

SERMON FOR NOVEMBER 12, 2023

TEXT: AMOS 5: 18-24

THEME: THE DAY OF THE LORD

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!

Why would you have the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, and not light,

¹⁹ as if a man fled from a lion,

and a bear met him,

or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall,

and a serpent bit him.

²⁰ Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹ "I hate, I despise your feasts,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

²² Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,

I will not accept them;

and the peace offerings of your fattened animals,

I will not look upon them.

²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs;

to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

In the name of Jesus:

Just before the death of actor W.C. Fields, a friend visited Fields' hospital room and was surprised to find him thumbing through a Bible. Asked what he was doing with a Bible, Fields replied, "I'm looking for loopholes."

Many think that death and God's judgment do not apply to them. But as we see in the prophet Amos today, Judgment Day is coming. You need to prepare for the Day of the Lord.

The prophet Amos was not a prophet by trade. He lived during the time of Isaiah and Hosea and made his living as a shepherd. Yet the Lord called Amos from the fields of watching and caring for sheep to deliver a stern message to the people of Israel and Judah. Amos' message is one that was to wake his hearers up to the realization that the Day of the Lord was fast approaching. I pray that the Spirit will open our ears and hearts to heed his warning as well.

Amos' words were aimed at the unbelievers in Israel, the unfaithful in Judah, and the Gentiles who were at odds with God. Instead of seeking God in faith at His Temple in Jerusalem, the people were worshiping God in places where God was not to be found. The government was corrupt, legal experts turned justice on its ear, tradesmen took advantage of their customers, and those who lived in that day deluded themselves into thinking that evil will not overtake or confront them. People in Amos' day tried to keep God the Judge at a safe distance, believing that God was pleased with their corrupt lives and worship practices. They were blinded by their boundless optimism, and really were not listening to God at all. The people were looking forward to the Day of the Lord, thinking that God was pleased with their worship life and lives in general, and that great blessings would come upon them from God on that Day. But nothing could be farther from the truth!

Amos warned that the Day of the Lord would be a day of disaster for the people who actually were despising God's Word, failing to take heed of what God was saying through the prophets. How often that takes place today when people fail to listen to pastors and teachers who preach and teach God's word faithfully. Many think that God is pleased with their half hearted worship, their nonchalant attitude toward those in need. Amos tells the people of his day and ours that if you fail to listen to God and His Word there will be consequences!

It is as if Amos is saying, "Go ahead and despise God and His Word, but you will find out God's wrath in the end." Amos writes: "It is darkness, and not light "as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him." Amos is saying that there will be no escaping God's wrath on the Day of the Lord. It will be a day of darkness, not light, as if a man who runs from a lion and then meets a bear, there will be no escape. God hates sin and God sees the hearts of men, who from birth are evil, not just in Amos' time but today as well! The Bible speaks to this day and age, condemning everything sinners do, everything sinners establish, whereby they think that they are following God. The thought that sinners were secure was but an illusion and temporary. The one who thinks he has escaped God's wrath once will feel God's wrath the next

time and there will be no escape. It is as the Apostle Paul states: “ Let he who thinks he stands watch out lest he fall.” (I Cor. 10:12).

The Day of the Lord is a great and terrible day, where the darkness and gloom of creation are undone. To those who are deceived into thinking that God is a loving power who will pour out His blessings on everyone regardless of their behavior, they will find out on that Day that God is a mighty warrior who will wipe out all evil and punish sin decisively and in totality.

There is hope, though, for those who wish to escape God’s wrath. God has a Word, a Final Word, in His Son Jesus Christ. Judgment Day for the nation of Israel in the days of Amos was coming, and Judgment Day is coming for this generation as well. Judgment Day is a day of darkness, even very dark, and no light in it, unless something is done about the sins of all mankind that alienates from a holy and just God. But the Bible speaks of another Judgment Day that took place over 2000 years ago on a hill called Calvary. There, God’s only Son in human flesh, Jesus Christ, took on Himself the sins of all. Listen to the Word of God: ⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” On the Black Friday the skies turned black with God’s rage and anger against sin. He poured out His wrath on His only begotten Son, damning Him instead of you

so that by the gift of God's love you would be spared from God's wrath. God sent His Son Jesus to suffer Hell for you. That was the Day of the Lord, that Great Day when God took care of all sin. Your sins and mine. He who knew no sin became sin for you so that you might know the love God has for you in Jesus.

God's Word to you and to all this day is this: Repent. Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand. God in love seeks your redemption and salvation. God doesn't desire the death of the sinner, but that all come to a saving knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible says: ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ²⁰ For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. ²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, because there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

God does NOT seek to condemn you but to forgive you and save you. So confess your sins for there is forgiveness in Christ. Remember that you are the Baptized and that God has in Jesus Christ purchased and won you from sin, death, and the devil. God's love is poured out to you in His Son Jesus, which is why Amos writes: "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an

ever-flowing stream¹³ “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. For there will come a Day for God’s chosen Ones when you will live eternally with Him. Throughout this life we are so occupied and immersed in the matters and affairs of this life that we forget the blessings God has in store for His children in Jesus. For God says: ¹⁵ I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,” says the Lord your God.

Jesus says: “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. And again Jesus says: ¹² “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

And so we look forward to the Day of The Lord, that eternal day promised to the thief on the cross and enjoyed by all the saints who have gone before us, because on that day we will rejoice at God's salvation, we will see it and be glad.

We pray: Lord God Heavenly Father, prepare us for the Coming of your Son Jesus on the Last Day, so that we with all of the company of the redeemed may finally enter into eternal life. Use us to prepare others for that Day, so that through repentance and faith in Jesus, many more will be saved. To your glory and in Jesus' name. Amen