

SERMON: HARSH WORDS THAT INSPIRED A DREAMER

Amos 5:21-24

(21) I hate, I despise your feasts days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. (22) Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. (23) Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. (24) But let judgement run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Introduction

Amos is a classical prophet of the eighth century in the Northern Kingdom. He preached a message of judgement/justice and repentance. He spoke harshly against relying solely on military strength, immorality, social injustice, and hypocritical piety. He was brutally honest and did not pull any punches. Remember true prophets not only predicted the future, but they also spoke against the evils of their day. That's why they killed them. It's been said in many ways: We hate living prophets, but we love and revere dead prophets. Dead prophets are not around to correct us when we error.

This pericope was one of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s favorite Biblical passages and influenced his thinking and actions greatly. He preached from this passage on February 6, 1968, at Ebenezer Baptist Church two months before his assassination. The title of the sermon was *The Drum Major Instinct*. This sermon is well-known, second only to *I Have A Dream*. In it he said someone has to take the lead in every endeavor. Just as the drum major leads a parade, he was called to lead the movement for social justice. Of course, we know it cost him his life.

It is amazing how these harsh, blunt words did not offend, but inspired Dr. King. Without violating the rules of neither hermeneutics nor homiletics, let's look at these verses through the eyes of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Exposition

- 1. Scripture Can Inspire, Provoke, Challenge, Correct, And Comfort Those Who Hear And/Or Read It. 2nd Timothy 3:16.**
- 2. What Scripture Passages Inspire You To Do More And Better For The Common Good?**
- 3. Dreams Without Implementation Are Fantasies And Can Become**

Nightmares.

(Aspiration Without Implementation Leads To Frustration.)

**4. God Can't Stand Hypocrisy – Especially in Worship.
(There Is A Difference Between Christian Culture And Christian
Commitment.)**

**5. All Of Us Are Drum Majors (Leaders).
What Parade Are You Leading?
Where Are You Leading Your Parade?**

6. God Relishes Authentic Worship.

Closing Thoughts

Most of us will never have the impact or the fame of Martin Luther King, Jr. nor of Harriet Tubman, nor Mother Teresa, but we can all do good things. In God's sight the smallest good deed is a great thing.

I will end by restating a quote attributed to John Wesley:

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

End Note

The word “judgement” in verse four, could be better translated as justice or fairness. It implies accountability for evil doers and restitution to victims.

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