

Amos 6:1-7

October 9, 2016

“HA! It is laughable – without Jesus”

Our Redeemer

21st Sunday af. Pentecost

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Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior . Amen. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[**Introduction**] HA! It is laughable.

The Northern Kingdom was corrupt, greedy, but worst of all idolatrous.

19 kings and none of them, not a one was true to God.

After 120 years, after King Saul, after King David, and after King Solomon, the kingdom divides.

Two tribes to the south. They call it Judah.

Ten tribes to the north. They call it Israel.

There are two prophets and only two prophets who go to the Northern Kingdom pre-exile. And they go with a message from God.

Who are the two prophets? Hosea and Amos. H and A.

You see... **HA! It is laughable.**

Hosea and Amos go to the Northern Kingdom, to Israel, to Samaria.

And Amos speaks in our text... **“Woe!”**

[**Northern Kingdom**]

You see, the prophet Amos lived during a period of prosperity for Israel and Judah.

Unfortunately, this was not a result of their faithfulness to God.

Under the veneer of prosperity lay corruption, greed and contempt for God’s commands.

Instead of taking care of the poor, Israel’s leaders took advantage of themselves.

Instead of leading people to the LORD, they led them into idolatry.

They ignored God’s call to repentance.

They ignored righteousness, and sought opulence.

All they cared about was their pleasures

– with no thought about the God who created them.

And so Amos preaches:

“Woe to you who are at ease in Zion, and trust in Mount Samaria, notable persons in the chief nation, to whom the house of Israel comes!” (Amos 6:1)

Zion represents the southern kingdom of Judah, and

Samaria represents the northern kingdom of Israel.

The people of Israel and Judah would look to their priests and kings for direction, justice and help.

Having no enemies to pursue them, these leaders considered themselves on top of the world. They were at ease – feeling mighty secure in themselves – treating themselves almost as gods.

But Amos offers this warning. He says:

“Go over to Calneh and see; and from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory? Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, who cause the seat of violence to come near” (Amos 6:2-3)

The LORD points to other nations around Israel

– proud and mighty nations that fell.

Calneh is Nimrod’s great fort that was captured by the Assyrians.

Hamath is it’s own city-state that was captured by the Assyrians

Gath, the Philistine city all the way in the south, was going to be captured by...

Yep, you guessed it. The Assyrians.

Would Israel’s fate be any different? *[long pause]*

721 BC – the Assyrians attack, and the northern kingdom was no more!

But the leaders of Israel laughed away these warnings. ***HA! It was laughable.***

They call the prophets who spoke them fools.

Instead of repenting and reforming,

they oppressed the poor and committed even more injustice.

It is interesting to note that while the Israelites,

God’s chosen people, were ignoring God’s warnings;

another nation, Assyria to be specific, was listening to the prophet Jonah.

Nineveh repented and reformed.

They were spared from God’s wrath.

And they were the very nation that would bring God’s judgment upon Israel.

Amos continues the LORD’s charge against Israel:

“Woe to you . . . Who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall; who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments, and invent for yourselves musical instruments like David; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.” (Amos 6:4-6)

And herein lay Israel's problem - the same problem that is affecting our society today: Luxury lulled them into a deep spiritual sleep.

Here is the picture Amos paints:

Israel's leaders are all sprawled out on expensive ivory couches.

They gorged themselves with the best and fattest meats.

They drink wine like water – and even use the sacred bowls to do so.

They make a farce of religion

and simply indulge in whatever they want to indulge in.

They love pleasure and entertainment.

They consider themselves as great as King David.

But the thing they refused to care about was this: the ruin of Joseph.

Joseph is another name for the northern Kingdom of Israel;
and Israel was a spiritual disaster.

Greed and materialism ruled the day.

The poor were being taken advantage of,

justice was being perverted and worst of all:

the Gospel was not being proclaimed.

The leaders of Israel – the priests and kings – cared only for themselves and their gain.
This is why God says: ***“Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives, and those who recline at banquets shall be removed.”*** (Amos 6:7)

Judgment was coming. Assyria would reduce Israel to just a memory.

Their wealth would be destroyed.

They themselves would become slaves to a foreign people in a foreign nation.

They would become the lost tribes of Israel – never to be heard from again.

[***What about Us?***] The Israelite pride was great

But take a moment to consider the following:

If this is how God judged his chosen nation

whom he delivered out of Egypt in mercy with an outstretched arm,

how do you think he will deal with our society,

which refuses to repent and turn from its wicked ways?

Are we any different?

You and I, what do we focus on?

Material wealth? Prosperity?

Our success, our wants, our desires...

The Israelites great pride and sin.... Our great pride and sin... ***HA! It is laughable!***

[*Jesus*] It was also laughable that Satan would tempt Jesus.
After Jesus was washed in the baptismal waters of the Jordan River,
He was, to use the Gospel of Mark's word, kicked out into the wilderness.

40 nights and 40 days. Jesus was in the wilderness and Satan was there too.
40 nights and 40 days. Jesus was tempted by Satan.

Scripture records three temptations.

Command these stones to become bread. (Matthew 4:3)

Throw yourself down. (Matthew 4:6)

I will give you all, if you worship me. (Matthew 4:9)

Satan tempted Jesus.

Even in the garden on the night Jesus was betrayed temptation stood firm,
but Jesus prayed, "*My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;
nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.*" (Matthew 26:39)

Jesus did His Father's will. He fulfilled the will of His father.

He endured the mockery of a trial.

He diligently went to the cross.

And He died. But more than that He rose. He rose. He rose.

And because He rose, we shall rise too.

Because of His Easter morning, we will have an Easter morning,
when our bodies, like His body, will rise at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is then that we will truly know the joys of paradise.

It is then that we will be body and soul with our God forever

It is then that we will know sin no more.

[*Conclusion*] Sin is a serious matter.

You and I, we must see our sin. The Law needs to do its job.

We must repent and we must confess.

Then the Gospel can do its job, and we can be forgiven.

For only in Jesus we have the forgiveness of sins, salvation, and life everlasting.
Life without Jesus... HA! It is laughable.

Do you think all of this is laughable?

Do you question can anything good come out of Nazareth?

I use the words of Philip, "Come and See." Amen!

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! AMEN!