. He references Charles Finney's suggestion of studying Bible verses about hell and imagining loved ones in those verses as a way to grasp the urgency of the message.

Transcript

Now, we're turning in our Bibles to Amos, the book of Amos. I'll give you a wee bit of time to find that. It's a hard one to find.

It's Hosea and Joel, then the book of Amos, in chapter 6. Amos chapter 6, verse 1. But before we read the word of God, let's bow in a word of prayer and ask the Lord's help as we come to his word this morning. Let us pray. Our Father, to make our weak hearts strong and brave, send the fire.

To live a dying world to see him, send the fire. O see us on thy altar lay. Our lives are all this very day.

To crown the offering now we pray. Send the fire, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amos chapter 6 and verse 1. I believe that this is the message that God has laid upon my heart to bring to you this morning. Again, like some of the messages I've brought before, it's not a very comfortable message, but God never promised that we would have an easy ride. Amos chapter 6 and verse 1. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came.

It's just that wee sentence. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. I want to take you on a journey this morning.

A journey to Palestine. In 25 years before the fall of the nation of Israel, I want us to come and to visit a little city called Bethel. A small city.

A small city where there is a chapel. And within that chapel sits a king whose name is King Jeroboam II. A chapel like Balmoral Palace.

It was his local home where he went to enjoy a vacation like our queen. His priest was a man called Amaziah. If you like, that man was the Archbishop of Canterbury in our turn.

And I want to take you there this morning, 25 years before the fall of Israel, and we walk into the front of the chapel just like this church, and we see right at the front of it this man, King Jeroboam II. And the priest is standing there at the lectern. He's about to lead the service.

A majestic service is about to begin. There are instruments, there are singers, there are chanters, there are readers there. And then suddenly, just before Amaziah is about to speak, we all hear a commotion outside the building.

A bit like Portadown. And we all run outside the building to see what is going on. There's so much noise.

There's so much commotion. And when we run out, we see there a man. A man standing on his own, with no one with him.

And all that we can hear is this shout, woe unto you that are at ease in Zion. For judgment is coming, and this evil nation that once trusted in God is going to be judged by God Himself. We look him up and down.

We don't see anything special. We just see a man, a rustic, hill, open air preacher. His name is Burden.

That's what Amos means. Burden. He wasn't a professional prophet.

If you like, he wasn't a pastor or a minister. His father wasn't a prophet. He wasn't the son of a prophet.

He didn't go to a prophetic school, if you like. He didn't go to a Bible college. But the fact of the matter is, as we look at this chapter of Scripture today, this man Amos, this man Burden was God's man for God's day, with God's message.

And he stands before the people, and he preaches a message, and he preaches against and denounces their luxury. He preaches against their lack of concern and care and compassion for the poor. He condemns their expensive houses.

He condemns their drinking. He condemns their complacency. He condemns their costly parties and rich living.

He condemns the philosophy where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. He condemns the fact that those who are fiddling the books, those who are getting rich through false gain, are the very ones who are religion. He condemns the fact that they use religion as a masquerade for their false living.

But you know what the big problem was? If you read this book, you will see that these very people, the very people who are religious, the very people who are going to all the services, the very people who are

taking the name of Jehovah, the name of the Lord, these are the same people that are shouting, we are looking for the day of his coming. We are looking for the day of the Lord, when the Lord will come, and when the Lord will judge the earth, and we will be free from all our enemies. These were the very people that were asking for that.

But the message of Amos is this, woe unto thee, woe unto you that are at ease in Zion, because you are calling for the coming of the Lord, but when the Lord comes, it will not be your enemies that will be judged, it will be you. Do you see any parallel? Do you? What do Christians long for today? Christians long for the coming of the Lord, and that's right, and Christians yearn for the coming of the Lord, but so many of the Christians that yearn after his coming, and are looking for the glory of his coming, are not ready for his coming. Christian, are you at ease in Zion today? The nation of Israel, there was peace and prosperity, there was luxury that there never was before, everything seemed to be going well, everyone was prospering, yet this man, this rustic preacher, God's man with God's message was standing out there shouting, woe! That wasn't what the people wanted to hear, that wasn't what the people expected to hear, but he was shouting, woe unto them that are at ease in Zion.

Did our Lord not speak like that in Matthew chapter 7 and verse 22? Turn with me to Matthew chapter 7 and verse 22. Verse 21, to get the context, he says this, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have we not cast out devil? And in thy name done many wonderful works.

And then the Lord says, I profess unto them, I never knew you. Just like these Israelites, we are going to the meeting, we're going to the services of God, we are performing the services, we are breaking the bread of the show table, we're doing everything that that is meant to be done, we are singing the songs of Zion, we're worshiping the God of Zion, we're looking for the day of the Lord coming, but he most says, listen, like the Lord, he says, there will be many in that day that will say, Lord, Lord, did we not do this in your name? Did we not even lead one to Christ in your name? Did we not preach in your name? Did we not sing or testify in your name? And he will say, I never knew you. We find it in Colossians chapter 1 and verse 23.

Colossians 1 and verse 23, we read, And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and unblameable and unprovable in his sight. Verse 23. If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled.

If you've a pen this morning, ring that word if. If you continue in the faith. If there's a condition.

Now I'm not preaching here that you can be saved one day and lost the next. I don't believe that. But somehow, somewhere along the line, we've forgotten about something.

We've forgotten that we are to be living in fellowship with God today. And if we don't live in fellowship with God today, we cannot be a hundred percent sure of our situation before him. Spurgeon counseled preachers never to give a man who is in sin at this moment assurance of his salvation.

Never do it. We're to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We're to make sure that we're in the faith by the way that we live.

Let me ask you, Christian, or professing Christian this morning, listen. Are you at ease in Zion today? Are you? Are you at ease in Zion when the church is dormant? The church of Jesus Christ, as far as I can see, is absolutely asleep. It's the greatest dormant volcano that has ever existed.

And I think as I read the book of Revelation that we're like the church of Sardis. In fact, I don't even know what church we're like. We're like them all.

The church of Sardis, the Lord said of them, thou hast a name that thou livest and are dead. And let's not pass the book this morning. We're evangelical.

And evangelicals have a name that they live, but you know what the reality is today? They're dead. Maybe you think I'm being too hard. They have a name that they live.

Baptists have a name that they live. Evangelical Christians have a name, but the reality could be this morning that we're dead. We could be like Laodicea.

We say to ourselves, we are rich. We are increased with goods and have need of nothing. And we know not, the Lord says, that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

He says to us, thou art neither hot nor cold. I would that you were hot or cold, but you look warm. And he says, I'm gonna spew you.

I'm gonna vomit you out of my mouth. Are you at ease in Zion this morning, believer? Answer the question. You might be saying to me, but hold on, David.

You've forgotten the doctrine of perseverance. You've forgotten the doctrine of saved. Once you're saved, you're always saved.

You're never lost. I have not forgotten. I believe it with all my heart.

But we have forgotten the doctrine of perseverance. You might say, David, Matthew 16 and verse 18, when the Lord Jesus spoke to Peter and spoke about the confession that he made and said, on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. David, have you forgotten about that verse? God is going to build the church, and the gates of hell will never, ever prevail against it.

That's right. But that answer that you may give me this morning is the same thing that the children of Israel said in Emo. They said, it's all right.

Don't worry. We are secure. We are saved, and that's the main thing, as long as we are saved.

And they lived like whatever way they wanted, and they were looking for the day of his coming because they were saved. They were secure, and that was their problem. You remember years ago, who were the pioneer missionaries to Africa? They were people from the United Kingdom, weren't they? Great men of God.

Pioneer missionaries all over the world like Kerry, Hudson Taylor, all those great men. They were from the Western world, as it were, our little world of Europe or America. But do you know what the reality is today? The missionaries going to London are coming from Africa.

The places we once sent missionaries to are sending missionaries to us. Christ says in Revelation that he will spew us out of his mouth. Is that saved and lost? I don't think so, but don't ask me what it means.

It scares me. But listen this morning, a wee dose of saved and lost wouldn't do us any harm. If we tried to please God every day, have you seen the Mormons? Have you seen the Jehovah's Witness? I know they're working for their salvation, but they live their lives for their ideology, and God help them.

It's for the devil and demons, but they're living it out. I hope I don't think today that God hasn't the power and the sovereign will and ability to lay me aside and to raise up another. And don't think today, Christian, don't think today, Evangelical church or Baptist church, that God can't lay you aside and raise up another people, because that's exactly what he did with Israel, isn't it? He promised them, and they were covenant promises, but there were conditions, and they didn't fulfill the conditions.

So for a season, he has laid them aside, and he raised up the church unto himself. Did you watch the television? On Wednesday night on UTV Live Insight, there was a program about how the decline in church membership is at an all-time low. Did you see it? I've never seen such nutcases in all my life.

Never. And because the church of Jesus Christ is dwindling, and it is, we are going to all extremes to try and get people in, and we can save people through entertainment, but do you know what we're going to have to do? We have to then keep them by entertainment, because the Word of God is not enough for them. But listen, listen, are we at ease in Zion this morning when the church is dormant? Are we at ease in Zion when the world is damned? Are we? Let me ask you a question.

Who were the people that Jesus came to save? Know who they were. Christ Jesus came into the world to save what? Sinners. He came to save the prostitute.

He came to save the drunkard, the gambler. He came to save the homosexual. He came to save the publican.

He came to save the terrorist. He came to save the murderer. He came to save the thief.

All these evil people he came to save. Now another question. What kind of people are we the furthest away from? Those people.

Those people that God sent his Son to save and to rescue. I have a friend. You're going to hear his testimony not too long from now.

He's already testified in the Young People's Fellowship. But my friend had a life of sin, a life of, if the expression could be used, hell on earth. It was awful.

And God gloriously saved him. And now he's fellowshiping. He's testifying.

He's serving the Lord. But he still goes through problems like us all. And he was confiding in me one day.

And he was worried about the place where he lived and about the people who were living around him. He found temptation. He found it hard.

And he was asking and confiding in some people in the church that I used to go to. And he just said to me in despair, he said, David, it's all right for them. They get into their car and they drive away.

Because we're removed. We're removed. Another question.

And this isn't really a sermon this morning. This is from my heart. Do you believe in hell? Do you? Don't give me the answer I'm looking for.

Do you really believe in hell? I know you know it about it in your head and you've learned about it from Sunday school since you were at the children's meeting. I know all these things because I know them as well. But do you really believe? An atheist once said to a Christian, an atheist.

If I believed what you believed about hell, I would crawl on my hands and knees across beds of broken glass and hot ashes to the four corners of the earth to tell people, to warn people of hell. Do you believe in hell, Christian? Charles Finney, great American revivalist of the 1800s, brought many souls to Christ, was used as an instrument of God for revival. He said this, that as Christians, we need to do something.

It's an exercise we need to do. We need to take a New Testament. We need to take our Bibles and we need to open them at every passage that mentions hell.

Go through St. Matthew's Gospel, go through the verses that talk about hell. And he says this, take a member of your family and place them in that verse. He says, pretend that you're looking into hell with a telescope.

This is what he says, and put your little girl there. And then you'll know the cost of hell. Do you believe in hell? Oh, but David, people will say that they don't like that kind of hellfire preaching.

They say that they like the kind of Christianity that's personal, that's private, that you can see it just with your life and you don't try and share anything with anybody or you don't try and convert anybody. Well, listen to me, you know those type of Christians that couldn't care if you went to hell for all eternity. They don't care.

But you, Christian, this morning on Thomas Street, do you believe in a place called hell? We've forgotten that the gospel is an offense. Jesus said that the gospel would be a stumbling block, that it would either be the savior of life to a person or the savior of death. That doesn't mean that we preach it in an offensive manner or in a rude manner.

But the gospel itself is an offense. George Wesley, the great revivalist in England, who, as a matter of fact, stemmed civil war and revolution because of his preaching of the gospel. That man used to ask his open air preachers, when they came back from a time of preaching, he asked them two questions.

The first one was this, did anybody get saved? If the answer was no to that question, then he asked another question, and he said, well, was anybody offended? And if the answer was no to that question, he would tell the men to go back to their day job. They had not the gift to preach. Have we forgotten? Have we forgotten what the gospel of Christ is? It's not a wee nice story.

It's about sin. It's about a cross. It's about blood.

It's about judgment, but it's about deliverance from it all. And we cannot bring people to Christ if they are not brought to the law, first of all, to see what they really are, to see their sin in the mirror of God's word. And then when we point them to Christ, then it will be good news.

Could a mariner sit idle if he heard the drowning cry? Could a doctor sit in comfort and just let his patients die? Could a fireman sit idle, let men burn and give no hand? Can you sit Christian at ease in Zion while the world around you's damned? A wise man in Athens was once asked, when injustice would be abolished? When injustice in the world, in society, in workplaces, in education, when civil rights would be established and when justice would be established and injustice abolished? He said this, listen. This will happen when those who are not wrong, those who are not wrong, feel as indignant as those who are. When those who are not wrong, put it in their Christian context, when those who are in Christ see the need of those who are not in Christ, when those who are under no condemnation because of the law of the spirit, which has set us free, when we see the condemnation that the child of the devil is under, then we will cease to be at ease in Zion while the world around is damned.

George Bernard Shaw, not a theologian, but a wise man nevertheless, he said this, the worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them. Are you indifferent to the lost today? Oh, are you indifferent? Can you not hear the cries from hell today? I hope I can hear them. The cries of my friends, the cries of family who I never told about those fires.

Can you not hear them in your ear today? Do they not drive you out the door to tell people of Christ and his gospel? I want you to turn to Samuel, 1 Samuel 17. And we have in 1 Samuel 17 the story of David and Goliath, and you all know this story well. You remember that the little boy David, you remember when the prophet Samuel came to anoint the future king, they all laughed when he went to David, because David was like me, he was short, he was only a boy.

And these other men were tall and they were big strapping soldiers, and they expected the next king of Israel to be like them. But Samuel went to this little insignificant shepherd boy, and he was like me. Then later on in this story, you remember that David's father, Jesse, sent out David to his brothers who were fighting in the battle, took with him cheese and bread.

And you remember when he got there, David said these words, they were all talking about the Philistine Goliath. They were talking about how he'd come out to the front of the whole host and army of Israel and how he'd shout it, send me someone who can beat me. Any of you Israelites come and beat Goliath the great, Goliath the giant.

And David said these words as he heard them talk about it. He said in verse 29, sorry 26, for who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? Now think of it, a wee lad, a wee lad chirps up, who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? And all the boys looked around and laughed. And after their laughter, David turned to each of them one at a time and said in verse 29, is there not a cause? Is there not a cause? It's all right you laughing boy.

It's all right you thinking I'm too weak and I'm too small, but is there not a cause? Is the name of God not at stake here? Is there not a battle to be fought and is there not a battle to be won? Is there not a cause Christian today? Is there not a church that is asleep? Is there not a world and a family, our families, that are in hell? They're in hell now because they're condemned already. Is there not a cause? And all that it took was this wee fellow David with a heart full of faith. All it took and he defied the armies of the Philistines and he cut down the giant.

And you know something today, we have a cause that is better than David's. You know why? Because our battle is already won and we are not fighting for the victory, but we're fighting in the victory and from victory and we cannot lose if we only would take up the fight and have a heart of faith. Are you at ease in

Zion? When the church is dormant and the world is damned, is there not a cause? You know something, there is nothing uninteresting about Christianity.

Nothing. But I'll tell you what there is. Uninterested Christians.

Nothing uninteresting about Christianity, but uninterested Christians. Christians that couldn't give two hoots. Turn with me again to Acts chapter 70 in verse 16.

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. When Paul was in Athens, he looked around him and to put it in our modern context, he saw the chapels. He saw the dead Protestant churches.

He saw the mosques. He saw the cults. He saw the paganism.

And he lifted his eyes to God and to Christ and he cried because his heart was stirred within him because of the idolatry in his land. Christian, will you not stir yourself? Will you not stir yourself to all the idolatry and sin that is in your land? Does it not drive you to your knees? Does it not bring tears to your eyes? Does it not move you? Does it not stir you? If you've ever taken your mother to a football match or watched a football match, young fellas will know that you're sitting through the football match or watching it on the television and your mother's sitting there now, what's that? What's he doing there? And what's that? Why did he blow the whistle? And what's that line for there? And you're sitting through the whole match explaining that to them. And then your team, whatever your team is, then your team scores a goal and then you jump through the roof because of it and you're clapping and you're shouting.

And your mother turns to you and she says, well, what are you doing? He says he scored a goal. And she says, well, is that not what he's meant to do? And what do I tell you? There are people coming to churches today and they are expecting to hear about Christ. They're expecting to hear about the gospel.

They're expecting to be told what to do to be saved. They're expecting all these things because that's what you're meant to hear. And when somebody shouts hallelujah or amen or gets excited to look at them, sure, this is what's meant to happen.

Will you not stir yourself, Christian? Oh, let me look at the crowd as my savior did till my eyes with tears grow dim. Let me look and see the wandering sheep and love them for love of him. All it takes for evil to triumph is for a good man to do nothing.

I want to, in closing, turn you to Hosea. Hosea, in chapter 12, chapter 10, sorry, Hosea chapter 10, verse 12. Hosea chapter 10 and verse 12.

And another rustic prophet, a voice like John the Baptist that we've been learning about in these past weeks, a voice in the wilderness. That means a voice on his own. No one else was shouting his message because it wasn't comfortable.

He says this, verse 12 of chapter 10, sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and reign righteousness upon you. You're here this morning and you're not seeing. You're not seeing and you've heard this message week after week after week and you know what's happened? The God of this world that is not Jehovah, the God of this world who is Satan has blinded your eyes.

Now take it from me because it's in the Word of God. He has blinded your eyes to the fact that there is a hell and that at this very moment that you are, you are literally dangling over that place. And each time you hear the gospel and each time you refuse the gospel, you are being put down a little lower to that torment.

You know what you need to do? You need to today break up that fallow ground for it is time not to seek the Lord. If there's any farmers here, they'll know what fallow ground is. I didn't know what it was being a Belfast man, but it's land that has never been broken up for a few months or a few years.

It's land that has been left while another piece of land has been used to grow crops in. And what the prophet is saying here is you have fallow ground Christian. You have ground that hasn't been used in a long time.

That could be the ground of prayer. That could be the ground of fasting. That could be the ground of reading the Word of God, of witnessing to people.

That could be the ground of going to the Bible study, the prayer meeting, or the outreach. And it hasn't been broken out. And what the prophet is saying here is sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, and break up that fallow ground.

Break it all up. Go back to it and use it. Use it.

And then when you use it, there will be a harvest. Yes. Christian, it's time to seek the Lord.

It's time. Our land is falling to bits and the church is following suit. And we need a revival today.

But you know something? He'll only do it through us. Campbell Morgan, or not Campbell Morgan, another revivalist in the Hebrides was at the Bangor Missionary Convention. He was sitting, sitting now up here at the Bangor Missionary Convention.

And he was just about to get up to speak in the very last message of the whole convention. And the Lord, by the Holy Spirit, told him, don't ask me how, but told him to get off his seat and to go to the Hebride Island. He went over to the speaker.

And he asked the speaker, could he be given leave? Because he had to go. And the speaker said, well, hold on a minute. You're giving the next message.

He can't just get up and leave. But he had to. He was compelled by a man under the Spirit of God.

And he went. And when he reached the shores of the Isles of Lewis, there was one man waiting for him. And he just said, I've been waiting on you.

And the other question he asked him was this, are you right with the Lord? And that man said that he does not know what would have happened if he had went all that way and he had been faced with that question and he was not right with the Lord. And the Lord did not trust him with revival. Christian, what would you do today if God visited your bedside? With a cloud of mercy.

And was willing to open it and let it burst and rain righteousness upon you. But you weren't there. I believe that that is what God wants to do.

And all we have to do is fulfill what he asks of us. We trust you've been blessed and challenged by the message you've just heard. Why not pass it on to a friend or colleague? If you have access to the internet, you may want to visit our website, which is updated weekly at preachtheword.com. There you'll find our audio sermon archives and transcripts of Pastor Legge's messages.

That's www.preachtheword.com. Thank you for listening.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10937.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-legge/at-ease-in-zion/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net