

**Amos 5:4-7, 14-15, 21-24**  
**2015 Summer Series – Amos**  
**June 21 & 22, 2015**

### **Amos – A Simple Farmer with a Simple Message**

Some of you may be familiar with Paul Harvey's speech – *So, God Made a Farmer*. A small part of that speech says:

*And on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, Good looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker!" So, God made a farmer. .... God said I need somebody with strong arms. Strong enough to rustle a calf, yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild. Somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry and have to wait for lunch until his wife is done feeding and visiting with the ladies and telling them to be sure to come back real soon... and mean it. So, God made a farmer. .... I need somebody strong enough to clear trees, heave bails and yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs... to stop his mower for an hour to mend the broken leg of a meadow lark. So, God made a farmer. (And it continues from there.)*

Paul Harvey's point was really simple – A farmer needs to be strong enough to do all the hard tasks that need to be done; yet, at the same time, he also needs to be gentle, kind, caring and comforting. In a way, that describes the task that he gives to Amos, a simple farmer with a simple message.

Amos lived about 800 years before Christ was born. He was shepherd, and he was a farmer. Nothing is mentioned about him having any special religious training. He never went to a seminary, nor did he come from a line of religious workers. He farmed ... and probably would have continued in this walk of life except for one thing – the Lord chose him to be His messenger to the land of Israel.

This simple farmer was going to become God's spokesman to the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel was enjoying a time of prosperity and peace. Things were going very well for some. People were resting on their own riches instead of relying on God. Listen to how Amos described the people: **"You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. You drink wine by the bowlful."** (Amos 6:4-6)

Yet, spiritually, they had become very complacent. They really didn't care about God or have much time for him. God's people weren't listening to God's prophets. Amos isn't the only prophet talking to God's people in both the Northern Kingdom and the southern Kingdom. The prophets Hosea and Jonah were also working in the Northern Kingdom. Isaiah and Micah were in the Southern Kingdom.

This spiritual complacency translated into how they treated each other. Amos writes:

**"You who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground.... you hate the one who reproves in court and despise him who tells the truth. You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain. ... For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts."**

They are content to go on in their way of life. They would continue to take advantage of the poor. The poor would be content to hate the rich. For nine chapters in the book of Amos, this country prophet condemned their sins. He doesn't hold back. He speaks boldly. He speaks plainly. He calls them to repentance. He asks them to abandon their worldly security and turn to God for salvation. He warns them that if they don't turn back to God, he's going to destroy them. No one listens to Amos' simple message to repent. It's almost as if they are saying: *Yadda, yadda, yadda.....*

It has been said that those who don't learn from mistakes of history, are bound to repeat them. When you look through the pages of Scripture, history records what happens when people don't listen to God. It all began in the Garden of Eden when the first two human beings in this world didn't listen to God. God's perfect creation was ruined. God's judgment would come on those who don't listen to him. Again and again we see what happens to those who repeat the mistake of not listening to God.

All the terrible things that Amos predicted would happen if they didn't listen to God happened. Things would get so bad that something even worse was about to happen – God would no longer listen to them. God says: **"I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps."** The Northern Kingdom of Israel would later be taken into captivity and never return as a nation.

*"I've got some good news and I've got some bad news. Which one do you want to hear first?"* the auto mechanic says to you the car owner. You ask, *"What's the bad news?"* *"Your car's transmission is shot, the warranty has expired, and it's going to cost \$3500 to replace it."* You ask, *"Ok, what's the good news?"* Your mechanic replies, *"The good news is I can get you in a week from Friday."* What's good about that?

As you read the book of Amos, you might even think the same thing. There doesn't seem to be any good news for the children of Israel. They don't listen to God or his country prophet. Finally, God doesn't listen to them either. But then at the very end of the book God says: **"The days are coming," declares the Lord, ... I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. ... I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God.**" (Amos 9:13-15)

There would be those in the Southern Kingdom who would listen to God. They would repent. God would listen and restore them to their land. There is even better news. Just as God restored the children of Israel who listened to Him, God restores all of us who trust Him through the blood of Jesus Christ.

That is also the beauty of this simple message of Amos. It reminds us of the simple message that Jesus would 800 years later speak: **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."** There would be those who would say: *It can't be that simple.* It is. Believe it. Trust it. Hold on to it till that day when God plants us in the glories of heaven. Amen.