Ignoring God Doesn't Work Out

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Date: 07 August 2016

[0:00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Take your Bibles to go with me to the book of Amos. The country is living in opulence and luxury and everything is going good and everybody's happy and they're complacent.

They're enjoying all their good stuff and God wakes up a man or brings him out from behind the sheep and says, I want you to go talk to him.

In fact, when he comes to talk to the nation of Israel and the nation of Judah, he's going to make them mad. You're going to really enjoy the confrontation between Amos and Amaziah before the end of the chapter.

It really sounds a lot like America and Alpharetta. So as you hear God speaking to Israel and to Judah, I hope you'll make an application. I hope you can obviously see what the Bible is talking about and then see how much it compares to the world you live in and also look at your own life and see how it works there.

But here's the central truth of these two chapters. Ignoring God doesn't work out. You can kind of like get so involved in your life and enjoying all of your wealth and enjoying all of your success and enjoying all of your blessings and being the most powerful country in the world and thinking you're the chief among nations.

But God does it like that. And he calls them back to himself. In Amos chapter six and verse one, woe to them that are at ease. Those that are complacent.

The Bible says, woe to them that are at ease and Zion and trust in the mountain of Samaria and are named chief of the nations to whom the house of Israel came.

And he tells them, why don't you go out and look around? Why don't you go see the other nations around you and see how they felt so secure and how they thought everything was working out for their good, but it didn't work out.

You're no better than they are. The prophets talking to Israel and Judah, both. They call themselves the chief of the nations. They trust in the mountain of Samaria.

[2:12] They are at ease and they are complacent. Complacency is based on lies motivated by pride. It leads to trusting someone or something other than God.

That's the picture you find in the book of Revelation chapter three and verse 17 when the Lord was talking to the church of Laodicea, the church of this decadent decade.

The church of this, the opulence and luxury. And he said, because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. And you don't know that you are really wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

So he was waking up a church in the book of Revelation. He was waking up a nation in the Old Testament. And he was saying, I'm fed up with your complacency. I'm fed up with you just being so comfortable.

It's easy for a people or a church to look at what they have and feel good about themselves. It's easy to evaluate ourselves, but that not be God's opinion.

[3:18] We need to see ourselves like God sees us. We need to see our church as God sees our church. God's people need to see how God sees his people. We don't want to be at ease and think that all is good and right.

We need to face the facts about our spiritual life. We need to check out our heart, not our wallet. We need to see what's happening on the inside more than what's happening on the outside.

So I'll just bring a question to you out of the first couple of three verses in Amos chapter 6. And the question was, they were so complacent, so happy. They were just at ease.

Everything's going to be okay. Everything's going to be okay. And often we live like that. We live in a great country. We live in a great country.

Boy, it's a great time in history to be alive. And everything's okay. But God pronounced judgment. He said, whoa. He said, I don't like it.

[4:19] Because when you become complacent, you don't think you need God. When you begin to think everything's going okay, it's amazing when you're in the emergency room how you want to call on God.

It's amazing when you don't know where your next meal will come from, you want to call on God. It's amazing when your life's at great problems, you want to call on God. But when you're at ease, whoa.

Another whoa starts in verse 6. Verse 6 talks about it. They were enjoying their luxuries. And they were more interested in their luxuries than the things of God.

Namus chapter 6 and verse 6. The Bible said that drink wine in bowls. That is an interesting thing, isn't it? You like wine so much, which rich people get to drink, and you like it so much, you drink it in bowls.

My wife came to visit my family. My family country people. And her family's all this rich and sophisticated people. And she came to our house. And when they came out, and it was Sunday morning, we had Cheerios for breakfast.

[5:23] That's the only day we ever got cereal. And her family, they served things in a little bitty bowl like that. And our family, we serve them in serving bowls. Amen. And so everybody had a serving bowl.

And nobody had one of them little bitty spoons for babies. We had a spoon you could shovel that stuff in with. And she told me later, she said, I could not believe your family. But I'll tell you, I couldn't believe hers.

I went to visit her family. And they sat me a plate down and had a little sample of everything. And I was like, are we eating today? Are we just sampling food? And so here in the story, you have them drinking wine out of bowls and wiping themselves with fancy ointments that they're buying.

But they are not greed for the affliction of Joseph. They have no idea. They're laying on their beds of ivory. They're stretched on their couches eating lambs and calves.

They don't even let them get full grown. They don't even let them get full grown. I grew up on a farm. If you were born a boy calf, you were dead meat. If you was born a heifer, you had a good long life ahead of you.

[6:28] If you got old, we ate you. But these guys are so rich, the lambs and the calves will do. They're drinking their wine from bowls and they're anointing themselves. They had gone pleasure mad.

I wonder what that sounds like. In 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 4, the apostle Paul talked about the same thing. Traitors, heady, heady.

That's a good word. Heady, high-minded. Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. They even went to church where they had a form of godliness, but they denied the power thereof.

And Paul told Timothy, get away from those guys. From such, turn away. In Luke chapter 21 and verse 34, the Bible said, and take heed to yourselves, thus at any time your hearts be overcharged with service.

If you get so hung up in partying and drunkenness and enjoying the riches and enjoying the fancy life, you got a remote control to switch between any of your 5,000 channels while you're drinking wine out of bowls and eating ice cream out of gold dishes with silver spoons.

[7:32] He said, you might ought to wake up because this life is going to get you where you're not aware of what God's doing. In Amos chapter 6 and verse 5, while David had made music for God, now they had music in their house.

They were making all kinds of instruments so they could enjoy it, not for God, but for themselves. Their selfish lives angered God. And he said, I'm taking away your luxuries.

So you'll think about me. Look at Amos chapter 6 and verse 7. Therefore shall they go captive with the first that go captive. And the banquet of them that stretch themselves on their couches shall be removed.

So in this little set of verses, God's kind of angry with how you've let your money and your luxuries take over your life. I don't know if you realize it, but we live in the lap of luxury.

I'm not condemning you. I live in the lap of luxury. We live in nice homes. We eat nice food. We wear nice clothes and we go nice places.

[8:41] And if you live in Alpharetta, Cumming, Roswell, Duluth, you live in any of this area around here. Even if you leave our area and go to another part, you're like, my goodness. This is a whole other country.

They don't even live like we live. We are so used to our luxury. And sometimes that lulls us to sleep where God doesn't get any attention from us, where prayer moves to the back room, where the Bible reading is out of it, where God is only there for our culturally correct attendance.

But no real listening. God's not against us having things at all. And he tells Paul in 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 17.

Look at it. 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 17. He said, I know there's some rich people. And I'll just tell you up front, God likes them to enjoy what they got. So love your boat and enjoy your boat and enjoy your TV channel and enjoy your good food and enjoy your couch.

He's not against that. He's going to tell you. But he said, I do have some instructions. And so this would apply to us. In the book of Amos, God is upset with their luxuries, upset with their complacency.

[9:50] And Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 6, 17, charge them that are rich in this world. That's us. If you compare the United States of America, if you compare just this area to the United States, we're rich.

But if you compare the United States of America to the world, we're extremely rich. Not much. Anything we want, we can have. If we can't afford it, we can get a credit card and get it.

Say amen. And we live in the wonderful, wonderful world of luxury. And he said, charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded. They don't think so proudly of themselves.

They don't think they deserve it. They don't think they're better than other people. Look at it. That they do not trust in uncertain riches. Money comes and money goes.

And 2008 showed you that. And 1929 showed you that. And you can understand, whether you know this or not, you can't trust in uncertain riches.

[10:52] But in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Would you underline that? Who gives us richly all things to enjoy. He said, don't think that God's up there saying, I'm mad at you because of that nice car you're driving.

He said, no, I gave you the car. Enjoy it. Can I get an amen right there? Because some of you are sitting there already, man. You're just grabbing your keys and holding on to your wallet. And you're just tightening up and squeezing down.

And said, oh, no. He's trying to tell me I can't have my car. He's trying to tell me I shouldn't live in my house. Not at all. Not at all. God said, I just don't want you trusting that junk. Say amen right there.

I just don't want you trusting that junk. I want you trusting me. I want you. And I don't want you to be proud about it. Just because you got junk don't make you better than anybody else. I could get an amen right there. Now look at the next verse.

18. All word of God. Now y'all are rich. So do good. He can give you money so you would keep it. Gave you money so you could.

[11:48] Can I get those two words out of you? How about it? Could you just say do good? He gave you money so that you would. That's what it says here. Oh, you said that's not what it said. Go back to verse 17. Charge them that are what?

Read that with me. Charge them that are rich in this world. Say that. Charge them that are rich in this world. Now go down to verse 18. And that they do good.

That they be. Read this. Rich in good works. Ready to distribute. Willing to communicate. So he said I gave you money. I'm glad you got it.

Now spread it around. Give to missions. If God has given us money, then we're never to trust our money but him.

But we can enjoy all he's given us. But we're to use our money and all that we have to do good. We're to show our riches in doing good works.

You want to know how to show your rich? Be rich in doing good works. Man, just be a guy who just does more good works than other people. We're to be ready to give our money. We're ready to give to meet ministry needs all over the world.

As we do that, we're living out who we are and showing where our heart really is. Verse 19 said, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation. It gets the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life.

John's offer devotional talked about that. A guy had a lot of money. God gave him the money. And God was glad he had the money. But his problem was he didn't think about God. He got the money and he thought, man, I'll think about me.

I'll think about me. And I'll carry down my barns and maybe bigger barns so I can have more stuff for me. And God's like, I don't like that a bit. And over in the book of Amos, they're complacent and they're rich.

You know, most people are sleeping on the floor on a mat in the book of Amos. But these rich guys got beds made out of ivory. And these guys are laid out on a bowl. Bring me another bowl of ice cream and keep it cold.

[13:46] By the way, I know there's no refrigerator. Somebody run, get me some ice and keep it cold. Just imagine the luxury. And Amos said, God's going to take that away from you because you don't ever focus on me. I wonder what God might do here.

In Amos chapter 6 and verse 8, God hated their pride. You see, when you got stuff, you think you're something. It's amazing how stuff fills you with stuffing.

It's amazing how when you got stuff, you're like, I am the stuff. I got stuff, so I must be the stuff because I got stuff. And that's what's going on here. I just say I'm not against that and God's not against that.

Just to get you trusting that. Did you hear that? Can I get amen there? So don't get all mad and puffy on me. Don't say I don't like you saying it. I'm not saying it. Look what he said in chapter 6, verse 8.

The Lord God has sworn by himself, said the Lord God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob. I hate Jacob's excellency. I hate their pride.

[14:51] I hate how lifted up they are. I hate their palaces. You know, we live in palaces. I live in a palace. I'm going to build a bigger palace.

I'm not saying it's wrong. I'm just saying to you, we got to catch on to who we're talking to here. I grew up in a four-room house with six of us. And one of the rooms was a kitchen. And people slept in the living room and everywhere else.

But, you know, man, we're prospering now, ain't we? I don't even like anybody to use my bathroom. Glory to God. I got a bathroom in the house. Say amen. And I got it in my bedroom.

Say amen. I mean, it's a good stuff. But here's what he's saying. I hate that. They're so proud of all that they have and all that they are.

Their God has become personal pleasure and comfort. In Luke chapter 12 and verse 20, But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.

[15:48] Then whose shall these things be which you've provided? You fool. I gave you stuff. And you tried to can all the stuff and sit on the can.

So I'm taking you out of here. When your focus turns to you and yours, your comfort and convenience, you're in danger of being this fool in that verse.

God wants you to always be realizing that all your life is to be lived in the light of eternity. Their pride is causing God to send death among them. God is going to destroy their houses.

He's angry because they have turned what is right into poison and holiness into bitterness. God is going to cause a nation to attack them and destroy them. They're so happy with themselves.

They're satisfied. They're content. They're complacent. They're living in luxury. They don't really even think about God or what he can do or will do. They just think about themselves. Is that anywhere near home?

[16:46] When we get too focused on this world, we lose the blessings of God. Have God's blessings caused us to become too proud to bow before him? Have we gotten to the place that we think that we deserve the life we have?

Are we flaunting our wealth and prosperity before God? And to be honest with you, you know, country people, ignorant, hillbilly, basically almost white trash people that I grew up with, they'd hear a message and they were like, I'll humble myself.

I'm already pretty well down there. But the bigger we get, we're too big for our britches, we are not going to humble ourselves. Our pride's a great hindrance. Look what the Bible says in James chapter 4 and verse 6.

He gives more grace. Wherefore God said God resists the proud and he gives grace to the humble. Verse 7, submit yourselves to God.

Resist the devil. Verse 8, draw not a God. Verse 10, humble yourselves. That's kind of hard for us in our pride to do that. And stuff makes you proud.

[17:54] God, just be honest. Proud of my car. Proud of my house. Proud of my wife. Proud of my health. Proud, proud, proud. I even like to look at myself in the gym when I work out and say amen.

Because I like me. And selfies, that's the thing. Our success often goes to our head. We think we're better than others. The solution is submit to God.

Resist the devil. Draw not a God. He's our source. Humble ourselves. Go with me to Amos chapter 7 and verse 1. This is a crazy story. So God and Amos start talking.

They got this relationship. And so God shows Amos, I'm going to send some grasshoppers. And I'm going to destroy the last harvest of the year. Just as everything starts really coming into bloom.

And everything's looking good for that last harvest that you need to make it through the winter. And he said in chapter 7 and verse 1, I'm going to send them. So God's having this regular conversation with Amos. And he reveals his will.

[18:50] And so he's showing Amos what's going to happen. By the way, you can know what's going to happen. If you get along and talk to God, he's already given you a book where he can tell you what's going on. Can I get an amen there? So Amos knows what's going to happen.

And Amos is like, in chapter 7 and verse 2, Amos is like, whoa, God. If you do that, Israel is too weak. I know they're pompous and proud and think they're good. But if you take this harvest, God, man, Israel's too small.

They won't be able to handle it. So God said, okay, I won't do it. Chapter 7 and verse 2. He said, oh, Lord God, forgive I beseech thee. How could Amos or how could Israel or Jacob arise?

He's too small. So in chapter 7 and verse 3, the Lord repented. He showed mercy. He said, I won't send the grasshoppers in, Amos, since you ask.

Look, since you interceded, I'll call off the grasshoppers. So Amos said, thank you, Lord. That's real good. I appreciate that. And God said, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll send fire. I'll destroy them with fire.

[19:48] So he said, fire's coming to get them, and I'll do that. And that's chapter 7 and verse 4. He said, I'll send them from fire. And Amos said, whoa, Lord, I need to talk to you one more time. I beseech you.

Lord God, cease. Stop it. Don't do that to our people. They're too small. They can't do it. And in verse 6, God said, okay, won't do it either. He repented for this.

Then God said, but I'll tell you what I am doing. I'm sending a plumb line to see if Israel's really as well off as they are. I want to show them how bad off they are. I'm going to hang the plumb line down.

You know, the plumb bob, you got this line at the top of the wall, and you hang it at the bottom. See if the wall's crooked or not? Back in the first church I pastored, I didn't have any people that would help me do anything.

And so I can do everything. I'm a master of all trades. I'm a jack of all trades, master of none. That's me. And so I wanted to put some rooms up. We had this whole big open area in our building that we owned upstairs.

[20:45] Had no walls. So I need to learn how to sheetrock and everything. So I went, I drove down the road, found a guy doing some sheetrock, pulled off the road, said, you mind teaching me how to do that? He said, yeah. I watched him for about 30 minutes.

I said, I can do that. Anybody can do that. Don't tell Mike or Rustelli this. So I went back to the church, and I put the walls up. I mudded them.

I taped them. I mudded them. I sanded them. I did everything I was supposed to do. And I said, they're looking pretty good. And then some men started joining our church. And one day, some of the men came to me, and they said, we've got to do something about the walls upstairs.

I said, those are great walls. I built those walls. They said, they're crooked. They're crooked this way, crooked this way. They're crooked every way. See, when you pull out the plumb line, you'll find out what things really look like.

And God said, Israel, you can think you're doing pretty good, but I'm bringing the law. I'm bringing the word of God, and we're going to check you out by what the law says. See if the wall's straight.

God's going to bring the truth, his word, the law, and compare the nation of Israel to what he wants. Maybe the naked eye can't see that it's not perfectly straight, but God can.

And in chapter 7 and verse 8, God tells Amos, I will not pass over this one, buddy. I've given you two passes. You ain't getting this third one. The wall, the plumb line's coming.

And in verse 9, he said, in the places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. And I will kill Jeroboam with a sword. And God's tired of their false worship.

He's tired of their living like he isn't even there. He's tired of their pride, and I'm thinking they don't need him. Amazing. And we don't focus on God until we do need him. So maybe he'll have to take away our toys, so we'll pay attention and listen.

Now that made the religious crowd angry. So in chapter 7 and verse 10, this guy named Amosiah, he's a priest of Bethel. Bethel means house of God.

[22:48] And Amosiah, he runs and tells the king, he says, King Jeroboam? He said, there's this herdsman, this preacher going around, and he's saying, God's upset with us.

You know we're doing good. Churches are full. Offerings are great. Great music at the church. We're just having a good time, and everything's going good. But he said, God's going to kill you and destroy our country.

Chapter 7. He said, Amos has conspired against thee. Amosiah is a corrupt priest. He's a government priest. He does what the preacher wants him to do.

And he's enjoying the same luxuries as the others. And his pride is in how good he and his church are doing. And that sets him against Amos. And God. Then Jeroboam tells Amos.

Or excuse me, Amos says, or he tells the king, he says, Jeroboam, this is what he said. Jeroboam, verse 11, will die by the sword and Israel will be taken away captive. And Amosiah said, I don't like that message.

[23:46] I don't like it. I don't like that message. I don't like it at all. And Amosiah, he says, the king's going to die. And that's not nice. He says, the people are going to lose a war. There's no hope in his message.

There's no optimism when he preaches. It's a bitter, dark, pessimistic truth. So Amosiah tells in chapter 7 and verse 12, he says, Amos, you ought to just run away to the land of Judah.

We're tired of hearing your message here. Won't you move? Just go to Judah. Run away and eat your bread and preach over there, if you will. Run like a coward.

Now, the king don't like you and the people are upset here. You can preach that there. Just don't preach it here. He basically tells them to leave the religion and the government alone.

I love chapter 7, verse 13. Look at it. And prophesy not again anymore at Bethel. Now, just remember, Bethel means house of God. So this is a place that they've been worshiping God a long time.

[24:43] Bethel means house of God. And so Amos is at the house of God preaching. And Amosiah said, I don't like it. He said, look what he said. That's the king's chapel and the king's court.

We don't give this to God anymore. It belongs to the king. Get out of here. We don't like your message. Funny and sad. The house of God is the king's chapel.

It doesn't matter to him that God sent Amos. He wants a positive message or no message. So go preach somewhere else. You better put on your seatbelt now. Because what I'm about to read to you, you will need parental guidance to listen to.

Chapter 7, verse 14. Amos responds to Amosiah. If we could make a movie out of this, my goodness. Look at this.

Amos looked at Amosiah and he said, I was no prophet. And I wasn't a prophet, son. I was just a sheep man taking care of my herd and gathering sycamore fruit. And God came to me in verse 15.

[25:48] And he took me away from my flock. And he told me, you go and you preach this message. He said, God called me. I didn't have any plans of doing this. I wasn't looking for a message. I wasn't looking for a pulpit.

I was just taking care of my sheep. And God told me to do this. And so instead of just leaving and going somewhere else like you're telling me to, just let me tell you, won't you listen to God? Look at verse 16.

Won't you hear the words of the Lord? He said, thou says, don't prophesy against Israel. And drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. That's what you tell me. So I'll tell you what God says.

Okay, hang on. Are y'all ready? Have you got your seatbelts on? He said, this is what God says. Your wife will become a prostitute. This guy is not going to win the Joel Award.

He says, your wife will become a prostitute. Your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. The land will be divided. And you, Amaziah, will die in a polluted land. And Israel will be a captive.

[26:50] Take it out of here. Hmm. I think we need to send this boy back to Bible college. He needs to learn how to curry favor with the president.

He needs to learn how to get along with everybody. But God's man showed courage to deliver an unpopular message. Amos didn't look for the message.

Amos just had to preach the message. He didn't want to be in the limelight. He didn't enjoy the political pressure. He just enjoyed God. And knowing God. And God told him what to say.

Some lessons to take home. And we'll be through with these two chapters. God wants to wake up the complacent. That's in this two chapters very clearly.

Complacency is based on lies. We said this once. But motivated by pride. And leads to trusting someone or something other than God. It's time to quit being apathetic. Just satisfied.

[27:54] And reach out to serve God more. Listen to me. All across the United States right now. Independent Baptist is talking about revival. Revival. And we really do need revival.

We need to wake up. We're all sitting back and enjoying a lap of luxury. Hey. Isn't it amazing? When you made \$100 you tithe. But when you made \$1,000 it was harder to tithe.

And so instead of giving 10% of what's been \$100 you gave \$90. Because you got too much. And you won't know by thinking you're giving too much. And now that you're making \$10,000. You definitely aren't going to tithe. Because you're just too proud of what you do.

Come on. Let's be honest. I mean this chapter is wild. I don't tithe. I enjoy the lap of luxury. Everybody ought to be blessed. I come to church. You know what kind of education I got. You know what kind of money I got.

You know who I am. You ought to be blessed. That's what's going on here. Don't let things like prestige and popularity pull you away from serving God.

[28:53] We ought not to live selfish lives. Our prosperity may make us proud instead of humbled by what God has done. When's the last time you thought I should be in hell.

But for the grace of Almighty God I would be in hell. But God saved me. And God has blessed me. And I will honor God. You need to get into God's word so you know what he's doing.

You need to be a person of prayer so that God's dealing with your heart. And working in your family. God is tired of false hypocritical worship.

Culturally correct. Cultural Christianity. We come to church because we're supposed to. But he is not in charge of our time. Our talents. Or our treasures.

Will you stand for God no matter how much political pressure there is? Will you surrender your life to leave your job and do the work God's calling you to do? You may be here this morning and say I don't know. I'm not even a born again believer.

[29:59] You need to be saved. Jesus died for you. Paid your sin debt. And you can be saved. So if you came this morning you need to understand God's. You're probably fed up with Christians. You came to church this morning and said I'm fed up with Christians.

I don't blame you. God was too. God's fed up with Christians who don't put him first. You say I know a lot of junk goes on with Christians. You should read Amos.

God knows a lot of junk goes on among his people. But if you're a lost person. If you're not saved. If you don't know you go to heaven. If your sins haven't been forgiven. If you haven't gotten right with God. Whatever term you're using.

If you're not following Jesus. If you're not seeking him. Today's your day. It's a time to say I'm not here because of Christianity. I'm not here because it's politically correct. I'm not here because I'm a culture Christian.

I'm here because I realize I have sinned against a holy God. And I need to trust God with my salvation. That's what the story's about.

[30:57] Are you saved? Do you know you're going to heaven? But Christians you can't get off that easy. As I read these chapters. And worked through them.

And they worked through me. I realized. Man I got a good life. And so often. I don't have to have. That praying time I needed. When I was desperate.

And I didn't know. If I was going to have money to pay our bills. And you. If you're honest. Might have to admit.

Yeah. My couch of ivory. And my nice bed. And all my luxuries. Have tended to calm.

The work of God in my life. And I need to repent of that. And do right. Amos was a man of God. And God talked to him. You're a man of God. God will talk to you.

[31:51] He gave you a book. He'll talk to you through. Amos is a man of God. He talked to God. And God listened to him. You're a man of God. God will listen to you. This is for real. Sitting in the game.

And we ought to take it. From our hearts. This morning. That ignoring God. Things won't work out. Ignoring God.

Things won't work out. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information.

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Thanks.