

Date: July 20, 2025 (Pentecost 6)

1. Texts: Amos 8:1-12; Ps. 52; Colossians 1:15-18; Luke 10:38-42.
2. Subject: leadership.
3. Topic: our responsibilities to those in need.
4. Aim: challenge.
5. Proposition: "Those in relationship with God must support those in need."

DIVINE LEADERSHIP IS SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

As you have guessed by now, Amos was not part of the prophetic community. He was dragged into this, nearly resisting the call of God.

There were bands of prophets, who would travel around the two Jewish kingdoms of Israel and Judah. A senior prophet, like Elijah or Elisha, would take up semi-permanent residence while the junior prophets would travel from place to place, bringing the word of God to the people. Amos was neither a senior or a junior prophet. He was a ringer, brought in by God to push the leadership of Israel in a new direction.

Israel had become economically secure. This success encouraged the leadership to focus on accumulating wealth. It wasn't long before their methods of securing wealth trampled upon their relationship with God and on people.

God expected his people to live moral and ethical lives. The evidence that they were so living would be seen in their treatment of the poor and needy. Of course, this should have been especially visible from those in leadership, who also happened to be the wealthy people. Position and money should be made to serve the needs of the whole people and particularly those without position and money.

According to the prophecy from Amos, God will punish those who cheat, deceive and oppress the poor. They will have earned their punishment because they will have proven their contempt of God and his word.

It is possible and likely even necessary to argue that only those leaders who claim to belong to the whole people of God fall under God's condemnation. God's expectations of moral and ethical treatment of the poor and needy cannot

be applied to atheist, Buddhist or Taoist leaders. Only Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders can expect the scrutiny and potential judgment of God.

In North America it is undeniably obvious which leaders should and will suffer the condemnation of God. In the Middle East it is obvious which leaders should and will suffer the condemnation of God.

However, while the leaders of government and the economy were clearly the target of God's wrath, the expectation of moral and ethical treatment of the poor must be extended to all God's people. We see this clearly in the Parable of the Good Samaritan as well as in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah. Christian Churches throughout North America are populated by privileged believers. We all are obligated by our relationship with God to treat the disadvantaged with respect. God's command to "love your neighbour as yourself" is clearly our command to ethical and moral treatment of the needy.

St. Bartholomew's Church, Grimshaw, houses the food bank. It also has public and free distribution of feminine sanitary products—which was recently vandalized. This illustrates both the divine treatment of the needy as well as actions that will deserve the condemnation of God.

St. James' Church, Peace River, houses the soup kitchen three days a week, despite the number of times the facility has been broken into.

St. Helen's Church, Fairview, uses its location—across the corridor from the food bank—to provide a listening ear to the clients of the food bank.

These are just three examples of the whole people of God ministering with the needy in accord with God's command. There are surely many more.

The lessons of Amos are clear. God expects all his people to live moral and ethical lives, which will be proven by their treatment of the poor and the oppressed. "God's people" are those who claim to have a personal relationship with God the Father through God the Son and in the power of God the Holy Spirit.

Those who refuse to support those in need will experience the judgment and condemnation of God.

Of course, our support for those in need must not drive us to be in need. God does not usually call us to add to the problem as we work at solving the problem. We do what we can with the needy without becoming needy.

It is uncertain whether we should hope that God's judgment occurs sooner rather than later. Delay in judgment gives people time to repent. It is certain that those who claim to follow God should learn the lessons of Amos and the Good Samaritan and learn them now.

AMEN.