

**In the name of our Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

<sup>10</sup> Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: “Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. <sup>11</sup> For this is what Amos is saying: ”‘Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.’”

<sup>12</sup> Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. <sup>13</sup> Don’t prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king’s sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom.”

<sup>14</sup> Amos answered Amaziah, “I was neither a prophet nor a prophet’s son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. <sup>15</sup> But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’ <sup>16</sup> Now then, hear the word of the LORD. You say, ”‘Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the house of Isaac.’ <sup>17</sup> “Therefore this is what the LORD says: ”‘Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will certainly go into exile, away from their native land.’” **This is God’s Word for God’s people.**

**Dear Friends,**

Have you ever had someone tell you that there are a very “spiritual” person – that they talk to God every day? They talk to God and think they are doing pretty good when it comes to their spiritual lives, but their conversation with God is only one way – they don’t take time to listen to him and what he has to say.

In a way, that is how things were at the time of Amos. The Children of Israel thought they were pretty spiritual and they thought they were following God’s Word. They were making sacrifices and listening to the spiritual leaders but the message they were hearing wasn’t from God and their sacrifices were being made to a false idol. Yet life was good, they thought they were in good shape spiritually and they didn’t want anything to change. But they were headed away from God and so he sent them the prophet Amos to call them to repentance.

Amos was not what you would call a politically correct kind of guy. He was not worried if the people didn’t like message because God had called and directed him to speak this message. When Amos went to Bethel to proclaim the Lord’s Word, Amaziah, the chief priest at Bethel, basically told Amos, “**We don’t like your kind or your message, so why don’t you go back to where you came from.**” There are a lot of people that don’t greet the Lord’s message with open arms – there are a lot of attacks on Christianity – and yet that doesn’t mean we should stop proclaiming God’s Word.

Today as we consider the words of Amos, may they encourage us to be a faithful witness against unbelief as we proclaim a call to repentance and a call to faith.

When King Solomon died, the Children of Israel split into two nations: the Ten Northern tribes who kept the name of Children of Israel and the southern tribes which went by the name of Judah. The first king of the northern tribes didn’t want his people traveling south to Jerusalem to

worship, so he built two golden calves and installed them in Dan and in Bethel and directed the people to worship God at the foot of these golden calves. In this way he brought idolatry to the people and started taking them down a path away from God. Every king of the Children of Israel continued in this sin of Jeroboam.

God was patient with his people but finally sent Amos with a strong message because of their sin, **“Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.”** As you might imagine, this was not what the people wanted to hear and Amaziah, the priest or person in authority at Bethel, felt it his duty to refute such a message. He began by informing the king, **“Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words.”** Amaziah didn’t call Amos a false prophet rather he tried to appeal to the king by claiming that Amos was threatening the king’s power and trying to lead an insurrection against the king. We don’t know how the king responded but it appears Amaziah took things into his own hands.

He tells Amos, **“Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. <sup>13</sup> Don’t prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king’s sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom.”** Amaziah doesn’t try to refute Amos or argue about the content of his message, he just wants Amos to take it somewhere else – don’t preach it hear.

Just like Amos, we, at times, have a message that people don’t want to hear. It’s a message that isn’t always popular or even politically correct. It calls for a change that people don’t want to make because they have gotten comfortable with sin.

Same sex marriage stands out as a very relevant example. Television shows and the media have been promoting homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle for a number of years, but the Supreme Court has now ruled that same sex marriage is a constitutional right. Many people have embraced this ruling as a loving gesture towards a persecuted segment of our society. The sad part is that if you don’t celebrate this ruling you are labeled as being hateful and unloving. But is it really loving to celebrate this ruling of our nation’s highest court?

Scripture tells us to avoid certain, sinful lifestyles, **“<sup>9</sup> Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders <sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”** (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). That’s quite a list. Being a thief is not an acceptable lifestyle, being a drunk is not an acceptable lifestyle and homosexuality is not an acceptable lifestyle.

And yet, the pressure is on all of us to celebrate this new ruling by the Supreme Court – to celebrate this sinful lifestyle. So how do we react to that? What do we do? How do we talk to our friends, co-workers, neighbors, relatives who are living in this sinful way?

Some key things to remember are that God does not celebrate sin and neither should we. Sin takes us down a path away from God and his Word. Even though we don’t always like what God’s Word says, he doesn’t give us the option to pick and choose what we want to hold onto and what we want to discard. Jesus commands us to teach all of his word.

The sin of homosexuality is bad but so is every other sin that you and I commit. We have all fallen into temptation in one way or the other. Sometimes we sin by doing nothing – by giving silent approval by not speaking up.

Thank God that Jesus has paid for every one of our sins on the cross and he even paid for the sins of homosexuality and the sin of same sex marriage. When Jesus died on the cross, he wasn't being punished for being politically incorrect. It may have looked like that way on the outside. What was really happening, was that he was being punished for the sins of the world – my sins, your sins, every sin that you have ever committed was placed on Jesus Christ, and he took all of them away when he died, and then rose from the dead.

Today and every day, we want to remember that as we come before God with a repentant heart, he forgives every one of our sins. So as we talk to someone about same sex marriage and homosexuality we want to remember we are a sinner and so are they. We want to remember Christ's love for us and for them.

And so we want to start by talking about God's love and yes God's demand that we be perfect. We want to talk about Jesus and the cross where we see God's love for us and we want to talk about repentance and forgiveness and note that repentance always means a change in our lifestyle – a desire to want to follow our Savior and his word. And we want to be patient and eventually you will have to talk about what scripture says about same sex marriage and homosexuality but pray that the Holy Spirit has worked through the word to help the person see God's love – for only the gospel can change hearts and change lives. And there will be some that reject what you have said because they don't want to listen to God's Word and they don't want to change their lives and that kind of response fills us with sadness, but if just one person's life is changed it is worth it.

So are you a spiritual person? Do you talk to God – even more importantly are you listening to him? The world will try and take us down a path away from God in the name of political correctness or a distorted view of love. But God's love is what has changed each one of our hearts, so let's not get caught up in celebrating sin, rather let's celebrate the forgiveness that comes through faith in Christ who paid for our sins and let's give a faithful witness of what God's Word says. Amen.