



One Page Sermon

By Rev. Robb McCoy

July 14, 2024

Doom to you...

Recap of sermon from July 14, 2024

Scripture: Amos 5:7-13

We really didn't need any more doom today, so I'm thinking that I picked the wrong passage. "Doom to you," are the first three words of this passage from the prophet Amos. In fact "doom to you," is a pretty good summary of the entire book. The last four verses of the nine-chapter book are a promise of restoration. The rest is a bitter statement of judgment upon Israel for economic injustice and empty worship.

The third portion of the Revised Social Principles is "The Economic Community." In the preface, two Bible passages are cited. The first is Matthew 25, which includes three parables of Jesus. They are parables about readiness and faith in action. The last of the three parables is the famous story that Jesus tells about the separation of the sheep and the goats, with how they treated "the least of these" as the determining factor for this judgment. It is a powerful parable, and it is one that is easy to preach on. Take care of the sick, feed the hungry, visit the prisoner. These are the things we do which lead to the Kingdom of Heaven.

I decided to choose the other passage today because I figured it would be more of a challenge. So we begin the reading with "Doom to you," on a Sunday morning no one needs to hear more about doom. In fact, most of us are probably already thinking about doom. And anxiety, instability, fear, and violence. We really didn't need to hear "Doom to you" on the day after the attempted murder of Former President Donald Trump. Yet how can I stand here and ignore it?

It was a despicable act of cowardice, one with little obvious motive other than to cause chaos. One man was killed. Others were seriously injured, and while former President Trump was relatively uninjured, the aftermath could be ugly. I can't be the only one who's imagination spun wildly out of control, playing out the many possibilities of retaliation, accusation, and conspiracies that will grow from this violent act.

I did not need to come in and hear "Doom to you..." because my "doom sensitivity" is already on high alert. Amos however, is a reminder of the importance of worship in the midst of troubling times. Amos worked as a prophet during a time of relative prosperity and stability. The kings of Israel and

Judah at the time were highly successful. The economy was booming. There were stone houses being built, extensive feasts being shared, lush vineyards being planted. Yet Amos came to remind everyone that the relative prosperity was being gained on the backs of the poor.

There were unjust practices of high taxes on the poor, forcing them to plant "cash crops" like olives and grapes to settle their accounts while sustenance farming like wheat and grains were ignored. Fields were confiscated. Wealth was consolidated. Bribes were levied. Scales were tipped.

All the while, the worship and festivals and sacrifices were empty promises to the God who liberated the people from slavery. God was angry with people who went through the motions of worship while enacting injustice. Later in this fifth chapter of Amos, God declares "I hate your festivals; I don't enjoy your joyous assemblies. If you bring me offerings... I won't be pleased" (Amos 5:21-22). God is not interested in worship that does not lead to justice.

So we come to worship in the midst of the doomscrolling and we must find a way to the good news. Yes, there is doom around. Yes, we still live in economically unjust times, but we can keep reading Amos and hear his prophetic promise to "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). When we worship we dip our hands into the ever-flowing Spirit of God and get a glimpse of the righteousness before us. When we worship, we can hold onto the hope of things to come.

When we worship, we do not participate in idyllic escapism. We don't put on a show while the world crumbles. We acknowledge the doom and get refreshed by the righteousness of God. We claim that the Way of Christ that is our hope out of the doom. It is the way of compassion, kindness, and love. When we get lost in the doom, we can turn to Christ who spoke of the relationship between false worship and economics too. In the sermon on the mount: "Stop collecting treasures on earth... Indeed, desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness" (Matthew 6:19, 33). Seek first God's Kingdom, and we might find a way through the doom and the gloom.

Next Week: Beloved Community, Part 4 of 4
The Political Community