

**“FIRST THINGS FIRST”****Pastor Mike Corwin****TEXT:** LUKE 10:38-42**GOD’S WORD:** AMOS 8:1-12**I – AMOS:**

The first time I read this prophecy from Amos I shuddered. When it came up in the lectionary text we’ve been preaching from and I read it, I still shuddered. I shudder because I can see this piece of Scripture being played out in the life of the world today.

God told Amos that just like a bowl of ripe fruit, the people of Israel were ripe for punishment. He had said it was coming numerous times but he withheld it hoping that his children would come to their senses. But this time he’s had his fill and he will postpone it no longer. He tells Amos that during the time of judgement nasty things will be happening:

- The singing in the church will be turned to wailing.
- There will be an earthquake.
- There will be an eclipse.
- Time of mourning...agonizing, life changing mourning.
- Famine.
- Dead bodies piled all over the place.

The part that really scares me is the next part, verses 11 and 12. He speaks of a famine that doesn’t concern food, but is a lack of the Word of God. He says that people will stagger all over the place looking for it, but they will not find it. They are looking for a word of hope in the midst of their turmoil, but none is to be found. God has abandoned them.

Verse 13 was not included in this morning’s reading, but it speaks volumes to me as I consider our youth, the ministry we’ve done to bring them and keep them in the church and what we’re trying to do for them at an early stage of their life, like dancing with the Praise Team during music. It says...

<sup>13</sup> Beautiful girls and strong young men  
will grow faint in that day,  
thirsting for the LORD’s word.

And all of this seems to be because Greed among the people and the way it's used against the less fortunate members of society has finally pushed God over the edge. And leading up to all of this, and the cause of greed and all the other rampant sin of the day was that God's chosen people had moved God down on their list of priorities. They had decided other things were more important than living to please God. They had even turned to worshipping idols too.

## **II – TODAY'S PRIORITIES:**

As I look at the world today I see these same things coming to pass. In the recent past we have observed all kinds of natural disasters, not just earthquakes. We have had mass deaths in the wake of things like Covid. People are dying in mass numbers in the Ukraine right now. Then we add to these wars the mass shootings we are experiencing here in our country, where innocent children are wiped out by a madman with an assault weapon. Most of us are mourning over what we are seeing and experiencing in our lives. We are concerned with the future. Our population rate has been falling because people aren't having children as often as in times past. Mostly because they are worried about bringing them into a world of uncertainty.

And then there's the famines. We see famine all over the world. Even in this country there isn't enough to eat. We've termed a new phrase for it...food insecurity. It means because of supplies, because of cost, because of poverty, people go to bed hungry each and every day.

Then there's the famine Amos heard about from God. That people would search all over for the Word of God but not be able to find it. That our youth and children would grow faint because of the lack of it.

Drive down the streets after church today and you'll see more youth outside the church than you'll see inside. Some churches have a famine because they seem to be able to preach about everything but the Word of God. Morals, ethics, the Golden Rule and other such things are no longer taught or modeled in our society. That might offend someone but yet you can have violent images on video games, movies, and social media. You can act in all kinds of disgusting ways and it's OK because you have rights, but not in faith matters it seems. We can accommodate all the other beliefs, but not Christianity. And I think Greed plays into most of it today as it did then. WHERE ARE OUR PRIORITIES!!!!

## **III – TEXT:**

This morning's text points out what I'm trying to convey to you. And Jesus does it much better than I do.

**Luke 10:38-42 (NLT)**

## Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

<sup>38</sup> As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup> Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

<sup>41</sup> But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! <sup>42</sup> There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

If you want to alienate one of the women in the church who seems to always be in motion continually doing something, read them this story and tell them they should be named Martha. They seem to get a little upset over such things. But that's not the real point of this story. Servers are needed. We are all called to serve in some way. The point of this story is about priorities.

Jesus and the disciples are on their way to Jerusalem and they stop in a village along the way where a woman named Martha invites them to come in and rest and eat. This is the same Martha who has a sister named Mary and a brother named Lazarus that we read about in some of the other Gospel stories. So it says that they do stop and Martha enters into this flurry of motion so all of her unexpected guests can eat and be comfortable.

In the meantime her sister Mary goes in and sits with the guests. The phrase that she "sat at the Lord's feet" was used to say that a disciple was learning from a rabbi. This image though would be disturbing to some. The women of this time period did not receive religious education. They were expected to do what Martha was doing and help take care of the men, help serve.

Martha has enough at watching her sister loaf and not carry out her duties in the house. She goes to Jesus and complains about how unfair it is that she's doing all this work while Mary shirks her household duties. Jesus, in a loving way (my dear Martha) tells her that there is more to life than getting supper together. That Mary was doing what they all should be doing...learning from Jesus.

Catch what's going on here concerning priorities. Jesus, the Messiah, the rabbi, the Savior was in the house. He didn't go to every house, but he had come to Martha's. But instead of paying attention to Jesus, Martha was distracted by all her many tasks she thought more important. He worries about her because her hurried demeanor on the outside could very well affect her soul's condition. He chides her for this and then turns his attention to Mary.

He tells Martha that "There is only one thing worth being concerned about" and that would be to listen to him, to learn from him, to have your life changed by him, and that Mary had discovered

this and he wasn't about to take it away from her. Mary had her priorities straight. Mary had put "First things first."

I've often wished there was a last verse to this passage that would tell me if Martha went back to the kitchen, or if she set down beside Mary instead.

#### **IV – CHANGE THE WORLD:**

I have been amazed and disappointed in all the things that come out of the people who are leading the famine on TV, social media, news reports, and political arenas. All we've heard in the wake of the Texas mass shooting and the subsequent shootings, are long discussions about what we need to do to control firearms and other parts of the picture to stop such things.

I'm here to proclaim that any measure they pass...any actions they take, will not stop the bloodshed. You can put all the rules in place and it won't stop the bloodshed.

If you want to stop the behavior of society you must stop the famine! You must put the words of Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy back in to the lives of the people. If the famine continues, the senseless actions of those who are starving from faith will continue. Kids will continue to shoot kids, mass murders will go on, violence will continue, human trafficking will flourish, rape, robbery, racism, and all the other issues will continue on. The church needs to step up and feed people with the Gospel and not just a bowl of soup. Jesus is the answer...the only answer.

#### **V – OUR PRIORITIES:**

This will only happen when we change our priorities so we're not part of the famine, but those who are feeding the ones fainting from the lack of God's Word. What are your priorities in life?

- Is God #1, above all
- Is Jesus truly the Lord of lords, and the King of kings in your life?
- How often do you skip church and for what reasons?
- How many idols do you have that need to be smashed?
- When's the last time you read the Sermon on the Mount to learn what the life of a Christian should be like?
- How has Jesus transformed your life?
- How have you transformed the life of others?

I will continue to try stopping the famine we face until the day I see Jesus face to face. How about you? I believe there is still Hope...we just need to share it instead of being Greedy.

AMEN