

The Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos

Lesson 11: Woe to Those at Ease in Zion -- Amos 6:1-14

Picture the most comfortable room you have ever been in. Soft cushions, music drifting somewhere in the background, the table heavy with good food, the door shut against the cold and the news of the world. Now imagine that the house next door is on fire, and you cannot quite hear the cries over the music. That is the room Amos walks into in chapter six. He finds the leading men of Israel stretched out on beds inlaid with ivory, lambs from the flock roasting nearby, wine drunk by the bowlful, the finest oils rubbed into their skin. They are not evil in any cinematic way. They are simply comfortable. And that comfort has gone deaf.

The word that hangs over the whole chapter is a heavy one: woe. We tend to reserve that word for obvious villains, but Amos aims it at the relaxed and the respectable, at people who would have considered themselves the good ones, the secure ones, the blessed ones. They feel safe in Zion and confident on the hill of Samaria. They count themselves first among the nations. And the very thing they prize, their ease, is the thing God names as their danger. It is possible to be lulled to sleep by your own blessings until you no longer feel the ache of a world coming apart.

There is one line in this chapter that I cannot get past. Amos says they are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph. They sing idle songs, they invent instruments like David, they drink and anoint themselves, and all the while their nation is bleeding and they cannot feel it. The opposite of love, it turns out, is not always hatred. Sometimes it is simply not being grieved, not being moved, having a heart so padded with comfort that the suffering of others never reaches it. God notices that numbness. He calls it a thing worthy of woe.

This lesson is not meant to make us feel guilty for owning a soft bed or enjoying a good meal. Amos is not against beauty or rest. He is against the heart that uses comfort as a wall to keep God and neighbor out. As we walk through Amos six, let the Lord ask the gentle, searching question underneath every verse: have I grown so at ease that I can no longer hear the fire next door? And then let Him do the better thing, which is to wake us up while waking is still mercy, and turn our comfort back into compassion.

Group Discussion: Where in your life right now do you feel most comfortable and secure, and how might that very comfort be making you slower to notice the needs of God and the people around you?

Personal Reflection: Amos says the leaders were not grieved over the ruin of Joseph. What is one specific area of brokenness, in your church, your family, or your community, that you have allowed yourself to grow numb to, and what would it look like this week to let your heart be grieved again?

Read Amos 6:1-14

Study Questions

1. Amos pronounces woe on those who are at ease in Zion and feel secure on the mountain of Samaria (Amos 6:1). What does the text say these people trusted in, and why does God treat false security as a spiritual danger rather than a harmless comfort?
2. Read Amos 6:1–3 slowly and honestly. Where do you notice yourself feeling secure for reasons that have nothing to do with God, and what would it mean to put those things in their proper place this week?
3. In Amos 6:2 the prophet tells Israel to look at Calneh, Hamath, and Gath. What point is God making by pointing to these other cities, and how does it expose the pride of those who counted themselves first among the nations?
4. Amos describes leaders who put far off the day of disaster (Amos 6:3). In what ways do we push the thought of God's reckoning out of our minds so we can keep enjoying the present, and what helps you keep that day in honest view?
5. Trace the catalog of indulgence in Amos 6:4–6: ivory beds, choice lambs, idle songs, bowls of wine, the finest oils. What is God actually condemning here, since rest and good food are not sins in themselves? Be precise about where comfort crosses into something God calls woe.

6. Amos 6:6 says they were not grieved over the ruin of Joseph. Whose suffering have you found it easy not to be grieved over, and what would it look like for God to soften that numbness in you?
7. Because of all this, God says the revelers will be the first to go into exile (Amos 6:7). How does God's judgment fit the sin in this passage, and what does it teach us about the way unchecked self-indulgence ends?
8. The chapter moves to scenes of death, plague, and silence (Amos 6:8–11), even to hushing the name of the Lord in fear. When have you seen comfort and complacency lead, over time, to a place far darker than the comfortable expected? How does that sober you?
9. Amos 6:12–14 charges Israel with turning justice into poison and righteousness into bitterness, while boasting in their own strength. Drawing on the whole chapter, why is complacency mixed with pride such a serious thing before a holy God, and how does true worship of God and real justice toward neighbor belong together rather than apart?
10. Look back across all of Amos 6. Name one specific way the Lord Jesus is using this chapter to form you, whether to wake you from ease, to grieve you over something He grieves over, or to root your security in Him rather than in your comforts. What is the first concrete step of obedience He is asking from you?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Luke 12:16–21, the rich man at ease who was not rich toward God; Luke 16:19–31, the rich man and Lazarus and the danger of comfortable indifference; James 5:1–6, woe to the rich who lived in pleasure while withholding justice; Revelation 3:14–19, Laodicea’s lukewarm self-satisfaction; Matthew 25:31–46, judgment tied to whether we saw and helped the suffering

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