

Court Is in Session!
January 27, 2013
Allen Power

Amos 5:4-6,18-24; 6:1a,4-7

- Opening question: We have a saying we use, we say someone or something is the "real deal." Remember the margarine commercial? "I can't believe it's not..."
Manufacturers have gotten good at creating artificial things that look pretty real? Some examples?
- **How can you ultimately spot artificial from real?**
- **When it comes to living the Christian life, what outward characteristics might lead you to think someone WAS a REAL Christian?**
- **On the other hand, if you looked closer, what outward characteristics might lead you to believe someone was NOT the "real deal" as a Christian?**

In Amos chapters 5 and 6, the Prophet Amos is calling out the church for having a religion but not relationship. They loved to make a SHOW of religious ritual but they treated those less fortunate with abuse and injustice. Let's start with chapter 5 verse 4.

4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: "Seek me and live;

- Verse 4 is the short version of this lesson: God said to the House of Israel back then, as He says to all people today, "seek me and live"
- **What do you believe it means to "seek the Lord?"**
- Turn to Isaiah 55:6-7

Isaiah 55:6–7 (ESV)

6 "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;
7 let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to
our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

- **CIRCLE the ACTION STEPS. What do those verses tell us to DO to seek the Lord?**
- **Then what will God do?**

Warren Wiersbe writes:

To seek the Lord means first of all to change our thinking and abandon the vain thoughts that are directing our wayward lives. Disobedient children of God are thinking wrongly about God, sin, and life. They think God will always be there for them to turn to, but they forget that sinners reap what they sow. To walk "in the counsel of the ungodly" is folly indeed (Ps. 1:1, nkjv), for it leads to a fruitless and joyless life. — Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - Old Testament - The Bible Exposition Commentary – The Prophets.

If a Christian is the REAL DEAL, we won't just be a member of a church. We'll live in ways that are PLEASING to God. We'll have a RELATIONSHIP with Him not JUST a MEMBERSHIP to a church.

- The Israelites of Amos' day had convinced themselves they WERE seeking THE LORD. "We're going to the temple, we're taking sacrifices, we worship. We are very religious people!"
- Verse 5 Amos says:

5 but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into exile, and Bethel shall come to nothing."

- He told them not to seek Gilgal, Beersheba, and Bethel.
- **Anyone know what those places were?**
- You see they were going to church. But, doing religion had replaced seeking God. They had MEMBERSHIP but not RELATIONSHIP.
- **Question: How would you explain to an unchurched friend the difference between seeking the Lord and going to church?**

- Amos continues in verse six:

6 Seek the LORD and live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel,

- Their nation was definitely going to be judged for its sin, but there was time for each individual to "seek the LORD and live."

18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light,

- **What does that word "woe" mean?**
- **What do you think "the day of The Lord" meant for them? How about for us today?**
- **Why would The Lord coming back be a bad thing?**
- They thought God was coming to destroy their enemies...but they were mistaken.
- It's like a kid saying to a bully: "Wait till my dad gets home...he'll take care of you."
- Instead, it was really more like a mom saying to an unruly kid, "You just wait till your father gets home! He's gonna tan your hide."
- Verse 19 and 20 are like a scene right out of an adventure film.
- God was bringing judgment on their nation and there was no running from him.

19 as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him.

20 Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

- You can't escape the judgement and justice of God.
- **Even if we're a believer in Christ, one day what will we face?**
- It's not just about "fire insurance." If we've truly been SAVED we'll want to LIVE LIKE CHRIST...we won't do it perfectly or 100%...but we will DESIRE to live like Christ.
- You think UNBELIEVERS hate Christian HYPOCRITES? So does God:

21 "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
 22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them.
 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

- **Why would God hate, despise, and take no joy in their worship?**
- We can't worship like an angel on Sunday, and live like the devil the rest of the week!
- Verse 24 gives the remedy for their offensive worship:

24 But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Start treating people with JUSTICE not MISTREATING those less fortunate than you.

- Quickly, as we wrap up...In chapter six, Amos called out the Israelites for selfishness.
- While others were suffering, they were living in the lap of luxury!

6:1a "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria,

6:4 "Woe to those 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,
 5 who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music,
 6 who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
 7 Therefore they shall now be the first of those who go into exile, and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away."

- **Does God have a problem with His people having money or possessions?**
- **Under what circumstances do you think God IS offended by his people having money and possessions?**
- The problem wasn't that they had possessions, it was that their possessions had become their God.
- They gathered more and more STUFF while they mistreated and cheated their fellow man.

So, What's The Takeaway?

- Am I living the Christian life as the REAL DEAL or just going through the motions?

- How can I know if my life displays the “mind of Christ?”
- There are many scripture verses that answer that question, but here are four of my personal favorites:

John 14:15 (ESV)

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control;...

Micah 6:8 (ESV)

8 He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

- Am I obeying His commandments (the Bible)?
- Am I displaying the fruit of the Spirit?
- Am I treating others as Jesus would? Doing justice; loving mercy/kindness; and walking humbly with God?
- No one can BE the REAL DEAL without first, a SALVATION experience, and then a DAILY RELATIONSHIP with Christ.
- Anything else is just “going to church.”