

The Twenty Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time Cycle C 2022

The Book of Amos is the earliest of the books of prophets in the Old Testament. Amos who was from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, prophesized in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Two major issues were addressed in today's readings. There was a failure to recognize the importance of the Sabbath. Humanity must set aside time to thank and praise God, to seek his help and advice and to bond as a people of God. Secondly, the rich were greedy and exploited the poor. The new moon and the Sabbath were days of worship and all businesses had to be closed. This annoyed the rich who viewed days of worship as lost opportunities to make more money. The rich were not only dishonest because they adjusted their scales and weights and measures, to cheat their customers but gloried in their shame by showing contempt for the poor. Amos warned the leaders and the rich that their wicked deeds would not go unpunished. In the year 722 BCE, the Northern kingdom was completely destroyed by the Assyrians, and was never rebuilt. When Amos preached wicked men laughed at him. Why? They were enjoying great prosperity. They lived in luxury, and could not imagine anything bad could affect them. Even if they could have foreseen that economic hardship was possible, they could never have imagined the total destruction of all their property and their exile to lands from which they would never return. It's was the total destruction of the Northern Kingdom that prompted the disciples of Amos to write all the prophet had said and done.

How much time do we set aside for God and family on Sundays? The rich do not have to worry; they can keep their stores open all the time. While the executives stay home on Sundays, the lowly worker has to be away from her family, to be at work to serve others who also disrespect the Sabbath. We live in a culture where earning more money is given a

greater priority than our relationships with God and others. Greed and dishonesty involving massive amounts of money do not shock us any more. Like the people in the Northern Kingdom at the time of Amos, we cannot imagine the catastrophe that will result from the many sins of our culture. Without repentance and the renunciation of the values of materialism, we will head toward self-destruction, which may include loss of civil liberties by revolutions or the emergence of military dictatorships.

The people of Cuba and Venezuela never foresaw the ruin of their countries.

The message of the Gospel is what we ought to prepare for life after physical death in the same manner that a dishonest steward tried to prepare for life, as he was about to lose his job. While not addressed in the parable, what do we do if we have obtained our wealth dishonestly? We ought to use any dishonest wealth that is already gained, to earn treasure in heaven by sharing it with the poor and needy.

A parable makes a specific point and is never an all-encompassing body of wisdom. The parable did not follow what would happen in a real situation at the time of Jesus. The dishonest steward would have been sent to prison immediately. Jesus did not endorse his dishonesty. Jesus praised the steward for acting prudently. Prudently in the Jewish understanding here, referred to an act for self-preservation. The point of the parable is that he used his worldly skills to make sure that when he was lost his job, he could find other ways to continue to live comfortably. What are we doing to make sure that we enjoy eternal life? None of us will live forever. We have to start planning now!

According to Saint Paul: "The love of money is the root of all evil". Money is like fire, which can serve our needs for heat, light, and cooking, but out of control it is very destructive.

Money can be used for good: helping the poor and needy, but if we make it our god, it makes us selfish and greedy. The Church teaches that relationships among people, love of each other is always more precious than things. Selfishness and greed will destroy relationships, and eventually lead to disharmony and fighting. The love of money destroys families and communities. People (relationships) are more precious than things especially money.