

Hello. /We will begin the 16th lecture on the Minor Prophets. /Our message begins with Amos 5:1. /The title of chapter 5 is “Seek the LORD.” /Verses 1-3 are a sad song about the Israelites. /Verses 4-9: They will find life if they abandon evil and seek the LORD.

/Verses 10-13: Because of its sin, Israel will not be well. /Verses 14-15: To find life, Israel must seek goodness and stop from doing evil. /Verses 16-17: Failure to repent leads to lamentation. /Verses 18-20: The unrighteous will face hardships.

/Verses 21-23: God does not accept the sacrifices of the unrighteous. /Verses 24-27: Israel’s idol worship will lead to them being prisoners.

/Verse 1. Please read. /Hear this word that I take up over you in lamentation, O house of Israel:

/When God thinks about Israel, he should be joyful and delighted with them. /However, because they had left God and made him their enemy, there are no songs of joy, but sad songs of ruin.

/We need to be individuals who bring out God’s love and joy instead of his rage and worries.

/If we cannot be acknowledged by people whom we can see, we cannot be acknowledged by God whom we cannot see. /We first need to be loved and acknowledged by God’s servants.

/Verse 2. /“Fallen, no more to rise, is the virgin Israel; forsaken on her land, with none to raise her up.”

/Up until now, God prevented Israel, who was like a virgin, from being conquered by other nations. /Now, they will fall to the Assyrians, and they will not stand up again. /The virgin Israel was pure for a while.

/But now, they perished and were violated. /Thirty years after Amos’s prophecy, Israel meets its ruin.

/The verse says, “Forsaken on her land, with none to raise her up.” /The land that God allowed and loved, the land that God blessed, was now collapsing.

/Although God may bless us, when we leave God and stand against him, he punishes us. /A land flowing with milk and honey can change into a cursed land flowing with slaughter and blood.

/Verse 3. /For thus says the Lord GOD: “The city that went out a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went out a hundred shall have ten left to the house of Israel.”

/After the war that caused great ruin and loss for Israel, only a tenth of the participants remained. /Israel, when standing against God, lost its numbers and became the loser with a tenth of what it had. /Verses 4-5 tell Israel to seek the LORD.

/Verse 4. /For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: “Seek me and live;

/Amos again warns the people to repent before the harsh, unfortunate events become a reality. /If they return now, there is hope for revival. /Seeking God with all your heart will lead you to salvation.

/Verse 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.”

/God tells the people to not seek Bethel, Gilgal, or Beersheba. /Rather than seeking God through powerless idols and ritualistic offerings, he wants them to seek him directly.

/Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba were once places of God’s grace, but they became a place for idols. They should no longer seek these places.

/Verse 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,

/God says his judgment will even fall on the house of Joseph, his chosen one. /When God sends his fire, no one can put out the flames. /When the believer seeks God and lives according to his words and teachings, he will find victory in life.

/Dear listeners! Are you encountering problems in your life? /If you are, do not look at the problem, but look to God who is in control of everything and find an answer from him. /Then, you will find life.

/Verse 7. /O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!

/The reason the people of Israel are punished is they turned justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth. / “Wormwood” is bitter, which makes it difficult to eat. / Israel’s leaders did not love God’s word of justice, but they cast down God’s customs and righteousness.

/Verse 8. /He who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning and darkens the day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the LORD is his name;

/The people need to seek the Almighty, the all-powerful God. /God is “the one “who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning and darkens the day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth.” The verse is telling us to seek the Almighty LORD God.

/We need to come before the all-knowing, all-powerful God who controls all of creation.

/Verse 9. /who makes destruction flash forth against the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress.

/Some things may appear strong, but when God puts his hand on it, destruction comes upon it. /The verse says, “Destruction comes upon the fortress,” which means that the central place in which the people put their trust will be affected. /Verses 10-13 say Israel’s sin will not make things turn out well.

/Verse 10. /They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth.

/The people of Israel did not obey the words of their leaders, who spoke the truth. /When religion becomes corrupt, morals become corrupt, and people start to hate discipline. /In a corrupt society, education does not work. /Even today, people do not like messages that rebuke them, but rather, they hate them.

/Verse 11. /Therefore because you trample on the poor and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine.

/Because they did not receive God’s word, their spirits became evil and their lives corrupt. /That is why the people trampled on the poor and exacted taxes on them. /This is why God’s judgment was upon them.

/Verse 12. /For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate.

/After the people abandoned the word of God, they did all sorts of shameful acts. /They afflicted the righteous, and they took bribes, turning aside the needy in the gate. /The judge who was supposed to enforce the law acted unfairly.

/Verse 13. /Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time.

/A frightening event is when he who is prudent is silent. /Similarly, when the warnings of the word stop flowing into our lives, then we lose hope.

/Verses 14-27 say “Avoid judgment, seek God if you want to live, do good, and maintain justice. /Verses 14-15 are about doing good in order to find life and not seeking evil.

/Verse 14. /Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said.

/To live, Israel has to leave their evil ways and seek good. /The people of Israel believed that God would protect them while they were still doing evil. /But God says his people must seek good in order for them to live.

/The people of the time left a life of faith, but with their lips, they said that God was with them. /In order for their words to be true, they must leave their evil ways and return to doing good.

/When we face hardships or are sick with disease, we must not pray for healing alone. /We need to think of the root cause of our problems. /We need to obey God in the things that we did not obey in the past.

/Verse 15. /Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

/God loves good and hates evil, so we too must abandon evil and seek good. /The verse says to apply this mentality starting by establishing justice in the gate. /Then, God will show mercy to the Israelites during their punishment.

/To seek God and meet him, we must first seek good. /Those who are holy and pure will be able to meet God. /Anyone who calls out to God, saying “Lord, O Lord,” but does evil will not find God, but he will face judgment.

/Verse 16. /Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord: “In all the squares there shall be wailing, and in all the streets they shall say, ‘Alas! Alas!’ They shall call the farmers to mourning and to wailing those who are skilled in lamentation,

/If Israel does not listen to God’s advice, then God says a day of mourning and wailing will come. /Before we meet a day of disaster, it is important that we first return to God.

/We average people have not experienced God’s punishment, so we have a tendency to view God’s judgment and punishment lightly. /However, the person who fears punishment and judgment without having experienced it is a noble person.

/Verse 17. /and in all vineyards there shall be wailing, for I will pass through your midst,” says the LORD.

/When God comes to find us to give us grace, it is a precious moment, but when he finds us to punish us, it is a sad day. /To those who repent, God pours down his grace, but to those who sin, he gives them punishment. /Verses 18-28 are about the disaster that will fall on the hypocrite on the day of the LORD.

/Verse 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,

/Without repentance, obedience, and good work, awaiting the day of the LORD is foolish. /The day of the LORD will not be a day of light, but a day of darkness.

/Verse 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.

/It is no use waiting for the LORD to come when one is not standing upright. It is like a man fleeing a lion to meet a bear, or leaning a hand against a wall to be bitten by a serpent. /We must not encounter such days of disaster.

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

/Meeting the LORD when we are unrepentant means meeting him in darkness, not light. /Whenever we face difficulties, we need to first repent before God.

/If we have nothing to repent about, then we need to be still and wait for his salvation. /Verses 21-23 say God does not like their formal religious acts.

/Verses 21-22. /“I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 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.

/Israel’s three biggest festivals are the Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles. /These days were celebrated to be thankful for God’s grace, but the Israelites forgot the meaning of these holidays.

/Because the people celebrated these days without meaning, God despises the feasts. /If we are to celebrate church festivals and events formally and ritualistically without understanding their meaning, God will not be pleased. /We need to be careful to not make these mistakes in all of our actions of faith.

/Verse 23. /Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

/The offerings, songs, and instruments of the festivals are detestable to God. /God is severely rebuking their empty and formal faith.

/A religion without morals or justice may seem magnificent, but before God, it is nothing. /In verses 24-27, the people of Israel become prisoners because of their idol worship.

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

/God wants the people to abandon the outward formalities of religion and to act in justice. /Acting justly is the life of true faith. /God does not seek rituals, but he seeks an earnest and humble heart. /Until we meet with God, we need to bear fruits of repentance.

/Verses 25-26. /“Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You shall take up Sikkuth your king, and Kiyyun your star-god—your images that you made for yourselves,

/The empty sacrifices and offerings that they gave for forty years are pointless. /If we do not earnestly fear the Lord, everything we have done in our lives for God may be meaningless.

/The people of Israel, while they sacrificed to God, also served Sikkuth the god of Moloch and Kiyyun, the star-god. /They served both God and idols.

/We need to reflect on our lives to see if we serve anything other than God.

/Verse 27. /and I will send you into exile beyond Damascus,” says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

/Because Israel lived apart from God, God handed Israel to Assyria beyond Damascus, to a nation of idols. /If we follow idols, God leaves us, and he throws us into the world of idols.

/We must follow God alone and make sure that we do not find ourselves in this state of disaster. /We will continue with Amos 6. /Amos 6 is a warning from God to both South Judah and North Israel.

/Because Israel was satisfied with its current life, it did not seek God’s grace, look to him, or obey him. So God gives them a warning.

/Verses 1-6: God rebukes those who are at ease in Zion. /Verses 7-11: Israel’s fall is predicted. /Verses 12-14: Because of its sin, Israel will be punished by God.

/Verse 1. Please read. /“Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes!

/Zion is Jerusalem, and it is also the capital of South Judah. /Samaria is the capital of the kingdom of North Israel. /Here, those who are at ease in Zion are the leaders of the South who have given in to pleasure without knowing their impending judgment.

/ “Those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria” are the leaders of the North who think they are secure but are actually deeply into sin. /When we obey the word of God in faith, we find peace and grace.

/If we find ourselves at peace when we abandon the word of God and go against it, we need to take it as a sign of great punishment that is to come.

/Verse 2. /Pass over to Calneh, and see, and from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory,

/God tells Israel to observe the other nations. /Calneh was a powerful city near the East coast of the Tigris, but it collapsed and was annexed by Assyria. /Hamath the great was a large city of Aram, but it too collapsed and became a part of Assyria.

/Gath was a city of the Philistines, but it collapsed and became a part of Aram. /Just like the once powerful cities that became weaker due to sin, Jerusalem and Samaria must know that the same will happen to them. /We need to learn from those in our surroundings who succeed and fail.

/Verses 3-4. /O you who put far away the day of disaster and bring near the seat of violence? “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,

/The people put far away the day of disaster and brought near the seat of violence. /They should have been awake and cautious in their actions, but the leaders of Israel thought their day of disaster was far away and persecuted the weak.

/When the verse says, “Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall,” it means the people were living in extreme luxury and consumption.

/Verses 5-6. /who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music, who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!

/Instead of praising God, Israel was drunk in the songs of the world. /They lived in debauchery and extravagance. /If God’s people are blessed with material possessions, we must not use them for extreme luxury or self-indulgence.

/The verse says the people do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. /What is “Joseph’s ruin?” Joseph’s brothers had thrown Joseph into a pit, and they sat beside it enjoying their food. Joseph’s ruin is enjoying the luxuries of life while your brothers are suffering in pain and poverty.

/God gave us abundance and peace so that we may use it to bring him joy. /If we use what we have for the desires of our flesh, God will punish us. /In verses 7-11, we see Israel meeting its destruction.

/Verse 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.”

/The leaders living in extravagance and indulgence are the first to go into exile on the day of judgment. /Because people think Jesus’s second coming and God’s judgment are far away, evil things are happening today.

/Verse 8. /The Lord GOD has sworn by himself, declares the LORD, the God of hosts: “I abhor the pride of Jacob and hate his strongholds, and I will deliver up the city and all that is in it.”

/God is giving a clear warning to Israel about its fall. God also swears by himself in predicting Israel’s destruction. /Thirty years later, as the warning said, Israel fell to Assyria.

/Verse 9. /And if ten men remain in one house, they shall die.

/This means after the war, people will die from plague. /It says that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die. /Eventually, when disaster strikes again, people will not be able to avoid God’s judgment.

/Verse 10. /And when one’s relative, the one who anoints him for burial, shall take him up to bring the bones out of the house, and shall say to him who is in the innermost parts of the house, “Is there still anyone with you?” he shall say, “No”; and he shall say, “Silence! We must not mention the name of the LORD.”

/As people die because of God’s punishment that is upon them, there will be no one left to deal with the dead bodies. /Because God’s judgment has brought them to a state of despair, there will be no one left to call on the name of the LORD.

/Verse 11. /For behold, the LORD commands, and the great house shall be struck down into fragments, and the little house into bits.

/Houses of all levels will be struck down, and the nation and its people will be destroyed. /The nation’s people, the families of leaders, and the families of commoners will be destroyed, and no power will be able to avoid God’s judgment. /Verses 12-14 say due to Israel’s sin, God’s punishment will be upon Israel.

/Verses 12-13. /Do horses run on rocks? Does one plow there with oxen? But you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood— you who rejoice in Lo-debar, who say, “Have we not by our own strength captured Karnaim for ourselves?”

/It is meaningless to expect everything to go well when they abandon justice. /To “rejoice in Lo-debar” is being prideful by forgetting God in their lives, loving the world, and falling into materialism.

/The people incorrectly believed that through their efforts, they could become a powerful force. /This type of mentality is common in human and individual history, but it does not earn God's approval.

/God does not gift us with success, peace, and abundance for us to live in extravagance and debauchery. /He gives us these things so that we work together for God, helping those who are in need.

/Verse 14. /“For behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel,” declares the LORD, the God of hosts; “and they shall oppress you from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of the Arabah.”

/God says he will call upon Assyria to invade Israel, a people that has left God. /For the price of its many sins, Israel is invaded and destroyed by Assyria.

/When we are blessed in our abundance, we need to be awake and humbly work together for the work of God. /And we must not keep our hope in this world, but we must have hope in heaven.

/This ends the 16th lecture on the Minor Prophets. /Thank you.