

Theme: **Seek the Lord and Live**

Text: Amos 5:6-15

Date: October 14, 2018

Occasion: 21st Sunday After Pentecost

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and peace to you as you learn from God's past about your future, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

All three of our scripture readings for today take us to the basic yet very vital core teaching of God's holy Word: sin and grace. Sin is our disobedience starting with the first commandment. Grace is God's undeserved love for sinners, like you and me. Today we are reminded especially in our reading from Amos and Mark that we have sought other gods and still we receive God's undeserved love for us, revealed in his divine Love, mercy and forgiveness. Truly, our lives are full of sin and headed towards eternal death. Yet, in grace God has now given us a new life – a life filled with forgiveness through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amos comes with a call for repentance to the people of God just like other Old Testament prophets sounded the call for repentance. John the Baptist and Jesus called for repentance because the kingdom of God was near. Then on Pentecost the Apostle Peter preached to the crowd how they put to death the author of life and the crowd wondered what they were to do next. Peter replied: "**Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus**" (Acts 3:19-20). Today we are called to repentance and to seek the Lord so that we can live.

This isn't new information, but will we take it seriously or will we be like Darrel and many others like him. How Darrel was brought up in the Christian Church and his parents made sure Darrel was in church and did what was needed to grow in his faith. If you asked Darrel, he would tell you that he believes in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, but that was not his top priority. Being a seeker of God was his mother's and father's way, not his way of life. So, when Darrel headed off to college he broke free from the bond of going to church each Sunday, unless he was spending some time at home.

This was the type of people that Amos was sent to speak to during a time of great prosperity for Israel and Judah. The people had gotten used to having what they wanted when they wanted it, with a little work and planning, much like we are today. They didn't care what was just and right as long as they got what they wanted and it didn't seem to matter what they did, they were able to get what they wanted eventually. So, who needs to seek the Lord? It is to

this kind of people and to us that God sent Amos to stand before us and say, **“Seek the Lord and live, lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it.”** (Amos 5:6)

The devil loves it when we think that we are in control of our lives and can do with it whatever we want. It is then that he takes advantage of our lack of seeking the Lord and His Word to lead us little by little into all the evil of this world while encouraging us to move farther and farther from God and His Word. We can all easily be caught up in the luxuries of this world and make them into our number one god. That’s what happened to Darrel and that’s what was happening to the people of God in Amos’ time. The people of Amos’ time thought that everything was going great and they didn’t want to hear about their sins and the truth of God’s Word. That was true for Darrel and that has been true for each of us also at times.

Do we wonder why the people of Amos’ time and Darrel didn’t want to listen? Why they didn’t want to repent and seek the Lord? We too can find ourselves looking around and wondering about everyone else and why they still continue in their sinful, disobedient lives. But here is where we need to remember a vitally important point about each of our lives, no one is exempt from sin. In fact, by our nature we are enemies of God. Because we have inherited the sinful nature of our parents, all the way back to Adam and Eve. The truth is that we sin daily and we sin much. God through the prophet Isaiah reminds us, **“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”** (Isa. 64:6) It is that time of year isn’t it, when the leaves are blown here and there and everywhere. That’s true of our sins also, they sweep us away from seeking the Lord and the life that He wants to give to us.

Who wants to take the blame for something bad? Who is willing to admit, “I am wrong”? Watching the daily news, it appears that no one is guilty of anything, anywhere, at any time. Those in authority in our nation are quick to fix the blame on the other party. Again, we are not exempt. Satan tries to blind our minds and spiritual thinking. Hard as it is to admit we have to agree with God’s Word, “I sin daily and I sin greatly.” So often we find ourselves doing just what God through Amos talks about, as he tells us, **“Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time.”** (Amos 5:13) Is that the solution to the problems of this world? Should we just keep silent about our faith, our belief in God’s Word as the truth? The Apostle

Paul reminds us what God's Words says, **"The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the Word of faith that we proclaim);⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."** (Rom 10:8-10)

In the midst of all the sin of the people of Israel, God sent Amos to call the people back to Him by repentance and seeking the Lord so that they could live again and not die in the unquenchable fires of death forever. In the midst of the sinful world that we live in, it is deadly to remain silent. Amos reminds us three times in this chapter, **"Seek the Lord and live."** God breaks the silence of this world that is deadly by sending the prophets to His people and finally by sending His Only Son, Jesus Christ into this world. Jesus Christ didn't just come into this world to call the people of the world to repent and seek the Lord, but to give His life for us. By Jesus incarnation into this world as a tiny baby, He became one of us so that He could save us from what we deserved, death, the unquenchable fires of hell forever. Jesus lived His life in this world without committing a single sin and yet He took all our sins upon Himself and when to the Cross of Calvary to suffer death and hell for us so that we don't have to face the fate we deserve but instead can live with Him in God's love, peace and joy for all eternity.

Through the words of Amos, we are given direction as to how we should live our lives as He say, **"Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as He has said. ¹⁵ Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate."** (Amos 5:14-15)

"Establish justice in the gate" is not something most us very often because we don't have a fortresses around our cities to keep the people who what to destroy us out. In Amos' time the gate of the city was where the city courts met to justly deal with the problems of the people and to help the poor. Amos broke the silence of the injustice going on at the city gates of Israel so that the people would once again repent of their sins and seek the Lord and live. The world that we live in is no different from the time of Amos and neither is the need to call others to repent and seek the Lord, so that they can live instead of die. God has called you to call to the people of your world. Call them to repent of their sins as you do by your words and actions, seek the Lord and encourage them to seek the Lord with you. God will give you forgiveness and bring you to

the new life with Him forever. The hymn that we just sang calls to us to remember what we need to be doing. Hymn #557 tells us, ***“Seek were you may to find a way, that leads to your salvation. My heart is stilled, On Christ I build, He is the one foundation. His word is sure, His works endure; He overthrows all evil foes; Through Him I more than conquer.”*** (#557 vs 1)

God doesn't wish to see any of His people destroyed in the unquenchable fires of eternal death. The LORD God wanted to show each of us His mercy. God says to us through the prophet Ezekiel, ***“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”*** (Eze. 18:30-32)

Darrel learned the hard way that life is not just fun and games and after failing college in his first try, he came back to college and got the degree that he wanted. He had the life that he wanted. A job that gave him enough money to get the things he wanted and a beautiful wife to share all the joy of life with him. Oh, his mother was still encouraging him to seek the Lord but that could happen in his future, he thought. Life was good and he was going to enjoy it the best he could. That is until a good friend told him to stop fooling around with his health and get to the doctor to find out what was causing him so many problems. The doctor was truthful and guided him through the many treatments for Leukemia along with the support of his family and friends. As he was headed for his last treatment possibility, a bone marrow transplant, a friend handed him a Bible and asked him to do some reading in God's Word in the midst of all his isolation. During those times of Isolation Darrel read God's Word and learned more about what we sang about in the 3rd verse of hymn #557, ***“Seek Him alone, Do not postpone; Let Him your soul deliver. All you who thirst, Go to Him first whose grace flows like a river. Seek Him indeed in every need; He will impart to every heart the fullness of His treasure.”*** (#557 vs 3)

Darrel made it through the bone marrow transplant and was declared cancer free, but nine months later he died from food poisoning and now lives with God forever. Don't be silent, call out to your friends and family the need to repent and seek the Lord so that they and you can live with the Lord forever. Amen