

Woe to Them That Are at Ease in Zion

by Greg Locke

The sermon warns against the dangers of being 'at ease in Zion', trusting in one's own strength and prosperity rather than God, and calls for a life of holiness and integrity.

Duration: 39:35

Scripture: Jeremiah 20:9, Amos 3:1, Amos 6:1, Amos 6:14, Amos 7:7

Topics: "Spiritual Complacency", "Gods Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher starts by asking a rhetorical question: 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' He emphasizes that people who are walking in the same direction cannot be divided on certain issues because they will not get along. The preacher then draws logical conclusions, such as a young lion not roaring unless it has found prey. He also mentions the Old Testament practice of blowing a trumpet in the city to alert the people, comparing it to the lack of response he received when asking for pledges. The preacher expresses his discouragement at the lack of support and emphasizes that God has done everything possible to get people's attention, but they have not returned to Him. The sermon concludes with the reminder that everyone will meet God, regardless of their background or beliefs. The preacher encourages Christians to have the same mindset as Christ, who humbled himself and became obedient even unto death.

Transcript

Alright, open your Bibles to Amos chapter number 6 please, the Old Testament Minor Prophet Book of Amos and chapter number 6. Let your eyes fall to verse number 1. The Bible says, Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which is named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came. Pass ye unto Calni and see, and from thence go ye to Hamath the Great, then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Be they better than these kingdoms, or their border greater than your border.

Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seed of violence to come near, that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, that chant to the sound of the vial, and invent to themselves instruments of music like David, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Look back at verse number 1 if you would please. It will be our title and be our text for the message.

It says, Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. Thank you very much. You may be seated.

Let's bow our heads and hearts, and let's ask the Lord to bless our time together. Lord, thank you so much for the privilege that you've afforded me to preach, and I pray Lord that you would bless as the word of God goes forth, and Lord I claim Jeremiah chapter 20 in verse number 9, where your Bible says, It's not my word like unto a fire, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. So I pray the Spirit of God would guide me now as I preach, in Jesus' name, Amen.

If you know anything about your Bible, especially your Old Testament, when you get to the major and the minor prophets, they are completely inundated with the subject of revival. As an evangelist, I am greatly joyed by the fact that I can preach on revival from these books, because this is a series of books where God's people are living on a spiritual plane, they are doing what is right, people are being saved, but yet then little things begin to creep into their life, begin to creep into their families, they go off into sin, into deception, and then God does some type of judgment, He gives them some type of blessing, He brings the prophet of God to come in and to preach, and then the people are once again brought into an aspect or an atmosphere of revival. But when you get to the book of Amos, ladies and gentlemen, that is not at all what is taking place.

The book of Amos is probably the only minor prophet book that you have that deals not at all with the subject of revival. As a matter of fact, there is no revival terminology in the book of Amos. As a matter of fact, there is not one tear shed over one lost soul in the book of Amos whatsoever.

But rather, the book of Amos is a continual book of the pungent judgment of Almighty God. And here is a man by the name of Amos. His very name means burden.

If Amos were alive today, his name would basically mean that Amos was a pain in the neck. He was a pain in the neck, burdened down preacher because of the message that he had. He opened his mouth, he opened his Bible, and he continually preached, thus saith the Lord.

And ladies and gentlemen, let me just say unapologetically this morning that without a shadow of a doubt, what America and what the world needs more than anything else is some old-fashioned, burdened down, pain in the neck preachers. The Bible says in 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse number 2, Preach the Word. Be instant in season, out of season.

Reprove and rebuke with all longsuffering and doctrine. And no doubt in your Bible, Amos was a gospel preacher, but yet he was a preacher of judgment as well. But you'll notice there in verse number 1 where God, using Amos, said, Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.

Now many people don't understand that little phrase, but the phrase, at ease in Zion, literally means that these people had kicked it in a spiritually neutralized year. They were carnal. They were compromisers.

They were complacent. They got to the place where they were very backslidden and lukewarm in their service to Almighty God. Now, quickly, by way of introduction, let me give you two reasons right here from the text that I believe with all of my heart, God said that these people were lazy.

Why did He say that they were at ease? Why did He say that they were backslidden, if you will? Well, look at verse number 1 if you will. The Bible says, 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. Now, we could go on in verses 2 and 3, but for time's sake, we will not.

What is God saying? He's saying, first of all, that these people were well protected. If you were to look at a map strategically, when this portion of Scripture was written, you would see that the children of Israel, God's people, the Jews, were located around mountains and many, many valleys. You remember reading your Old Testament Bible, I'm sure.

They would come against their archenemy, the Philistines, and the Ashtonites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and all the other parasites in your Bible. And they would fight against these people, and the enemies of God would come in, and they would always throw themselves on the mercy and grace of God, and they trusted in the saving right hand of God to protect them. But that is not at all what they were doing in Amos chapter 6. As a matter of fact, if we could say it this way, they were kind of like America.

They had a good military protection program, and so therefore, they did not trust in God, but rather they trusted in their own military. And so God said, because you're so well protected, you don't trust Me anymore, and you've got to the place where you're backslidden. I want you to look now at verse 3 if you would, because there's another accusation that God brings against them.

He says, "...Ye that put far away the evil day and cause the seed of violence to come near, that lie upon beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon their couches," there's your Bible verse for couch potatoes, "...and eat the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of the midst of the stall. They chant to the sound of the vial and invent to themselves instruments of music like David, that drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the chief ointments, but they are not grieved or bothered," literally, "...by the affliction of Joseph." So He said, number one, they were well protected. But He said their second problem was they were well prospered.

These were not people that prayed for their daily provisions. These were not people that no longer trusted in the strength of God to provide for them financially, but now they had so much riches and they had so much health and wealth that they were backslidden and they left God out of their daily routine. Now the basic premise of my message this morning is this.

How can you know, as a blood-bought, born-again child of God, if you are at ease in Zion? How can you know if, number one, you are an Amos 6 Christian, or, number two, you are well nigh on your way to being one? Well, I believe the Bible gives us the answer. Turn back to chapter 3, if you would please, of the book of Amos, and look at verse 1, would you? Amos 3, verse 1. The Bible says, "...Hear this word, that the Lord has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Therefore," God says, "...I will punish you for all of your iniquities.

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den if he hath taken nothing? Can a bird fall on a snare upon the earth where there is no gin or no trap for him? Shall one take up a snare from the earth and have taken nothing at all? Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Now what is taking place in Amos chapter 3 is simply this. The prophet of God, this pain-in-the-neck preacher Amos, is using some old-fashioned hillbilly logic. He just begins to draw some very ordinary logical conclusions to prove to these people why they are under the direct divine judgment of God.

For example, look at verse number 3. He gives a verse that we quote many times. "...Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Now obviously, the answer to that question is no. Two people that are walking in the same direction cannot disagree and be divided on certain issues because they are not going to get along.

So that is a logical conclusion. And then he begins to draw some other conclusions. He said a young lion is not going to roar unless he has found himself some prey.

He is not going to be all excited and roaring from his den unless he has found something that he is willing to fight for. That is a logical conclusion. And then he says in verse 6, "...Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?" In Old Testament days, they would be what they called a watchman.

This watchman would work 12-hour shifts and they would have one man go 12 hours, another man go 12 hours, and they would go this way 365 days a year, all the time, to make sure that the enemies of God were not coming against the people of God. They would stand up there and they would blow the sound of the trumpet. If that trumpet was blown, the people in the city would know, hey, this is kind of like a tornado warning.

This is something serious. This is not playing games. This is not messing around.

And so they would be very much afraid because their enemies were coming and they were fixing to engage in hand-to-hand combat. So logically, God said, if a trumpet is blown, what is going to happen? The people are going to be afraid. And then He said, if a bird is on the ground and that little bird sees a djinn, literally means a trap, He said that trap is not going to hurt that bird whatsoever unless the bird puts himself in the trap.

That is a simple logical conclusion. And then He concludes all of this by simply saying this, if a man picks up a snare, a stick, a rock, whatever you want to call it, if a man picks up a snare from off of the ground or off the earth, the Bible says, it would be foolish for that man to pick that up, to have it in his hand and say, look here, I have nothing in my hand. No, God said logically, if he picks it up, he's got it there.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, what God is doing is this. He's drawing some basic conclusions to show these people this. The reason I am judging you is not because I'm bored.

I'm not twiddling my thumbs in the throne room of God and kicking around pop cans. He said the reason I'm judging you is because you are full of iniquity, because you are full of sin. So what happened to the people of God in Amos chapter 3? How do we know that these people were at ease in Zion? And what is the first way this morning that you know that you are at ease in Zion? Number one, they began to tolerate sin.

These people got to the place where all too often I meet people in evangelism where they say, well, you know, brother Locke, sin just isn't that bad anymore. Who told you that? It certainly wasn't the Bible. As a matter of fact, the Bible says in Hebrews 13.8, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Almighty God never changes. Malachi chapter 3 verse 6, God said, I am the Lord, I change not. Therefore ye sons of Jacob shall not be consumed.

And we are living in a day, ladies and gentlemen, where people get to the place where they think just because the world is wicked, that they can involve themselves, they can tolerate, and they can allow

certain sins in their life, if you will, and they think that it's okay and that it's pleasing to God, but there's nothing further from the truth. Now, if you want a shocker, you jump in my diesel truck in my 40-foot travel trailer with my wife and I, and you travel around America for just about six weeks to six months, and you would be amazed and you would be appalled by some of the things that so-called God's people tolerate in their homes, in their family, and in their individual lifestyle. They are not growing in grace.

They are not reading their Bibles. They are not faithful to God the way that they should be, but yet they are tolerating things that they know good and jolly well that is not pleasing to Almighty God. And the reason, ladies and gentlemen, that we do not deal with sin properly in the day and age in which we live is because we've just about renamed and reclassified every sin in the book.

And there seems to be nothing that is sin anymore. Now it's only mistakes. Now it's merely problems, and now it's merely habits, and now it's merely just shortcomings of my humanity, but God calls it sin.

David said in Psalm 51 verse 1, "...Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." And America and fundamentalism will never see revival until we get to the place where we are willing to get rid of sin and totally annihilate sin rather than tolerate sin. And these people were harboring sin and bitterness and ungodliness in their hearts, and God told them, I am judging you because of your continual toleration of sin. But I want you to look now, if you would please, at Amos 4 and verse 4. The Bible says, "...Come to Bethel and transgress." Now the word transgress means to willfully disobey God.

It's not just a generic term for sin. It means to willfully and knowingly by your own volition, by your own will, do that which is contrary to what God has said. And so he says, "...Come to Bethel and transgress.

At Gilgal, multiply transgression. And bring your sacrifices every morning and your tithes after three years. And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven.

And proclaim and publish the free offerings for this likeeth you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God." I want you to notice in verse number 4 there are two places that he mentioned. He mentioned number one, Bethel, and he mentioned number two, Gilgal. You say, so what? So this.

Although these may not be very particular to us, these cities were greatly spiritually significant to the people of God in this day. As a matter of fact, in your Bible in Genesis chapter 38, we had a man by the name of Jacob. Jacob was running from his brother.

Jacob was running from God. And in essence, Jacob was basically running from all of his problems and trials in life. Well, the Bible says that he fell asleep one night and he had a dream that we call Jacob's Ladder.

The Bible says on that ladder there were the angels of God ascending and descending upon the rungs. And it says, and the Lord stood at the top. Now, I like that, ladies and gentlemen, because that proves to me one thing and one thing only.

That God's in control of everything that goes out and everything and everybody that comes in. Well, when Jacob woke up from that dream, if you know your Bible, you know good and well that his life was changed, his name was changed, and practically this morning we also realize that an entire nation was changed because of that experience. The word Bethel means house of bread or the place of blessing, the house of God.

And here was a man that was completely rearranged in that particular incident at Bethel. And so Bethel was very significant to the people of God. But yet in your Bible in verse 4 there's another place that begins with a G. It's called Gilgal.

Well, what was Gilgal? Well, you remember Joshua 1. The Bible says, Moses, my servant, is dead. And he told young Joshua, who probably was about 35 or 40 years old, he told him to take courage and to fear not. He told him to take this book of the law which shall not depart out of thy mouth.

And he told him to lead those people into the promised land which Moses could see but could never go in because of his disobedience to Almighty God. But yet the Bible says that they crossed over the Jordan River. And when they got across the Jordan River, their feet touched a land called Gilgal.

And as they entered into the sacred promised land that God had promised them many, many years earlier, they set up camp as a spiritual testimony. And that first place was Gilgal. And so these two places were very, very spiritually significant.

But I want you to notice, out of the great significance and the great importance of these two places, what does Amos, this pain-in-the-neck preacher say? He says, folks, come to Bethel and transgress. In essence, what he is saying is this. The next time you come to Bethel, don't act spiritual.

He said, act like you really are. He said, come and live for the devil. He said, then when you go to Gilgal, he said, not only do I want you to sin, he said, I want to multiply your transgressions.

I mean, heap them up in a rubber-made wheelbarrow and carry them around so everybody knows what you really are. What was he saying? Well, in chapter 3, he accused them of tolerating sin. But in chapter 4, he accused them of being two-faced or hypocritical in their service and worship of God.

Now, here's what took place. Now, I realize that our 365 days on our calendar does not correctly correspond to the calendar by the day and age in which they live in the Old Testament, but for illustration's sake and time's sake, follow me. Basically, what Amos is saying is this.

He is saying, listen here, if you are going to live for the devil for 363 days out of the year, he said, then that one day when you come to Bethel and that one day when you come to Gilgal, he said, don't put on your spiritual facade and make everybody think you're something you're not. He said, you people are hypocritical, you are two-faced, and you are very foolish in the eyes of man and the eyes of God to do such a thing. He said, if you're going to live for the devil and for the world and for yourself all those other days, he said, you might as well just live for the devil when you come to the house of God.

He was exposing their wicked worldly hypocrisy. Now, you can see, ladies and gentlemen, why he was a pain in the neck to these people. You can see why he was such a burden to these people.

You can see why they wanted him to be derailed and out of there, if you will, because he exposed their sin, he exposed their hypocrisy, he knew what they really were, and he was not going to soft-pedal and soft-soap and push around the Gospel and the Bible. He preached it gun barrel straight. He chopped the Gospel wood and let the chips fall where they may.

And he told these people that they were two-faced. Now, we have got a problem in American Christianity. And that problem is simply this.

We think that when we go to church, there is something super-duper spiritual about the building in which we worship. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I thank God for choir lofts, for baptismal pools. I thank God for carpet, for drywall, for crooked nails and straight nails.

And I thank God for shingles on a church roof. But I want to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that the church of Jesus Christ is not brick and mortar and drywall. And when you come into the doors of this auditorium at a local church, I want you to understand that it is not something you should be in here spiritual and then be another way out there.

No, no. What you are in here as a child of God should merely show a reflection of what you are on the job, what you are at Walmart, what you are at the supermarket, what you are in the neighborhood, at the family reunions and the friendly get-togethers. And many times we have people that live in the world one way and they come to the house of God, they wear their Sunday best, they wear their Sunday finest, they take their King James Bible, they tote it under their arm, they put on a great big hypocritical smile, and they pretend to be something that they are not.

And ladies and gentlemen, God says that that's wicked and God said that's hypocrisy. God said that is wrong. We should be genuine.

We should be the real deal. We should be 100% sold out to God in church, out of church, around church, anywhere we should continually, consistently be working on our Christian character and here were people that were two-faced in their worship and their service of God. Now, if that wasn't bad enough, now let your eyes fall to verse number 6 of Amos chapter number 4, would you? Verse number 6, the Bible says, And I also have given you cleanness of teeth.

He's speaking in reference to a famine in the land. They didn't have any food to eat and so God said their teeth were clean because of that. He said, I've given you a famine or a cleanness of teeth in all of your cities and wont of bread in all of your places.

Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord. You might want to underscore that little particular phrase. We're going to see it again.

Verse number 7, And also I have withholden the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest. And I caused it to rain upon one city and I caused it to rain not upon another city. One piece was rained upon and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.

So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied. Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you, he said, with blasting and mildew.

When your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the plumber worm devoured them. Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord. Verse 10, I have sent among you the pestilence after the men of Egypt.

Your young men have I slain with the edge of the sword and have taken away your horses. And I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils. Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord.

I have overthrown some of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and you were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning. Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto

thee, O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God." What is the third thing that these people began to do? I believe according to my study of the Word of God, they began to, number one, tolerate sin.

They began to, number two, become two-faced or hypocritical in their service of God. But number three, they began to toughen beneath God's judgment. You read your Bibles very closely, ladies and gentlemen, and you will find out that the more God judged them, the more backslidden, the more lackadaisical and the more rebellious they became.

Now you would think, logically, that is not human nature, but it is. And God said, I have sent you blastings, whatever that means, heavenly dynamite. He said, I have sent you mildew.

I have slain your sons. He said, I made it rain upon one city and not upon another. He said, I have given you famine.

I have given you dearth. I have given you death. And God said, I have done everything possible to get your attention.

I have whooped you. I have spanked you. I have chastised you.

He said, I have done everything that I possibly can as your loving Father, as your loving God, to get your attention, to give you revival. He said, yet have you not returned unto Me. And after God said that about five times with a broken heart, He then said in verse number 12, Because of this, O Israel, prepare to meet thy God.

Now ladies and gentlemen, that verse tells me two things. Number one, it tells me you will meet God. Regardless if you're saved or if you're lost.

Regardless if you're tall, short, fat, skinny, red, yellow, black, and white, you will meet God. Dear Christian friend, let me tell you what the Bible says. Philippians 2, verse number 5. The Bible says, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow with things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And dear Christian friend, you one day will stand before what Almighty God called the judgment seat of Christ. Not to give an account for your sins, for our sins were taken care of on the cross of Calvary.

That's why Jesus said in John 19, 30, It is finished. But you will stand before God and give an account of your motivations and your service for God if you are worthy or unworthy of the crowns that He is going to bestow upon you. And ladies and gentlemen, you have one simple choice.

You can declare Jesus Christ Lord of your life right now because you want to, or you can declare Jesus Christ Lord of your life then because you have to. But make no bones about it, you will declare Him Lord one day. But Mr. sinner friend, let me invade your private trespassing territory just for a moment.

Let me trespass on your spiritual property if I may and let you know. Although you may not be saved by the grace of God, you will meet God one day. But it will not be at the judgment seat of Christ.

It will be at what John called, what Jesus called, the great white throne judgment bar of God. Revelation 20, verse 11. Listen closely.

John said, And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.

And the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which are written in the books according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in them. And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And the Bible says that death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.

This is the second death. Verse 15. Get it and get it well.

It says, And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Dear sinner friend, you will meet God one day. And my Bible says that if you meet Him at the great white throne, it will be under adverse circumstances.

And there's not one thing that He, you, me, or anybody else in all the world can do. You have been doomed, dead, and damned in your sins. And the Bible says that you'll forever go to a place called the lake of fire.

But yet, you know, not only does it tell me that you're going to meet God, He said secondly, prepare to meet thy God. But you know what the irony, you know what the oxymoron, if you will, about this portion of Scripture is? You're going to meet God whether you're prepared to or not. You're going to meet God whether you're ready or not.

You're going to meet God whether you want to or not, whether you believe it or not, whether you're saved or not. It makes no difference. You will one day meet your Maker, as the preachers say.

And ladies and gentlemen, right here, Almighty God is judging these people, but yet they will not get right. Now you believe anything you want to. You study your Bible high and low.

From Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-21, you are going to find a principle that God spans His own, that God spans His children. And one of two things will happen when God chastises His children. Number one, you'll get right and your fellowship will be restored.

Or number two, according to Hebrews 13, God will kill you and take you to heaven because you can get more glory for Him up there than you can down here. God does not play games. He knows exactly what buttons to push in your life, in your marriage, in your family, to get your attention.

And ladies and gentlemen, as a child of God, God wants you to repent, to get right, and to live on a spiritual plateau, an atmosphere of revival, but yet God said five times with a broken heart to these people, yet have ye not returned unto Me. It's a dangerous thing to toughen and to buckle your neck and to stiffen up your heart against Almighty God when He says repent, when He says pray, when He says read, when He says go and be faithful. It is a very, very fearful and terrible thing to tell God no.

Now, let's define disobedience. If God says yes and you say no, you're disobedient. If God says no and you say yes, you are disobedient.

And according to my Bible, these people hardened their hearts and God greatly judged them because of Him. I was at a meeting not long ago. On Friday night, we had testimony time and an 85-year-old lady raised her hand.

There was about 150 people in the auditorium at the Calvary Baptist Church and she said, Brother Locke, I've shared this with few people, but please let me share this with you tonight. With tears in her eyes, she said, when I was 30 years old, I had a three-year-old daughter who was the apple of my eye. She said, we were in a fundamental church, we were faithful in tithes and prayers and offerings.

We went to soul-winning visitation. She said, but we had a financial crisis. We got out of church and she said, for two years, our family was not right with God.

She said, we didn't have family altar, we didn't read our Bibles, we didn't pray, we didn't go to church. When the preacher would come and knock on our door, we would pretend that we were not home. And she said, Brother Locke, we knew that we were not right with God.

She said, two years went by. And with a sorrowful broken heart, she said, Brother Locke, she said, after those two years, she said, at the end of those two years, I would lay in my bed at night and weep. And in front of all these people, she said, I knew, Preacher Locke, I knew I was not right with God.

And she said, I would go to bed weeping, saying this, not now, God, not now. Not now, God, not now. And she said, Brother Locke, almost two years to the day, she said, we had a terrible car accident.

She said, I was not harmed at all. We were hit head-on by a semi-truck or a dump truck, I can't quite remember which one. She said, we were hit head-on.

I didn't have a scratch on me. She said, but immediately, now was my five-year-old, was three, two years later, now five, my five-year-old daughter was immediately thrown, ejected from the car. She was immediately killed.

And she said, for all of these years, we've been in church, we've been faithful, we've tried to live right. She said, but I go to bed every night knowing that because I would not get right with God, God had to judge me and push a very sensitive nerve and button in my heart. And friend, I don't try to scare you, I try to prepare you, but God will do what He takes to make you live for Him because He wants your service.

But there's one more thing that I'd like you to see in your Bibles before we close, and it's in Amos chapter 7, if you would flip over there please. Amos chapter 7, and verse number 7. The Bible says, Thus He showed me, and behold the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumb line, that was a measuring rod, if you will, with a plumb line in His hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, a plumb line.

Then said the Lord, behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel. I will not again pass by them anymore. And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam, that was the king at this time, with the sword.

So God comes to Amos and says, Amos, I don't want you to preach a nice little sweet message about the love of God. I want you to preach, get right with God, the judgment's coming. Get right with God, the judgment is coming, and it's coming quickly and it's coming soon.

And so God said, I have taken the plumb line, the measuring stick of the Word of God, and these people are cracked, their foundation is sagging. He said, they are not vertical, they are not up and down, they are not perpendicular. He said, these people do not measure up to the ruler stick of the Word of God.

And He said, I want you to preach a message of desolation and judgment. Not a very popular message, but the message that God wanted him to preach. Now look at verse number 10.

It says, Then Amaziah the priest... Now look at me in the face. I want to explain something to you. We don't have pictures of people in our Bible, but I want to explain this.

Amaziah, I believe with all of my heart, was probably about six foot two. He had greased back Don Juan Suave hairdo. He wore one of those jackets that buttoned all the way from your neck all the way to your knees.

And he was just kind of one of these guys, and I mean he was just loaded down with money. And here was one of these fellas that just kind of walked around. He was kind of a highfalutin preacher.

Say, well, how do you know that Amaziah looked that way? Because all liberal modernistic preachers from the World Council of Churches look just like that. And here was this new evangelical backslidden preacher that probably knew nothing about his Bible. He knew nothing about God.

He was liberal to the core. And look what he said. Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam the king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel, and the land is not able to bear all his words.

For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. And so he gets together and he takes up a little love offering. And he goes and he puts on his little pharisaical grin and he gets his little Bible that don't even believe I'm short.

And he comes walking in there and he says, Mr. Jeroboam, he said, we appreciate everything that you've done for the kingdom. And you've been the best person in the White House up this far. And I tell you, your tabernancy and your rulership has just been absolutely wonderful.

And we appreciate your presidency so much. And as a matter of fact, me and the ministerial assassination have gotten together and we want you to know that we think you're doing a fine job. And he lied through his teeth about every bit of it because Jeroboam was one of the most wicked kings that Israel had ever known.

But then when he leaves the presence of the king, he says, King, just feel good about this thing. Don't worry about the judgment. He says that the land is going to be desolate and that we're going to be taken captive by our enemies and that you're going to die by the sword.

He said, but don't you worry about that. But you keep reading later in your Bible and you'll find out that every bit of that took place because God's man said it was going to. And then in verse number 12, it said, Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer... Now ladies and gentlemen, those were not words of

commendation, but condemnation.

He was saying, you redneck, hillbilly, backwoods, know-it-all, know-nothing preacher whatsoever. He said, you've never been to our seminaries and you've never been to places where we tell you the Bible is not the Word of God and you don't have our B.A.'s and our master's degree and you don't have our Ph.D.'s. By the way, I have one. Preach hellfire, damnation every time I get a chance.

Amen. And so, here was a man that didn't believe the Bible who comes against the man of God and begins to condemn him for preaching. And he says in verse 12, Go flee thee away into the land of Judah.

He said, We're sick of you. Why don't you go preach to the trees? He said, And go down there and eat bread and go down and prophesy there. But prophesy or preach not again any more at Bethel.

For it is the king's chapel and it is the king's court. He said, We want you out of here. We're selling the parsnips.

We're cutting your salary. He said, Your tale's through, friend. He said, We're sick of you.

We're going to get somebody that don't believe the Bible to preach to us. Now look what happens in verse 14. Then answered Amos and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son, but I was a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.

And the Lord took me as I followed the flock and the Lord said unto me, Go prophesy unto my people Israel. You know what Amos said? He said, You're right, Amaziah. I've never been to your schools.

I've never been told the Bible's not the word of God. He said, But I'll tell you one thing I got you don't have. He said, I wasn't looking to be a preacher.

My great-great-granddaddy is not a preacher. He said, One day I was a gatherer of sycamore fruit and I was a herdman. I just gathered them little sheep up and said, One day God called me into the ministry and I've been preaching ever since and said, I've had a burden in my soul, couldn't keep my mouth shut if I wanted to.

And he said, You're right. He said, I don't have all the credentials you've got. He said, But I've got something you don't got, big boy.

He said, I've got a divine, direct call of God upon my life. And you know what? You turn on your television and liberal modernistic preachers that don't believe the Bible that are a dime a dozen. But God give us in America some God-called, God-fearing men who will open their mouth and open their Bible and say, Thus saith the Lord.

And here was a man that preached it and the people did not want the message. And let me close with this simple thought. The last straw that they pulled out of the hat of God before God judged them was simply this.

They turned upon the man of God. Now study your Bible. When Jeroboam and Amaziah and the rest of those priests turned on Amos, the whole nation turned and they got on their heels and walked away from the man of God.

And when they did that, God sent cataclysmic judgment. He said, You've messed with my man and you have messed with me. Now, I realize that it is in reference to King Saul.

But there is a spiritual principle in your Bible that says, Touch not mine anointed and do my prophet no harm. And when God sends a man of God to pray, to teach and to preach the Word of God, you better be careful if he's preaching thus saith the Lord when you go against him or but that which he says because God said, I place my word in his heart and if you turn against him, God says, I will turn against you. Now there are many, many illustrations in the Bible that prove to us that when God's people honored God's man, God honored them.

But when God's people disregarded and disobeyed God's man, I'm not talking about dictatorship. I'm just talking about submission to the message of the Word of God. But when they disobeyed and disregarded God's man, God always in your Bible judged them.

We have the example of Elijah. Elijah was preaching and they came and they said, Go up thou bald head. Go up thou bald head.

And those teenage boys were laughing at him in the wilderness and basically they were calling him Mr. Clean, Mr. Clean because he was a bald headed man. But the grimaces and the smiles were wiped and the smirks were wiped from their cheeks whenever the cedar trees were bent down and the Bible says these she bears came and devoured them. And then there was a man by the name of Elisha.

Elisha came and a dear family built him a little room on the side of his house, on the side of their house rather. That's why we have the terminology prophet's chamber. And he came in there and he could sleep and preach and rest and relax and study his Bible.

And he said, You know what folks, you've been awfully good to the man of God. What can I do for you? And they said, Elisha, they said, We want a baby so bad we can't see straight. We've been praying and beseeching God but he's not so fit to give us one.

Would you pray as the man of God that God would give us a baby? You read your Bible. He got his Bible tucked in under his arm. He went out there and got down on his knees and said, God, these people sure have been good to your man.

I hope you'll give them a baby. And in the next couple of chapters they had a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, bouncing baby boy because they honored the man of God. And when these people turned on God's man that was the last straw.

God turned on them. Listen, I'm through. Let me say this just to draw everything that we've said to a simple conclusion.

I was preaching at a revival meeting and I preached one night on pastoral authority and pastoral leadership. A family came to me and said, Brother Locke, this did not happen to us. It happened to our sister and our brother-in-law.

They said they live in a little neighboring town, go to a little backwoods fundamental Baptist church and said one night a missionary from Russia got up and said, we need money for the land of Russia to translate Bibles into their language and give them the Word of God into their hands. The pastor got up. He was overly moved.

He was about my age, a young man, about 25, 26 years old. He got up and he said, folks, I'm your pastor. He said, I'm not an auctioneer and I'm not a money raiser.

He said, but tonight we're not going to pass the plate. He said, we're going to take up pledges. He said, is there anybody that would give me \$100? Anybody give me \$100 for this man? What about \$50? Anybody give me \$50? What about \$20? What about \$30? What about \$15? And he was getting rather discouraged because that group of 30 or 40 or 50 people there that night, they just did not seem at all encouraged with this man's ministry.

And he was discouraged at the fact that these people just would not give. And finally he said, what about \$10? Anybody give me \$5? And these people looked at me with a sad countenance and said, Brother Locke, this happened, sure as the gospel truth. And they said, finally he got down to \$1.

He held up both of his pointer fingers and said, who gave me \$1? Anybody give me \$1? Who gave me \$1 in the room? And a couple people raised their hand. He wrote that missionary some little old mealy mouth check out of the treasury fund and he left and he said, Brother, I'm sorry, I couldn't give you more. That night, they said, Brother Locke, it was not us, but our sister and brother-in-law went back home and she was eight months pregnant and they were going to have a little baby.

So they went home and they sat down at the kitchen table. And she had herself a cup of coffee. He had himself one.

He said, Honey, I think I'll play charades. He jumped up and he said, he put his little hands in the air and put his pointer fingers up and he said, Honey, who am I? And he began to mock, Who give me \$1? Who give me \$1? He began to jump around and dance around like some kind of Barlow and Baylor circus clown. And then she got up, Who give me \$1? And they jumped around.

They were appalled and completely eaten up with bitterness that their preacher would get up and raise money that way. And they laughed and they scorned the preacher, Who give me \$1? One month later, their baby was born. A little black-haired, blue-eyed, bouncing, beautiful baby boy.

But on both hands, his pointer fingers were missing. And they looked at me with a cold, blank stare and said, Brother Locke, our father, Who give me \$1? Ladies and gentlemen, I say to you this morning, you better be careful how you touch God's anointing. You better be careful how you take care of your pastor this morning.

You better be careful how you give and how you go and how you pray and how you follow the leadership of the man of God that God has given you in this local church and many local churches across America and across the world. You better be careful because according to my Bible, when they disregard God's man, God will send judgment. And in chapter 6 and verse 1, He said, Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.

And the simple question is this, do you find yourself in Amos 6 this morning? Your heads are bowed. Your eyes are closed, please. No one looking and no one talking.

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