

Amos 5  
“Giving Up”  
Mission Sunday

October 14, 2018  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

**[Introduction]**

Jeroboam ben Joash (793–753 BC) changed the map of Israel.

The territories east of the Jordan were recovered and annexed (Amos 6:13),  
the northern border was extended all the way up to Lebo-Hamath,  
and the southern border was enlarged  
all the way down to the Dead Sea (2 Kgs 14:25).

The Northern Kingdom had reached  
the summit of its material power,  
the height of its economic prosperity, and  
the pinnacle of its territorial expansion.

Though everything looked great on the outside,  
Amos saw that the inside was rotten to the core.  
And the prophet could smell it from as far away as his hometown of Tekoa.

“Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.”  
I MEAN... “Something is rotten in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.”

Back during the exodus, back during the exile from Egypt,  
the people of Israel had made a covenant.  
***“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,  
out of the house of slavery.”*** (Exodus 20:2)

He is our God and we – we are His people!  
But ... that was a long time ago.  
Now they have settled into the land of Canaan.  
They have settled into the promised land and have become a nation,  
And along the way they have forgotten Him,  
they have turned their backs on this ancient code  
– you shall have no other gods.  
The kingdom was divided and the remembrance of who they are was divided too.  
They not only worshipped, they worshipped other gods.  
They committed spiritual adultery.

They turned in on themselves – inward focused, *incurvatus*!

This sin lead to greed and false measurements.

They are exploiting the unfortunate and oppressing the poor.

Amos said in Verse 7:

***“Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground!”***

Wormwood is a Palestinian plant with exceedingly bitter taste

and was often used in metaphors

to describe the bitterness of calamity.

And that is exactly what is happening here

– it is a calamity; a bitter national calamity.

“Something is rotten in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.”

AND so Amos’ prophetic voice calls the whole nation – the Whole Nation –  
to repentance and to turn back to the God of justice.

Verses 14 and 15:

***“Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts,  
will be with you, just as you have said. Hate evil and love good...”***

**[Law]**

There are times in your life when you do not want to seek the good.

And there are times in your life when you run after the evil.

The world, the devil, and our own sinful flesh leads us astray.

It is then ...

That we are turned in on ourselves – inward focused, *incurvatus*!

By our greed and false measurements,

we exploit the unfortunate and oppress the poor.

AND Futhermore,

we become the exploited unfortunate and the oppressed poor.

**[Gospel]**

For this very reason Jesus came....

He came and was born of the Virgin Mary in our place.

He was the oppressed poor – not born in the royal palace wrapped in royal linens

but born in the backwoods of Bethlehem,

born amongst the cattle lowing and the sheep bleating,

AND In his life...

[Jesus] was despised and rejected by men,  
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.  
<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;...  
<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.  
<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,...  
<sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away; (Isaiah 53:3-5, 7-8)

“Something is rotten in the Kingdom of God.”  
So Jesus became the exploited unfortunate and the oppressed poor,  
So that we – the exploited unfortunate and the oppressed poor,  
May be lifted to His glory.  
The Glorious exchange  
Where Jesus takes our sins and gives us His righteousness.

**[The Church]**

As a result,  
motivated by Christ's love,  
we care for those among us who are the least, the lost, and the last.  
While so many dismiss these kinds of people,  
motivated by Christ's love,  
we will feed them, clothe them, and bring them the gospel.  
You see,  
the Church does not exist to just bask in God's benediction.  
The danger comes when churches retreat into themselves.  
Churches where all the focus and energy is  
poured into keeping the show on the road,  
maintaining the building,  
paying the bills,  
continuing to do what they have always done,  
Where everything starts and ends with the church,  
and when they become nothing more than religious clubs  
which appeal to likeminded people,  
When this happens, churches become irrelevant  
and slowly stagnate ... and die.

A healthy church in contrast is one that has a ‘whole life’ focus,  
rather than ‘church life’ focus.

It is motivated by God’s love,  
and wants to see the local community transformed by this love.

It sees its mission, to serve the whole community, to serve the whole world,  
and not just those who attend Sunday worship.

You see,  
the Church does not exist to just bask in God’s benediction  
but to carry out a mission.

Another way of saying it is  
that the Church does not exist for itself  
but for the welfare of others.

The Great Commission is specific.

It is to go out and to reach others with the love of Christ,  
in whatever form that may be, (baptizing, teaching, and serving)  
with the intent of making disciples.

Surely it can’t be just so that they will become a member of a church,  
show up on a Sunday morning,  
and throw a few dollars in the plate to keep an old building open.

No. “Something is rotten in our world.”

So we share the love of Jesus....

As we serve water bottles during the Fourth of July Parade,  
As we serve hot dogs during the Homecoming Parade,  
As we serve the community during Christ Cares Sunday...

So we share the love of Jesus...

As we support the mission in Papua New Guinea,  
As we support the mission in Swaziland or eSwatini as it is now called,  
As we support the mission in Panama

So we share the love of Jesus as we baptize, teach, and serve.

“Something is rotten in our world.”

So we – the church – seek good and not evil.

So we – the church – are about...

Equipping Disciples to Make Disciples for Jesus. Amen!

---

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)

---