

### 1st Devotion – Amos 6:1-7 Contentment with Jesus

Our first lesson is from Amos. Listen to these words: **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! <sup>2</sup>Go to Kalneh 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? <sup>3</sup>You put off the day of disaster and bring near a reign of terror. <sup>4</sup>You lie on beds adorned with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. <sup>5</sup>You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. <sup>6</sup>You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. <sup>7</sup>Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.**

And all God's people say AMEN! Really?! Do you want to say AMEN to that? To put it mildly, God is not happy with his people. Obviously, God is speaking to his chosen people through his prophet Amos. What seems to be the problem? Complacency. They have amassed wealth, so they are now happy. But they are ignoring the problem. There is a great lack of a spiritual concern on behalf of Israel's leaders and that has trickled down to the rest of the people. They don't grieve over the ruin of Joseph. You think about how God used Joseph, how Joseph was God's servant. Now Joseph's descendants, the Northern Tribes of Israel, are morally rotten and ruined. To put it mildly, God is not happy with his people! What will happen? He said it in the last verse: first ones into exile; feasting and lounging will end. And that is what we said AMEN to!

That begs the question – how does this lesson apply to us? Definitely not word for word, right? But is the general thought and warning for us too? Don't get too complacent!

I tried to come up with some examples. Warning to you – these examples are probably not the greatest, but hopefully you will get the point. Which one of these would make you the most upset: if you drove to church today and there was a sign on the door saying services have been cancelled? Or you drove passed the gas station and you noticed gas jumped back to \$5/gallon? Which causes you most alarm: hearing that, of our 1,600 members, we are only getting about 600 to come on average to church on the weekend? Or to hear the stock market dropped over 1,200 points in one day? Or how about this one: what will you make sure to do – watch each moment of the Packers' game (or whatever team you follow) this weekend? Or make sure you read the Bible daily?

Believe me, this is not an indictment on you as much as it is on me. After all, sermons and devotions are first preached to the pastor before they are preached to the people. It can be so easy to get complacent. We are blessed. Even in difficult times, we are blessed. God blesses us. But he doesn't want us to get complacent.

Our theme for this service is to show that heavenly treasures are so much more important than earthly treasures. Oh, they are still treasures. We need to make sure to remember where these earthly treasures come from: They are from God. Blessings. But they are not to be our complete focus. When we focus on those things, our emotions can change in an instant. Stock market up – emotions up. Stock market down – emotions down. Earthly treasures come and go. They chance constantly.

Heavenly treasures do not! They are there forever. Think about it. Jesus didn't die so that you would be comfortable on this earth. He died so that you would receive the eternal comfort of heaven.

Amos preached to God's people who had become complacent. Was there help for them? Absolutely! The help was God himself!

Do we ever become complacent? We can. Do we have help? Absolutely! Jesus! The heavenly treasures which come because of Jesus – forgiveness, love, heaven – never go away. They are yours. Focus on those treasures. Be in the Word. Become more concerned with the spiritual welfare of you and your family. Jesus will take care of your earthly treasures too. But he has already taken care of all your heavenly treasures. You have forgiveness. You have his love. You have his heaven. To that now all God's people can say Amen!

### 2nd Devotion – Hebrews 13:1-2, 5-6 Contentment because Jesus is with you (Children's Devotion)

Do you want to hear a cool passage? It is in our next lesson: **Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. <sup>2</sup>Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.**

Wouldn't that be pretty cool? You are showing hospitality and bam...those to whom you are showing hospitality are angels! Ever think that? Maybe you are holding a door open for a stranger, maybe you pick up a stranger's item that dropped, maybe you let that stranger go before you...angel? Maybe. Even if there are never angels you are serving, still a cool thought, right? This passage gives us a great reminder of how the angels (those God sends to serve you) are so close to us that maybe, just maybe, that person you gave a glass of water to was an angel!

Wanna know something even cooler than that? Listen to these words: **Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." <sup>6</sup>So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"**

There was a word in there. It was CONTENT. Do you know what that means? It means to be happy with what you have. Are you always happy? Maybe you have a PlayStation 4 but your friend has a PlayStation 5. Maybe your parents have the iPhone 13 but the 14 is now out! Let me ask you this: is it ok to have nice things? Yes, nice things are blessings from God. But God tells us to keep ourselves away from the love of money, or nice things. If all we want is the newest and greatest, we will never be happy. Because there are always newer and greater things coming out.

And after all, God tells us why we can be happy. Do you remember what I said was pretty cool? It was pretty cool to think how close angels are to us. We may even have held doors open for angels without knowing it. Even cooler than that is knowing how close God is to us! He didn't promise that we would serve angels. But he did promise that he would never leave us nor forsake us! He told us he is our helper in all things. Not only that, but he shows us we don't need to fear this world.

Think about that. If someone was going to fight against you, would you rather have me on your side or have the Hulk, Superman, and all the superheroes on your side? Having God by you and on your side is far greater. And God is on your side. He fights for you, but even better, he has forgiven you. And he has promised to live with you in a very special place – in heaven.

Do you see why you can be content, happy? You may not have the latest and greatest. You have someone so much better. You have God. You have Jesus. You have his love. You have his forgiveness. You have heaven. Amen.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Devotion – Luke 16:19-31 Heaven is our Treasure

If there was ever a need to see why it is important to treasure heavenly treasures above earthly, that is found in our last lesson from Luke 16. Listen to this parable: **“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. <sup>20</sup> At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores <sup>21</sup> and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ <sup>25</sup> “But Abraham replied, ‘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. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ <sup>27</sup> “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup> “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ <sup>30</sup> “No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup> “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”**

Of course, the warning is there. The rich man begged for just a drop of water for a tiny bit of relief. The rich man begged and pleaded to have Lazarus rise from the dead and let his relatives know about this warning so they will not be there with him. Agony!

The point must be made to start – just because you may have some riches in this world does NOT mean this is your eternal fate. Nope. Not the point.

So, what is the point? I think we need to look at the end. We heard: **‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’** Isn't that so true? Think of how many people hardened their heart over Jesus coming back to life!

A lot could be said here of stewardship and how we use the earthly treasures for spiritual gains of others. Use your treasures wisely. Give to the work of Jesus. Support missions and give of your time to help spread the love of Jesus. Now I think we are hitting on the point of the parable more.

But can we even go deeper into the point? The reference of Moses and the Prophets is the whole Word of God. Yes, at this point the New Testament hadn't been written yet. The people were LIVING the NT. But those books still had the promises of God and his love through the Messiah. Well, that Messiah was speaking to them. He was telling this parable. Could this also have been a foreshadowing of those who would reject Jesus even after he rose? Absolutely! Think about these hearers of Jesus. They constantly wanted proof. Even with him rising from the dead wasn't going to be enough for them.

Do we ever want proof of our heavenly treasures? “Jesus, if you would just give me this good paying job...Jesus, if you would just take this pain away...Jesus if you would just heal my loved one...Jesus if you would just let my team win...” Do you want that proof too? “When the proof comes, then Jesus I will believe!” Is that focusing on the heavenly treasures? Or the earthly ones?

What is it that we NEED? It is nice to have earthly blessings. But the question was, what do we NEED? Moses and the Prophets, or in other words, the very words from God! We need the Bible. We need the truths in the Bible. Not only do those words talk about the promises of God, but they talk about the FULFILLED promises of God. We don't just hear of how the Messiah will die and rise, we get to read how he DID die and rise. Why? Yes of course to take all your sins away. But even more than that – to give you PROOF! If Jesus was still dead, your faith would also be dead. However, Jesus is NOT dead and neither is your faith! Treasure that faith! Grow that faith! Keep that faith always connected to Jesus. Because in Jesus you have ETERNAL treasures! Amen.