

Amos 6:1-7

Pentecost 19; September 25 & 26, 2016

It was a busy night in the radio room on the *Titanic* on April 14, 1912. There had been a backlog of messages that were going and coming for passengers that night. In the middle of all the radio traffic that night, they received a message that the *Titanic* was heading into a dangerous ice field. For the moment, they set aside the message. The radio operators were busy. They were sending messages from the passengers to loved ones back home, reporting how good of a time they were having on this luxurious ship. Although the message was supposed to go to the captain, it never did. Other messages would be received, but they chose to ignore them. They weren't all that worried. After all, the ship had been advertised as being unsinkable. Nothing could sink the *Titanic*.

Around 11:00pm, the *Californian*, was the nearest ship to the *Titanic*, only about 10 miles away. The radio operator on the cargo ship, warned the *Titanic* about the icebergs in the area. They were shutting down their engines for the night and would continue in daylight. Before they had even received the full message, the radio operator on the *Titanic* responded: "*Shut up; shut up. I am busy.*" The radio operator on the *Californian* turned off his radio and went to bed. About ½ hour later, the *Titanic* struck an iceberg, and the rest is history.

It wasn't that the *Titanic* was warned, they just chose to ignore all the warnings. No matter how many messengers God sent to warn his people about the disaster that their sin was going to bring to them, they kept choosing to ignore them. What is it about us that makes us ignore warnings until it is too late?

Life was good for the children of Israel. They were comfortable. The economy was doing well. Many were prosperous. It was a time of peace from the nations surrounding them. But they had become way too comfortable with sin as well. There were real ugly things going on in the hearts of the people. Their hearts were far from the Lord. So, God sent Amos with a message to make them uncomfortable with the contentment they had found in sin. **"Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come!"** They had become complacent in sin. Why such complacency a dangerous sin? 1. It is based on lies. 2. It is motivated by pride. 3. It leads us to trust in something other than God.

Being comfortable in sin is based on a lie. There are those who would like to turn this reading, along with the other readings of today, into a debate about being poor or rich. They look at the words of our Gospel Lesson when Abraham speaks to the rich man in hell: **"Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony."** The **"good things"** that Abraham speaks about; the **"money"** that Paul talks about in our second lesson; the **"beds inlaid with ivory"** are not bad in and of themselves. It is okay to have wealth and to enjoy wealth.

What matters is what is in our hearts and how do we use the blessings that God gives us. The problem in the land of Israel at the time of Amos is that all these blessings were being abused by the children of Israel.

**⁴ You lie on beds inlaid with ivory
and lounge on your couches.
You dine on choice lambs
and fattened calves.**

**⁵ You strum away on your harps like David
and improvise on musical instruments.**

**⁶ You drink wine by the bowlful
and use the finest lotions,
but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.**

The lie that Satan dangles in front of them is that all these things will bring contentment. God looks into their hearts and says about them: **"Go to Calneh and look at it; go from there to great Hamath, and then go down to Gath in Philistia. Are they better off than your two kingdoms? Is their land larger than yours? You put off the evil day and bring near a reign of terror."** If contentment is based on the amount of blessings and things that we have in this world, we will

always be disappointed. They had a false sense of pride. Amos says look at the nations around you. They were even bigger than you, and God brought them down. You have no more reason to expect exemption from the consequences of sin than they had. You think: *"It can't happen to us!"* You are so wrong! If contentment is based on being comfortable with sin, they were going to be very uncomfortable. Sin was going to catch up with them. The **"evil day"** of Judgment was coming. They were going to be living in a **"reign of terror."**

What do all these words and judgment mean for us? We are not that bad, are we? Do we ever put the things that we have in this world above God? Do we become complacent to sin? Are we ever like the person who walks into a dimly room. As your eyes adjust to the light, do you become more use to sin? Do we start finding excuses why we don't give to support the Lord's work? Are we really ready to sacrifice everything for our God or others? Do these questions make us uncomfortable?

That's what God's law does. It makes sinful hearts feel uncomfortable. But that *uncomfortableness* drags us to the cross. It is there at the cross that we find contentment in this life. It is on that cross that Jesus paid the price for all our sin. He lifts the burden of all those uncomfortable sins off of our back.

As Amos closes his book, he gives the people a message of hope:

^{9:14} **I will bring back my exiled people Israel;
they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them.
They will plant vineyards and drink their wine;
they will make gardens and eat their fruit.
¹⁵ 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.**

When we become comfortable in sin, may we turn to our God to find true contentment in our Savior Jesus Christ. May we trust the God who will always restore us to him. Amen.