

“Going Where You’re Not Wanted”—Amos 7:12-13

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Going Where You’re Not Wanted”, is Amos 7:12-13. *Amaziah said to Amos, “O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.”* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

According to your usual custom you head for the mailbox. Aside from the junk mail and bills awaiting your arrival and attention, you hope that you’ll encounter some mail which is more positive. Pulling the mail from your box you scan through it to find a small envelope from your niece. You can tell by its size that it appears to be some kind of invitation or announcement. You open it with a sense of excitement to discover that it is an invitation to her wedding. She wants you to join in the celebration of her union with her female partner.

Taken back by the initial shock of your discovery you are immediately thrown into a struggle of conscience. Since you know homosexuality is a sin according to God’s Word how could you attend such an event without giving

the impression of condoning her lifestyle choice? Yet, because of your relationship, you do love her and want her to know you love her. Besides, she wants you to be there. Still, you wonder if you will end up going where you're not wanted because you will not be able to refrain from speaking in faithfulness to God's Word and condemn sin. You now have some insight into the life of God's prophets and servants.

Our text reveals the prophetic ministry of Amos, a prophet sent to God's people in the northern kingdom of Israel. Unfortunately he was a prophet who had to go where he was not wanted. The reason he was not wanted was because the people to whom he prophesied were living in blatant, unrepentant sin in rebellion to God's Word.

Don't get me wrong. These people were living in the best of times, enjoying "the good life" with a comfortable lifestyle of luxury and abundance. Amos described them in chapter 6 as living *at ease in Zion, and feeling secure on the mountain of Samaria, people who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and . . . invent for themselves instruments of music, who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!* (cf. Amos 6::1,4-6) Almost sounds like living "the American dream!" While

this is a description of the nation of Israel it is also a description of the Old Testament Church!

It wasn't the wonderful blessings of their lifestyle which the LORD condemned through Amos. Rather, it was the fact that they let it affect their relationship with Yahweh to such an extent that they turned away from His covenant of grace to worship their own desires. Amos came to tell them that "living the dream" was coming to an end with God's judgment and destruction.

So . . . Amos ended up going where he was not wanted. Who wants to listen to someone who comes along and condemns our nice lifestyle? Who wants to listen to someone who is always talking about how bad we are or how we're destroying ourselves spiritually with our idolatry? Such a person must be working counterproductive to our country which allows us to live the way we want! No?

Thus, *Amaziah the priest* presented Amos as a conspirator against the government since his proclamation was filled with messages about the destruction of the nation Israel. So Amaziah told him plainly to "get lost!" in the words of our text: *O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.* (Verses 12-13) While he recognized Amos as a prophet he basically told him to get out of there

because he was not wanted!

Yet, it wasn't so much Amos who was unwanted. It was his message. If he would have simply told them good things which would have reinforced their comfortable lifestyle of abundance and luxury in self-centered idolatry and sin he could have stuck around for a long time! Their idolatry was not their comfortable living but that they were rejecting the lordship of Yahweh **and the authority of His Word over their lives because it didn't fit in with their sinful lifestyle!**

This is true to the nature of our idolatry in so many ways. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 says: *The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.* The issue is that people do not want to recognize their sin in the sight of God and repent. Thus, the only answer left for them is to *wander off into myths*—to believe what they want to believe and even present it as God's teaching!

While many who have been baptized into Christ Jesus readily recognize the myth of same sex marriage, at the same time they will believe the myth that receiving the forgiveness of sins with the gathered believers through the means of grace is not necessary and exclaim: "I don't need to go to church!"

Many will believe the myth that their heterosexual marriages do not need to be legal. Many will believe the myth that biblical stewardship means taking care of my comfortable life of luxury and abundance at the expense of using my possessions to open up avenues to share God's love with others. Many will believe the myth that loyalty to one's country is just as important—if not more so—than commitment to Christ. So in the scheming of the devil who is the father of all these myths and lies what makes one sinner different from another sinner. NOTHING! As Romans 3:23 says: ***all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

In the midst of such uncomfortable circumstances Amos remained faithful to Yahweh instead of giving in to Amaziah's instructions. His presence in Israel was because *the LORD took him from following the flock, and told him to "Go, prophesy to My people Israel."* (cf. Amos 7:15) His connection with prophecy was totally a connection established by the LORD and had nothing to do with whether or not the hearers welcomed him or his message. Faithful to Yahweh, Amos went and spoke God's judgment upon their sin in hopes that they would repent and trust in the LORD again before the final judgment came upon them. Unfortunately they refused to repent and the destruction of their nation happened in 722 BC.

However, this judgment on sin only foreshadowed the ultimate judgment

upon sin which needed to take place. So, God had to go where He was not wanted . . . **in the Person of Jesus, the Christ.** According to John 1:10-13, *Jesus was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.* He went where He was not wanted, yet remained faithful to God's sending and died on the cross to face the ultimate judgment upon and consequence for your sin—eternal separation from God in hell.

Why? Why did He do this? John 1 goes on to say: *But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.* He did it so that you can be forgiven of all your sin! He did it so that you would no longer have to *turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.* He did it so that you can go where you're not wanted **as a forgiven sinner amongst other sinners where Christ's presence is needed.**

As disciples of Jesus Christ—His people who confess **HIS** lordship in every area of our lives—we also respond as Amos did to the Word go as the LORD speaks it to us. Jesus tells us in Matthew 28:19-20 to go . . . *and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that He has*

commanded us. We go not because we're "professionals" but because we are His forgiven sinners in the world. Neither do we go only to "appropriate" places where His Word is accepted by others. We go to those places where we're not welcome because we are His people in a world which still does not welcome Him!

This means that in all the vocations of our lives we are willing to speak openly to others about sin, repentance and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ alone. This means that we are willing to let His Holy Spirit and Word guide our everyday attitudes, decisions and actions. This means that we are willing to speak up for Him even when it may be "uncomfortable" to do so. And we do this not because we "have to" but because of God's love for **all** sinners in Jesus. In humility we repent and cling to His total forgiveness, His lordship over all and His power to continue proclaiming His Word even where we are not wanted!! Amen.

*I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective
for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us
for the sake of Christ.*

(Philemon 1:6)