

When God Calls The Common: Amos

Amos 5:10-13

Amos 5:10

*(KJV) They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.
(NIV) There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in court and detest the one who tells the truth.*

In this verse are two kinds of people—those who uphold the truth and declare it, and those who oppose the truth and detest the one who speaks it. Amos is a truth teller. He cannot help but proclaim the truth because God has both called and compelled him to speak prophetic judgment over the rebellious nation of Israel, who rejects both the truth and the truth teller.

Apostle Paul was also called and compelled of God to declare the truth of the gospel. He could not help but speak forth the good news wherever He was led by the Holy Spirit.

1Corinthians 9:16

For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

Amos and Paul were not the only common men to be called to the thankless but timely work of a truth teller:

2Chronicles 24:17-22

Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear. And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it.

God's great truth tellers bring truth that is not yours or mine—it is not relative. Jesus is the Truth. God's Word is the Truth.

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 18:33-38

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

Revelation 19:11-13

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you ever regarded yourself as a truth teller—one who is called of God to uphold the truth of Scripture within your unique sphere of influence? Why or why not? How might you activate your Spirit-borne gift of truth telling?

*STUDY POINT: Find three other truth tellers in the New Testament. What character traits do they share with Amos? What attributes of God can we glean by observing the similar traits of these men and women?

Amos 5:11

(KJV) Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

(NIV) You levy a straw tax on the poor and impose a tax on their grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine.

It's worth noting that in this verse we see the repercussions of a nation deviating from the truth of God. Indeed, we see those same repercussions in our world as we read the news headlines today.

Psalms 11:3

If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Israel has deviated from the God their Father and His Word. Now in their greed they unfairly tax the poor for their grain and wheat. At the same time, they stir up the punishment of God, Who will not allow them to enjoy their hewn stone mansions and high-

dollar wine produced from lush vineyards. Ill-gotten gain, folks, will not be enjoyed for long. Not in God's just economy.

Proverbs 1:18-19

These men lie in wait for their own blood; they ambush only themselves! Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the life of those who get it.

Amos 5:12

(KJV) For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.

(NIV) For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts.

Israel has a long history of unjust judges exploiting the poor—judges who take bribes to miscarry justice. Corrupt courts abound in the time of Amos. God is fully aware of this corruption, and is not pleased. But for those who would bow their knee to Yahweh, this evil would be His to avenge (Romans 12:19). Dear believer, let's bring it home to 2022, and understand that whatever injustices we are enduring today, God goes before us as we wait on Him, even as He strengthens us in the waiting.

Psalms 27:14

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

This next verse is surprising. In context, it speaks to any and all true God followers in the time of Amos. And what are the instructions through Amos for the wise and godly living amidst abject lies and injustice?

Amos 5:13

(KJV) Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.

(NIV) Therefore the prudent keep quiet in such times, for the times are evil.

Beloved, there are times when God's children—imparted with God's wisdom—are surrounded by corruption, when they must redeem the time unto the Lord because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). In these days, they must not act but be quiet. To do so is to be discerning and wise amidst the God-rejecting.

Matthew 7:6

"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Are you surprised that Scripture sometimes instructs us to be quiet while in the presence of corruption? Citing Matthew 7:6, recall a time in your own experience when silence may have been the better option.

*STUDY POINT: Looking at the conduct of Jesus, what specific events and corresponding verses in the New Testament illustrate Jesus' reluctance to share holy heart revelation with the unbelieving? What was the result of Him doing so?

In conclusion:

So just like Israel, whatever you or I or the rest of the world espouse the truth to be—that is relative truth—we will on the Judgment Day be judged by whether or not we accepted and followed Jesus, the living Truth.

Revelation 20:11-15

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven 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 were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

O God in heaven, we pray today for those who are building their lives on the lies of this world—that truth is relative, individual, and changes with the times. Your Word, God, is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89), Your Son Jesus—the Truth—is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Each of us is appointed to die once and after that to be judged according to Your Word (Hebrews 9:27). This will happen no matter what we believed while we were alive. By Your Spirit, empower us—Your children—first to live by the truth of Your Word, then tell it to our neighbours and to the nations. We ask this all to Your glory, God. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland