

# A Warning to Those at Ease

by Ronald Glass

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*The sermon warns against the dangers of being at ease in Zion, and calls for a spiritual awakening in America.*

**Duration:** 59:43

**Scripture:** Isaiah 55:6, Amos 5:4-6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 13:11-14

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how our culture is obsessed with entertainment, as seen in the recent deaths of celebrities like Michael Jackson. He highlights how music, originally intended for worshiping God, has been exchanged for the gratification of human sensuality. The speaker laments that both the nation and many Christians do not care about their spiritual condition. He emphasizes the need for revival and points out that the church is rotting to the core, failing to meet the present crisis and lacking in hope.

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## Transcript

Kevin, for your music this morning. Please turn with me today to the book of Amos. Minor prophet Amos, chapter 5. And we're going to begin in the middle of a message that the prophet Amos delivered to the nation of Israel.

And we're going to begin in verse 18 of chapter 5. And I want to read down through verse 8 of chapter 6. Amos, chapter 5, beginning in verse 18. Alas, you who are longing for the day of the Lord, for what purpose will the day of the Lord be to you? It will be darkness and not light. As when a man flees from a lion and a bear meets him or goes home, leans his hand against the wall and a snake bites him.

Will not the day of the Lord be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it? I hate, I reject your festivals. Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies, even though you offer up to me burnt offerings and your grain offerings. I will not accept them.

And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from me the noise of your songs. I will not even listen to the sound of your harps.

But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Did you present me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for 40 years, O house of Israel? You also carried along Sikoth, your king, and Chion, your images, the star of your gods, which you made for yourselves.

Therefore, I will make you go into exile beyond Damascus, says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts.

Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure in the mountain of Samaria, the distinguished men of the foremost of nations to whom the house of Israel comes. Go over to Qalna and look. And go from there to Hamath the Great.

Then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are they better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than yours? Do you put off the day of calamity? And would you bring near the seed of violence? Those who recline on beds of ivory and sprawl on their couches and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, who improvise to the sound of the harp and like David have composed songs for themselves, who drink wine from sacrificial bowls while they anoint themselves with the finest of oils, yet they have not grieved over the ruin of Joseph. Therefore, they will now go into exile at the head of the exiles, and the sprawlers banqueting will pass away.

The Lord God has sworn by himself. The Lord God of hosts has declared, I loathe the arrogance of Jacob and detest his citadels. Therefore, I will deliver up the city and all it contains.

In the providence of God, today's sermon could not have fallen on a more appropriate day. This weekend, of course, we have been celebrating our nation's independence. And as Americans, we rejoice in our freedoms.

And if you know anything about history, you realize that our freedoms are unprecedented in the annals of human history. We are a people who have been blessed beyond almost any other people at any other time. We live under the banner of with liberty and justice for all.

But a little study of American history against the backdrop of 1,500 years of biblical history and 2,000 years of church history will prove that most of us Americans take our freedoms for granted. We assume that our liberties are unassailable. We've all grown up in America and we've never known anything other than the freedoms that we have as Americans.

And we believe nobody can take those freedoms away from us. We are, I am afraid, and especially as Christians, I am concerned, that we are, in the words of our text, we are at ease in Zion. That's why we are in need of a far-reaching, widespread spiritual awakening in America today.

That's one of the great burdens that is motivating me in this series of sermons on the subject of biblical revival. We are looking at the urgent need that we face against the background of a history of God awakening his people. He did it in the days of the nation of Israel.

He did it in the days of the nation of Judah. And he has done it in the days of the church for 2,000 years. When God's people have lapsed into sin, when they have lapsed into a state of declension, of moral and spiritual decline, God has often sent his Holy Spirit to awaken the church.

That is what we're talking about today. We are talking about a new breath of life in the body of Christ. We are pleading with God that he will come and breathe fresh life into his church again, that he will make bare his mighty arm in behalf of his people.

As God has revived the church in the past, we are asking that he may do it again. Today, I want to come to the prophet Amos. Amos was a unique prophet in the total scheme of God's prophetic truth.

He was not a religious professional. He was not a priest like the prophet Jeremiah or like Ezekiel or like Zechariah. He was not a prophet from his youth as was Samuel.

He was not a highly educated statesman like Isaiah or like Jonah or like Daniel. He was just a simple farmer from the rugged region of Tekoa, south of Jerusalem. In fact, if you come over to the seventh chapter and look with me for a moment in verse 14, we find Amos having to reply to the objections of the priest, Amaziah.

And he replied to Amaziah, I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet, for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs. But the Lord took me from following the flock and the Lord said to me, go prophesy to my people Israel. Obviously a godly man, a man who was sensitive to the leading of God, but he was just a farmer.

And God came to him one day and said, I have a message for my people and I want you to go prophesy to them. During his ministry, he prophesied against the religious apostasy and the moral corruption of the Northern Kingdom, which was then ruled by King Jeroboam II. The year is approximately 760 BC.

This makes Amos one of the earlier of the writing prophets. These were days of great prosperity. These were days of wealth and luxury and a careless sense of security on the part of the people of the Northern Kingdom.

The message of Amos was not popular. It was not appreciated. Again, when you come to the 7th chapter, verse 10, Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent word to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel.

The land is unable to endure all his words. Amos was making waves. For thus Amos says, Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.

And then Amaziah said to Amos, go, you seer. Flee away to the land of Judah and there eat bread and there do your prophesying, but no longer prophesy at Bethel as the sanctuary of the king and a royal residence. It would be today as if God were to lay His hand anointing upon a man of God who is anointed by God and commanded by God to go and preach on the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. or outside the White House or on the steps of the Supreme Court.

And some presidential advisor comes to him and says, look, why don't you go down there to South Carolina and preach where they like this stuff, but not here. This is the residence of the president. Our text today is a very solemn sermon.

Apparently the sermon that so disturbed King Jeroboam and the priest Azariah and the other professionals there in Bethel. It is a prophetic funeral dirge. It begins in the first verse of chapter five and concludes at the end of chapter six.

I'm convinced that there is a compelling similarity between the prophet's day and our own time. Amos lived at a time when spiritual matters were in decline. So do we.

He lived at the end of an era. The kingdom was destroyed only 40 years later. And we live, I believe, at the end of an era as well.

Judgment was coming. We see that in verses 16 and 17 of chapter five. Therefore, thus says the Lord God of hosts, the Lord, there is wailing in the plazas.

And in all the streets, they say, alas, alas. They also call the farmer to mourning and professional mourners to lamentation. And in all the vineyards, there is wailing because I will pass through the midst of you, says the Lord.

That's prophetic. That's looking ahead. Judgment is coming.

Now, in spite of this, God's people at that time didn't care about their spiritual condition. And today, as you look across America on this Memorial Day weekend, or excuse me, this Independence Day weekend, you have to admit that most Americans don't care about the spiritual condition of this nation either. And the sad thing is that a majority of Christians don't care.

In any series of sermons on the subject of revival, I believe this text cannot be overlooked. It points us to the reasons why we need revival. It helps us to understand our condition.

I've been watching for a long time. I've been in ministry for a number of years. I read, I keep my eyes open, and the church is rotting to the core.

There are three areas in which God's people tend to take refuge when they leave their first love and when their hearts become cold toward the Lord. And what I want you to do today is to search your own heart, and for us together to search our hearts corporately and ask the question, is this where we are? Now, the Lord severely condemns each one of these three areas. Twice in this text, he pronounces a very solemn woe.

We don't see it in our New American Standard version in verse 18 of chapter five. It's translated alas, but the word is woe. And in chapter six, verse one, you have it again.

That is a very solemn declaration from God. I want you to think with me on this warning for those who are at ease, because I think the church of the Lord Jesus Christ today is largely at ease, and we don't realize the danger that we're in. That's why I am so passionate about revival.

That is why I believe we have come to a point, and I can say it on this 4th of July weekend, we have come to a point, my friends, where our freedoms are deeply endangered here in America. And the only thing that is going to change this nation is a spiritual awakening, which is why I'm preaching this series to you. As I've said to you before, most of God's people don't even understand what revival is, have no understanding of the history of revivals.

So would you join me as we look at these three areas and search your own heart? Ask God to really focus your mind today. First of all, I want you to see how the Lord condemns our personal security. How the Lord condemns our personal security, chapter five, verses 18 through 27.

This is the first woe. Woe, you who are longing for the day of the Lord. What God is telling through Amos, is telling Israel here, is that they are living by a false security.

And I think we are too. Let me tell you how I think this works. First of all, our false security comes from a misunderstanding of Christ's return.

A last woe for you who are longing for the day of the Lord. For what purpose will the day of the Lord be to you? Now understand what is going on here. Amos is taking aim at the pious hypocrites of his day who ignorantly claim to look forward to the day of the Lord.

They were looking for judgment, not upon their own nation. They were looking for judgment upon the heathens. They were looking for judgment upon the pagan nations, on their enemies.

They didn't even anticipate that God would judge them. And so they had heard the message of some of the earlier prophets that the day of the Lord was coming. And thus the day of the Lord was their hope for escaping the inevitable crisis that was coming.

They were facing on their borders, they were facing the prospect of a very aggressive pagan military power. It was called Assyria. And the Assyrian empire was making moves against what today we would call the Holy Land, against Palestine.

Now, how are we going to avoid this? We haven't got the military might to resist this nation. Well, the answer was we're hoping for the day of the Lord. We're hoping that in the nick of time, as the Assyrian troops advance upon us, that the day of the Lord will come, that God will send his Messiah and that the armies of heaven will descend and that they will wipe out the Assyrians.

Amos has to remind them what will really happen when the day of the Lord arrives. Now, although Amos was one of the earlier prophets, he's not the earliest. There is a prophet who had written before him.

And if you turn in your Bible, just a few pages to the left, you will find the book of Joel. Joel was one of the prophets who preceded Amos. And he had a lot to say about the day of the Lord.

Look for a moment in Joel 1.15. And here we have similar language. Alas for the day, for the day of the Lord is near. It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Look in chapter two, verse one, blow a trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm on my holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble for the day of the Lord is coming. Surely it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness as the dawn is spread over the mountains.

So there is a great and mighty people. There has never been anything like it. That's a reference to the Assyrians.

Nor will there be again after it to the years of many generations. You read the entire book of Joel and it is a very bleak picture. A picture of stark suffering on the part of Israel under the judgment of God in the day of the Lord.

I say, what has this got to do with us? Well, more recently, some evangelical Christians have been guilty of the same kind of thinking. I grew up in a fundamentalist church. Fundamentalist Baptist church in the Midwest.

We're dispensational premillennialists. And I believe that's accurate. I believe that's sound theology.

But here is the ultimate point that we always were taught. And it is true that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the answer to our problems. Our answer to our crisis.

But here's the thing that was not taught. Never forget this. The Lord's coming, when the Lord Jesus Christ appears from heaven, He will indeed catch away His church.

But that coming, the rapture of the church is going to initiate a series of terrible judgments that are going to be unleashed on the world. Literally billions of people are going to be hurled into a Christless eternity in that period of time. And I have to say, as I look back on history and I think back to my own upbringing in church, it's unfortunate but true that there has been very little burden for revival among those of us who are premillennialists.

Our hope is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And especially up until about the 1980's our attitude was often this. Get as many people saved as possible and pray for the rapture.

That was basically it. Missions and evangelism and even so come Lord Jesus. Now, there's nothing wrong with that except when we use that as our hope for escape from the present situation.

Our false security comes from a misunderstanding of Christ's return. Yes, we want the Lord Jesus Christ to come back. We're looking for that instantaneous upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

We're looking for the trumpet of God and the archangelic voice. We will be caught up to the Lord Jesus in the air. We're looking for all of that.

But remember this, for those who are left behind, it's going to be an awful time. So, our false security comes from a misunderstanding of Christ's return. Also, it comes from a misuse of our religion.

And that was going on here in the nation of Israel. Look in verses 21 to 27 where God says, I hate your festivals. I reject your festivals.

I do not delight in your solemn assemblies. God isn't happy. Now, we evangelicals may be religious people but just like in Israel our religious formality can become repulsive to God.

I don't like it, says God, when you get together in your assemblies. He's talking about worship. Even though you offer up to me burnt offerings and your grain offerings.

I will not accept them. I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Listen, here's the problem.

We can go through the motions of doing church week after week. We can be good Christians. We can do church as we're supposed to do.

But before God it's all in vain because our worship is insincere. Now that is the history of 2,000 years of Christianity. It is constant.

We see it constantly throughout church history. Roman Catholicism very quickly degenerated into a system that God hates. Protestant liberalism degenerated into a system that God hates.

Much of evangelicalism today I have to think is a stench in the nostrils of God. That's pretty strong language. Yes, it is.

But I'm convinced that it's true. Not only that, and especially, as God point out, our religious music can become repulsive to God. Did you notice in verses 23 and 24, take away from me the noise of your songs.

I'll not even listen to the sound of your hearts. Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. And God's saying, I don't care how much singing you do.

You can stand for 45 minutes with your hands in the air and sway back and forth and sing over and over and over. Glory to God. But God says, I don't care about that if when you go home you're living a godless life.

God says, I want to see righteousness coming from you. And today we see throughout our evangelical Christianity this emphasis on music, music, music, 45 minutes or an hour of standing and singing and then hardly any prophetic word coming from the pulp, but hardly any message declaring the holiness of God and repentance and the gospel message. That's not happening.

It's just so much noise when it's accompanied by a concern, a lack of concern for obedience. Notice the third thing here, and that is that our religious idols are repulsive to God. Verses 25 to 27.

This is interesting. God said, did you present Me with sacrifice and grain offerings in the wilderness for 40 years of the house of Israel? It was in the wilderness that God told Moses, here's what I want you to do. I want you to have these feasts and these certain festivals and these sacrifices.

I want you to observe all of this as worship to Me. They instituted this in the wilderness. You presented Me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness.

But now here's something we don't see very often in the biblical record of the wilderness wanderings. Verse 26, you also carried your idols with you. Do you realize that? Israel is worshiping God in the wilderness and they're in their tents packed away in their suitcases are their idols.

They brought with them from Egypt. Therefore, verse 27, I will make you go into exile beyond Damascus. See what God is saying.

He uses that historical example as an example for the present, an illustration of the present. That is, here you were in the wilderness worshiping Me, sacrificing to Me, observing festivals, observing sacrifices, worshiping at the tabernacle, and all the time, your heart was really attached to your idols. Today, he is saying, Amos is saying to his people, you still worship God and you still have idols.

And the evangelical church in the United States of America today, we Christians, we still stand and sing to God and attend church and we go through the motions of our evangelical religion and we are attached to our idols. Now, our idols may be more subtle than theirs. You may not have a little statuette mounted in your house somewhere that you worship, like the ones that we see in our Chinese restaurants around here, for example.

You may not have something like that, but you have your idols. They are just as real and they are just as offensive. And you know what I am talking about because an idol, in the eyes of God, is anything that takes the place of God in your life.

Anything that takes the place of God. It can be your family, it can be your job, your career, it can be your education, it can be your bank account, it can be your car, it can be anything. But if it takes place, number one, in your life, it is an idol.

Where is God? He may not even be number two. He may be way down the list. God says, it is all repulsive to me.

And he told Israel, because of this, I am going to send you beyond Damascus. In other words, the Assyrians are going to come in and carry you off captive. 1 John 5, verse 21, I remind you about it frequently, little children, keep yourselves from idols.

That is the last word God said to the church of Jesus Christ. I believe the last thing that was written chronologically in the Bible was that word, stay away from idols. Now it all amounts to this.

Israel had lost the fear of the Lord. They were thorough going religious hypocrites. Ladies and gentlemen, we need to search our hearts.

Are we religious hypocrites too? Are we? The Lord condemns our personal security. These people were secure. Verse two, verse one of chapter six, to those who feel secure in the mountains of Sinai, let them marry.

But now let me move to a second area that God condemns, and that is that the Lord condemns our spiritual complacency. Chapter six, verses one and two, Amos pronounces a second woe. Woe to those who are at ease in Zion.

Now what's going on here? Well, let me again put us in the place of Israel here. We, like they, reject the spiritual for the political. Verse one, woe to those who are at ease in Zion, to those who feel secure in the mountains of Samaria, the distinguished men of the foremost of nations to whom the house of Israel comes.

Israel had a long history of seeking refuge in international political alliances. Whenever Israel got in trouble, what did they do? The kings ran off to some neighboring king to help them out. You join with me against my enemy, then I'll join with you against your enemy.

We'll fight the common enemy together. Now, if you've been with us in our series, you may remember way back at the beginning that I talked about King Asa. Asa was a good king, a godly man.

We read about the revival under Asa in 2 Chronicles, chapter 15. But it's a sad story because at the end of Asa's life, something else happened. 2 Chronicles, chapter 16.

And here's what it reads, the way it reads, in the 36th year of Asa's reign, Basha, king of Israel, came up against Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent anyone from going out or coming into Asa, king of Judah. He instituted a blockade. The king of Israel blockaded the kingdom of Judah.

Then Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the Lord and the king's house and he sent them where? To Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying, Let there be a treaty between you and me as between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you silver and gold. Go, break your treaty with Basha, king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.

So Ben-Hadad listened to king Asa. He sent the commanders of his army against the cities of Israel and they conquered Aijin, Dan, Abulmayim and all the store cities of Naphtali. And when Basha heard of it, he seized fortifying Ramah and stopped his work.

Hey, it worked, didn't it? And king Asa brought all Judah and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timber with which Basha had been building and with that he fortified Geba and Mizpah. And then what happened? Now, I want you to listen to the words of the prophet. At that time, Hanani, the seer, that's a prophet, came to Asa, king of Judah and he said to him, Because you have relied on the king of Aram and have not relied on the Lord, your God, therefore, the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand.

Now, he reminds him of something that happened back in the previous chapter. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubam an immense army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand. Now, listen to this great statement.

For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro through the earth that he may strongly support those whose heart is completely his. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on, you will surely have wars.

Then Asa, the godly king Asa, Asa, who experienced revival, Asa was angry with the seer and he put him in prison and he was enraged at him and Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time. What did Asa do? Asa rejected a spiritual solution for a political one. Instead of appealing to God, instead of worshiping God, what did he do? When asking God to give victory, what he did was he asked another king to come along and help him with his enemies.

Now, today we may be tempted to pin our hopes for spiritual reformation on the reformation of our political institutions. That's what happened about 1980. Actually, 1976, something changed.

There was a title. I think it was Time Magazine. It had to do with the election of Jimmy Carter as president and it said 1976, the year of the evangelical.

And all of a sudden evangelicals emerged into prominence. We had simply been, most evangelical, most Bible-believing Christians had been sort of obscure in American culture and we were doing our thing in our churches, again, trying to win the loss and waiting for the rapture and all of a sudden evangelicalism was thrust into the public eye, became front and center in the American political life. There were a number of books written and one of the ones that I remember was the late Francis Schaeffer wrote a book called The Christian Manifesto and in this Christian Manifesto he advocated that the United States of America would undergo fundamental change for good through political means.

I can't go into all of it but he went back in history to Samuel Rutherford's great book Lex Rex and to John Locke who took Lex Rex and sort of secularized it. But basically the idea was that there comes a time when government rulers become illegitimate. When they turn their back on God then they are no longer legitimate rulers and we can overthrow them.

And in the Christian Manifesto Francis Schaeffer argues for the use of civil disobedience and the use of force even on the part of Christians in order to take back the institutions of America. Another man around the same time wrote a book called The Second American Revolution his name was John Whitehead. Let me just read to you he's an attorney and the founder of the Rutherford Institute which is still going today in Virginia.

Let me read to you a couple of sentences of what he said. The most important contribution the individual can make is to become actively involved in local community affairs politics and legal battles. If America is going to be revitalized or reformed in a Christian sense it will be done at the local level.

And then what does he advocate? Well he advocates Christians running for office becoming involved in political committees using your contacts with public officials letter writing voting your representatives out of office if they don't respond seeking to promote lawyers and judges for appointments to judges who are Christians in other words they saw the salvation of America as coming through the political institutions of our country and almost never in that entire period of time since 1976 have you heard much talk about the revival of the church.

So we neglect or reject the history excuse me we reject the spiritual for the political now let me remind you also that we neglect history for expediency that's what Israel did verses 2 and 3 here in chapter 6 look at your neighbors says Amos go over to Kalna and look and go from there to Hamath the great Kalna was in the area that today we would call Iraq and from there to Hamath that's Syria and to Gath the Philistines inhabited the coast the Mediterranean coast what today we call the Gaza Strip in Israel look at your neighbors the Sumerians the Syrians the Philistines once they had exhausted God's patience they were reduced to ruin he says look at that one and that one and that one where are they today these were kingdoms that had been destroyed what makes you think that these nations

with whom you make treaties are any better than you are there is no stability in political institutions or processes Christians need to get their minds off of trying to change America through the political process it will never happen never what do we need to do we need to remember the great truth of Psalm seventy-five Psalm seventy-five verses six to eight let me read these verses for you Psalm seventy-five verses six through eight here is what the psalmist says for not from the east nor from the west nor from the desert or the south comes exaltation but God is the judge he puts down one he exalts another for the cup is in the hand of the Lord and the wine foams it is well mixed he pours out of this surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its drinks God does judge

wicked nations so while we are sitting by hoping vainly that our political institutions are political representatives in congress and trying to get good people on the courts and all of that but that's going to somehow make America Christian again is very misguided the Lord condemns our spiritual complacency all of this putting our eggs in the political basket while we let the nation and especially the church continue to decline in spiritual power and that leads me to the third area and that is that the Lord condemns our personal luxury apostasy is an individual responsibility now I want you to notice how Amos gets very personal here Israel was obsessed with the world by and large so are we Christians and I say it respectfully but I would defy you to argue with me on that point we

Christians are in love with the world this is a reminder that the hindrance to revival rests with each one of us yes we're looking for a great work a moving of the spirit of God but it has to begin in individual hearts it has to take place in men and women and young people who are repentant who turn from sin now let me show you five obsessions Israel had and we have two number one we're obsessed with leisure verse four those who recline on beds of ivory and sprawl on the couches this is a picture of people well verse one at ease these are people kicking back on their nice soft recliner chair in their living room with their big screen TV remote in hand and a couple of beers in their hand as well on their other hand and having a nice old relaxing time these are people who are enjoying the

good life leisure time spent surrounded by elegant furnishings a picture of extravagant self indulgence a picture of luxury anything not to have to think about judgement see all I had to do was think about it and Assyria is knocking at the door but while they're doing that let me just put that out of our minds the day of the Lord will come and rescue us right now eat, drink and be merry obsessed with leisure secondly we are

obsessed with food again verse 4 they eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall to be eating a lot of meat like that was something that those who are well off did poor people didn't have much meat to eat these people who are spending their time surrounded by elegant furnishings and in their self indulgent luxury are indulging their appetites with

elegant fare as well only the finest foods sufficient for those who are at ease thirdly we are obsessed with entertainment this goes with it doesn't it the leisure and the food verse 5 who improvise to the sound of the harp and like David have composed songs for themselves now tell me if we aren't an entertainment obsessed culture that's what everybody's interested in all you have to do again is just review the last couple of weeks the death of Michael Jackson and see how obsessed our nation has been with this as well as some of the other people in Hollywood who died recently not only Hollywood but sports all of this entertainment this is where our passion is you can't get the average man in an evangelical church to shout amen but you watch them when they're down watching

football or when they're at the ballpark right they can get excited they can get excited and so what happened here they had diverted music what was music intended for God gave music for the worship of God and what they had done is they had instead exchanged it for the gratification of human sensuality and that's what we see in the world in music today and increasingly in the evangelical church today we are seeing that same sensuality in music in the name of God leisure food entertainment fourth thing obsessed with alcohol notice verse six who drink wine from sacrificial bowls now that's an amazing statement the bowls that are referred to here were large basins that were used in the temple for sacrificial purposes they were bowls that were basically used for for water for washing these

were big bowls and they belong to the temple of all places and the picture here is of the Israelites drinking strong drink out of things that are dedicated to God in vast quantities it is a picture of nominally religious people soaked in alcohol abuse the emphasis here is on the quantity and on the irreverence of it all a bunch of drunks who are claiming to be godly and then get this one here's the fifth we are obsessed with physical beauty verse 6 they anoint themselves with the finest of oils a society in spiritual decline exalts the virtue of physical beauty you know how it is ladies and gentlemen all you have to do in fact I I encourage you to read the insert in the bulletin today from what in the world from Bob Jones University there's a little blurb in there just makes the point we

are a sex saturated society today and physical beauty is all that matters especially to our young girls that's the point of that article and it's a tragedy and so today especially our women and our girls obsess over cosmetics cosmetics men too over health club memberships and spas and tanning salons and diets and athletic equipment and elegant clothes and fine jewelry all these things matter to people today we forget what God said through Peter 1st Peter chapter 3 verses 3 and 4 when he said your adornment must not be merely external braiding the hair wearing gold jewelry putting on dresses but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God our society and I'm afraid the church by and large has our

priorities all mixed up and so our popular media accentuate these same five values today leisure elegant homes furnishings food music alcohol fashion cosmetics all of that I don't normally read these things but a couple of times I've been sitting in a waiting room while I've been having my car worked on in a particular place where I take my car they have a table with numerous copies of I think it's called Long Island Magazine or something like that it's a glossy very elegant glossy magazine on life on Long Island and if you were to look through that you would see this passage in verses four to six of Amos 6 just jump off the

page that's all that's there celebrities entertainers dressed in fancy clothes having parties with elegant food musicians among them advertisements for cosmetics and

for all kinds of other accoutrements of elegance that's the kind of society we live in right here on this island how are we ever going to reach that we're never going to reach that island this island with those kinds of values unless the church is first revived the tragedy is that so many of us Christians are following suit now listen to what God said to Israel verse seven therefore they will now go into exile at the head of the exiles and the sprawlers banqueting will pass away what an interesting statement that is the sprawlers that's almost a sarcastic term on the part of God that literally means people who are sprawled out thrown over a chair or a couch or something they're so dead drunk they're banqueting is going to pass away the Lord God has sworn by himself the Lord God of hosts

is declare I loathe the and notice not just the sins of Jacob I loathe the arrogance of Jacob I detest his citadels see he thinks he's doing just fine God said I detest his citadels his fortresses therefore I will deliver up the city and all it contains now here's my fundamental point if our churches are not revived our culture is going to be destroyed I've said this before that it's either revival or judgment and I think I have the warrant of God's word to say that and be confident that it's true why because if it were not that way God would not be God how can the Holy God of Heaven who has given us our freedoms in the United States of America base I believe on the covenant that these men of God made when they first came to these shores honoring God how can we defy him and he not react

in judgment now Francis Schaeffer was accurate when years ago he described a modern American society as holding to two controlling values one personal peace two affluence in other words we want to be left alone so that we can make all the money we can and enjoy an affluent lifestyle that was Israel's problem that's ours today as well we want to accumulate maximum wealth nobody telling us what to do oh and while we're at it some of us we like to play at religion but for many who claim to be evangelical bible-believing Christians in America today their real faith is in the ability of our American democratic freedoms to preserve our lifestyle if you say where's your confidence your confidence ultimately is in the freedom we have as Americans not in and if the Christian church should ever be

in danger of persecution the attitude of a lot of Christians is well Christ will come in the nick of time and deliver us isn't that what we really think spiritual hypocrisy political complacency personal luxury it was all there in 760 BC and it all fell apart under the mighty hand of God's righteous indignation ladies and gentlemen our world is terminally ill with sin it is afflicted with a frantic sense of hopelessness you see it everywhere you look today hopelessness and while we have the answers our evangelical Christianity tends to be following suit we are not meeting the challenge of the present crisis look what happened in Israel in the day of Amos come over to chapter 8 and look at verse 11 behold days are coming declares the Lord God when I will send a famine on the land not a

famine for bread or a thirst for water but rather for hearing the words of the Lord do you see that what was one of the signs of judgment upon the nation it was a famine for the hearing the words of the Lord in postmodern church after postmodern church in America today preaching is losing its place it is given way to music as the foremost part of worship today and it's a very sad story but it is true expository preaching seek me that you may live chapter 5 verse 6 seek the Lord that you may live verse 14 seek good and not evil that you may live do you see that seek good that you may live when we talk about revival we are talking about new life seek God seek good and seek a new work of awakening of life flowing through the church listen verse 15 hate evil love good establish justice in the

gate perhaps the Lord God of hosts may be gracious to the remnant of Joseph there's America's hope it's not elected officials beloved it's hating good or it's hating evil and loving good and establishing justice and trusting that maybe God will be gracious to us new life personal reformation awakening of the church it's the most desperate need our world faces at the present moment and that revival could begin with us it could my brethren this is not a time for ease not a time for us to be at ease in Zion as these were let me remind you of the words of Romans chapter 13 verse 11 and following do this knowing the time that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed the night is almost gone the day is near therefore let us lay

aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light let us behave properly in the day not in carousing and drunkenness nor in sexual promiscuity and sensuality not in strife and jealousy but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts now I know that this is not an easy message for you to hear it's not an easy message to preach or to think about but I'm pleading with you ladies and gentlemen of Wading River Baptist Church tear down your idols put away your obsession with the world as we've seen already it's time to break up your foul ground it's time to seek the Lord surrender your life to his control trust him to breathe new life into your spirit and yes I would ask you live expectantly for the coming of the Lord Jesus and all of his

regal power while praying earnestly for the coming of his spirit in fresh reviving power the rapture is our hope for the future yes even so come Lord Jesus but revival is the hope for the present even so come Holy Spirit in the words of the old hymn rise up oh men of God have done with lesser things give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve now Father we pause briefly before you to acknowledge our sins we are an unworthy people and yet Lord we're we're just a few believers here in the eastern end of Long Island who well by the fact that we're here today we have a desire to hear your word sometimes Lord your word isn't pleasant to hear but we understand that we need to hear it because you are a God who has never changed and just as you are the God of holiness and righteousness and

a God of justice in the days of Amos the prophet so you are today on this Independence Day weekend our Father we grieve for America we see America we see the culture of the American people drowning in sin self-indulgent to the point Father where it must nauseate you and Father in none of that is there any joy in none of that is there any real meaning no wonder we live in a world where people are depressed and people are hopeless and people are in despair and people are taking their lives people are drowning themselves in drugs and alcohol they have no hope and we do but Lord they won't listen to us their hearts are too hard and Father we're afraid that in many respects our lives are too much like theirs to make much of a difference to them oh God that's why we need revival sweep through

this place with your spirit and clean us up and fit us to reach a notoriously difficult culture here in Long Island New York we're asking for an awakening for the moving of the almighty arm of the living and true God for the power of the spirit who broke loose that day of Pentecost and other times since then oh Father do it again by your spirit for the sake of your son for the glory of his church we pray in Jesus name amen I hope that you aren't content where you are I can tell you I'm not content where I am and I'm asking God to revive me and praying constantly Lord will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you the heart of that revival is for us to be transformed our hymn before the Lord's table today is a hymn that is a prayer in that direction Lord lift me up help

me stand by faith on heaven's table a higher place than I have found Lord plant my feet on higher ground what's the number Kevin? 399 Kevin come and lead us please please stand hymn 399

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/19/SID19893.mp3>  
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