

Sunday, July 11, 2021 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 85:8-13 – Listen to what God is saying

8 - I will listen to what the LORD God is saying.

Do you listen to what God is saying to you? Or are you like Amaziah in wanting the messenger and the message to go away?

Amos 7:7-15 - Plumb Line of the Lord

Amos was a man from the south who prophesied to the north, during the time of Jeroboam II, a king who reigned during a period of relative prosperity just a few decades before the fall of the north.

Amos 1: 1 – Two years before the earthquake.

7 - The Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand.
8-9 - Then the Lord said, "See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

How has God used a plumb line in your life?

If God were to use a plumb line in your life today, what would line up? What would not?

10-11 - Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land.'"

12-13 - And Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, flee away to the land of Judah and prophesy there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

14-15 - Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the LORD took me from following the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

Ephesians 1:3-14 - Chosen in Christ to live to the praise of God's glory

The city of Ephesus on the west coast of Turkey was a major center of political and economic power in Paul's day.

The grand theater, which was able to seat 25,000 people.

The Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

With the Temple of Artemis and the Artemis cult, Ephesus was also a major center of the powers of spiritual darkness in Paul's day.

Acts 19: 11 – God did extraordinary miracles through Paul.

Verses 18-19 – Many of those who became believers confessed and disclosed their practices. A number of those who practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly.

Verse 23 – About that time no little disturbance broke out concerning the Way.

Verse 37 – The town clerk to the screaming crowd in the theater – "You have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess."

What are some of the truths that Paul said about Jesus in the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesians?

3 - We have been blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Jesus.

4 - God chose us in Jesus before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

4-5 - In love God predestined us for adoption as his children through Jesus, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

6 - He has freely given us his glorious grace in Jesus.

7 - In Jesus we have redemption through his blood - the forgiveness of sins.

7-8 - The riches of God's grace have been lavished on us.

11 - God works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

13-14 - We have been marked in Jesus with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, who is the deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.

Mark 6:14-29 - Death of John the Baptist

17-21 - Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet.

29 - When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Matthew 14: 12 - His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.

When have you experienced so great a sorrow that one of the first things you needed to do was to go and tell Jesus?

Song - "I Must Tell Jesus"

This must have been a terribly difficult time for Jesus because I am certain that Jesus and John were very close.

They had been born not too many months apart.

No doubt they spent a lot of time playing together when they were young.

And for Jesus the death of John probably was a reminder of His own impending death.

And so, when Jesus hears about the death of His cousin - when the burden of sorrow gets too heavy for His spirit to endure - He tries to get away.

He tries to get away with His primary human support group - the twelve disciples.

Mark 6: 31 - "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while."

But we will see in next Sunday's Gospel what happens next.

How have you responded - what have you wanted and needed to do - when your sorrow was just too much for you?

When you need to get away, where do you go?