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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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A Call to Accountability Amos 5:18-24

Lesson Background and Introduction

In Israel, an apathy toward God's laws had set in among the majority of the people. Life was good for them; the nation was prospering, and nations that often posed a threat to them (such as Assyria and Egypt) were weak and ineffective. What could this prophet possibly have to say to them? Why had he traveled from Judah to disturb their life of ease? In the verses immediately preceding the start of our lesson text, Amos clearly revealed the cause of his ministry. At seemingly every turn, Israel chose evil over good (Amos 5:7-15). The prophet accused them of mistreating the poor (5:11). He then highlighted the people's numerous other sins (5:12-15): they punished those who sought justice, they accepted bribes, and they discriminated against the poor in lawsuits. We cannot allow ourselves to think that we have somehow fulfilled our Christian duty by simply attending worship services and then returning to our routines while ignoring the needs of those around us. Feast days and burnt offerings are not part of our worship observances, but do we offend the Lord today with our closed eyes and deaf ears to the hurts of those around us? Christians should consider Jesus' call to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16) as a call to practice the kind of lifestyle encouraged by the prophets. Righteousness cannot be practiced in isolation from other people; it requires contact with the world, a world that is often characterized by injustice and unrighteousness. To be salt and light is to have a noticeable impact on our surroundings, and that is what followers of Jesus have always been called to do. Without these practices, we too may see the day of the Lord not as a day of celebration but as a day of judgment to our great shame.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Misunderstandings - In the days of the prophet Amos, the people expressed a longing for the "day of the Lord." The people mistakenly thought the day of the Lord meant an end to their troubles. However, this occasion meant disaster, not victory. The day of the Lord for the northern kingdom of Israel would mean destruction by the Assyrian army because of God's judgment on the people's sins. Amos issued a stern warning about the hypocrisy of the Israelites, specifically their religious practices and routines with no genuine heart engagement.

False Worship - The Israelites still observed holy days, faithfully brought offerings, and sang worship songs before the Lord. However, the smell coming from the sacrifices failed to be a pleasant aroma in God's nostrils. The insincere songs, the musical instruments playing praise, the hymns with no heart proved to be merely an upsetting noise to God. The congregation mingled paganism with their belief in the living God. Amos expressed God's heart in his message. What the Lord desires, he told the people, is plenty of justice done in the land. Let it roll, overflow, like rushing water, unstoppable and with great force. It was a call for the people to repent, cease their superficial worship.

The Same Call Today - Martin Luther King, Jr. quoted Amos in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. He challenged those listening to "let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24, KJV). He encouraged his fellow citizens to treat all people as brothers and sisters. American history is stained with accounts about merciless slavery, discriminatory Jim Crow laws, lynchings, and other cruel, racist atrocities. Sadly, some of those calling themselves Christians attempted to point to Scripture as a basis for these kinds of actions. King and other leaders called for the purging of this hypocrisy. God's justice and righteousness are needed to cleanse the nation of its double standards.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
No part of our lives is hidden from God's grace and power

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
Nothing is hidden from God's sight. Nothing is greater than God's love. Nothing is stronger than God's mercy and grace. Nothing is too hard for God's power

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account
(Heb 4:13 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Jan 12, 2017)

Series: Justice and the Prophets

UNIT: God Requires Justice

NEXT WEEK

A Prayer for Justice
(Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Accountability Because of Coming Judgment (Amos 5:18-20)

Judgment at the day of the Lord (18)

The Day of the Lord is a day of tumult and terror for those who are not prepared (Isaiah 22:5)

On the day of the Lord all His holy people will be glorified (2 Thess 1:10)

The Day of the Lord is near (Zeph. 1:7-9)

The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (1 Thes. 5:2)

Study and apply word so that we will persevere until the day of the Lord (Phil 2:16)

Judgment that is not expected (19)

Not expected by scoffers (2 Peter 3:3-4)

Not expected by the religious rulers (Jer 5:12)

Not expected by false teachers (2 Thess 2:1-3)

Judgment of the darkness of sin (20)

A judgment that will bring everything to light (1 Cor 4:5)

A judgment that judges men's secrets (Rom 2:16)

A judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31-33)

A judgment that judges what was done in the body (2 Cor 5:10)

Accountability Because of False Worship (Amos 5:21-24)

False gatherings (21)

False gatherings where the people do not listen and are against God (Lev 26:27-31)

False gatherings that trample in God's House (Isa 1:12)

False gatherings that seek followers in evil ways (Matt 23:15-16)

False offerings (22)

False offerings from the wicked (Prov 21:27)

False offerings from people who carry out ungodly scheme (Jer 6:19-20)

False offerings from the disobedient (Hos 8:12-13)

False offerings from the sinful (Mal 2:11-12)

False music and singing (23)

False music and singing from the self-indulgent (Amos 6:5-7)

False music and singing from those who mistreat the poor and needy (Amos 8:3-4)

False music and singing from those who practice cheating and seeking dishonest gain (Amos 8:6-10)

False righteousness (24)

Righteousness that is false because it did not include mercy (Hos 6:6)

Righteousness that is false because of it being cast to the ground (Amos 5:7)

Righteousness that is false because of trying to establish it on our own (Rom 10:3)