

7.11.21 Sermon Pastor Jordan Gades, Amos 7 and Mark 6:14-29

Good morning, Grace and Peace be to you from God our father and our Lord Jesus Christ Amen.

Oof, just oof. That's all I can say, all I felt after reading the gospel message from the Book of Mark this week. So, the Word Gospel means the Good News. We are supposed to have the new testament start with 4 whole books full of the good news of Jesus Christ. But it's hard to see that in the story of John the Baptist's gruesome death. Sure, if we were in the old testament we might be expecting that. There are 39 books filled with the law of God and stories of a whole bunch of humans not following them. And then there's a whole bunch of people suffering because of that. So where do we find hope today? In the Law of the old testament in which no human can keep? In this story of death and corruption from the gospel of Mark?

But there is a beauty in God's word that always shines through. There is Law in the Gospel and there is Gospel in the Law. There is Good News that flows from the Law of God.

Now I know that we all have a natural preference to bend, if not break the laws that seem to bind us. But we all can see the point of laws as well. When you see that sign that says curve ahead, speed limit 30, and then you ignore it, and try and blast through that turn way to fast and slam on your breaks because you can feel your car going just a touch out of control and you find yourself flying up on a car who was actually going the speed limit, all while there's another car in the other lane and you have no room to maneuver, and your praying your insurance is paid up, and then that thought hits you, oh now I understand why that sign was there, now I understand why this law is in place. We didn't have to do any of that of course. We could have just listened to the law that was there for our own good, there to protect us, there to see us live a peaceful life.

And that's what Amos is trying to get across. If you're not going to listen to God, to what God wants for you, then you are going to crash.

That might not seem like good news. That might seem like a threat. And I said early there was gospel in the law, there is good news to hear from the prophecy of destruction. And I meant it. So, listen up because here it is.

God could have used a very different metaphor here, when he is speaking through Amos. God is talking about the judgement of the people because they haven't been following Gods law. If God's law is a threat God should be using some different language. God's law should have been as straight as an arrow to pierce, as sharp sword to cut, as deadly as a spear to impale. And God is talking about destroying a whole chunk of the chosen people. He's talking about the destruction of a whole bunch of the enemies of God's people who have been harassing them and hounding them and hurting them for years. And in the midst of all that language, we see the plumb line. We see how God's word should be used and what it should be seen as.

Maybe when you heard that a few minutes ago, that caught you a little. A plumb line. It's not a word we hear often in the bible. It's not a word that we hear very often now. Anyone know what a plumb line is? Maybe heard it as a plumb bob?

Picture

It's a weighted string that is perfectly up and down. It's been used for millennia to make sure things are built straight, built well. It is used to judge whether you're building a wall or leaning too. In the world before laser levels, this was the best way to get a straight line. Everything was measured off the plumb line.

And now Amos says God's word is a plumb line. God's Law is the thing unto which we have to measure everything else about ourselves.

Ya'll we need to start measuring ourselves against the plumb line of God's word, God's Law, it's so we live a good and peaceful life. The most important thing that I have to stress about this metaphor, and I really think it's important, is that a plumb line is used for building up, not tearing down. For construction not, destruction. God's law sets the mark for where we have to trim off to square ourselves to what God wants for us. And what does God want for us? God's law is meant for giving life, not taking it away. God builds us up, God gives us peace. It is meant to help us build a life that is whole, strong, with a good base that is well built over time.

So, taking that first and foremost, That God's law builds us a good and peaceful life, how do we now move into the world around us? How do we use the word and law of God to build up this world and ourselves? There's the million-dollar question. That's the question that I want you to go home with. That's the question that I can't answer for each of you from just standing up here.

But I'll tell you this. God is working with you without fail and God's word is sitting right in front of you to guide you. And you don't have to be anyone special to figure it out. It's the last line from our reading today that is what I find to bring me the most hope.

Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

God is calling you. God is calling all of us. To live good and peaceful lives built around the word and law of God. Amen.