

Saying What No One Wants to Hear

Isaiah 6:8-11

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- “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us? Then I said, Here am I! Send me. 9 And He said, Go, and tell this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive. 10 Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed. 11 Then I said, Lord, how long? And He answered: Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate”

Saying What No One Wants to Hear

- “Spend your leisure time in cultivating an ear attentive to discourse, for in this way you will find that you learn with ease what others have found out with difficulty.” (Isocrates)
- “There's a lot of difference between listening and hearing.” (G. K. Chesterton)
- “It takes two to speak the truth - one to speak and another to hear.” (Henry David Thoreau)
- “The humble listen to their brothers and sisters because they assume they have something to learn. They are open to correction, and they become wiser through it.” (Thomas Dubay)
- “Never allow your ego to diminish your ability to listen.” (Gary Hopkins)

Amos Had To Tell People What They Didn't Want To Hear

- Amos 7:1-6 - “Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed it was the late crop after the king's mowings. 2 And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said: O Lord GOD, forgive, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small! 3 So the LORD relented concerning this. It shall not be, said the LORD. 4 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, the Lord GOD called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory. 5 Then I said: O Lord GOD, cease, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small! 6 So the LORD relented concerning this. This also shall not be, said the Lord GOD.”

Amos Had To Tell People What They Didn't Want To Hear

- Amos 7:7-9 - “Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. 8 And the LORD said to me, Amos, what do you see? And I said, A plumb line. Then the Lord said: Behold, I am setting a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. 9 The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam.”

Amos Had To Tell People What They Didn't Want To Hear

- God gave Amos a vision of terrible destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel
- Israel refused to measure up to God's standard; they chose instead to persist in idolatry and its associated sins.

Amos Had To Tell People What They Didn't Want To Hear

- Amaziah, a priest of the idols of Israel, protested Amos' message
 - Amos 7:10-13 - “Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. 11 For thus Amos has said: Jeroboam shall die by the sword, And Israel shall surely be led away captive From their own land. 12 Then Amaziah said to Amos: Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, And there prophesy. 13 But never again prophesy at Bethel, For it is the king's sanctuary, And it is the royal residence.”

Amos Had To Tell People What They Didn't Want To Hear

- He accused Amos of being disloyal
- He declared that the people couldn't stand to listen to him
- He advised Amos to go away into the south to Judah (we don't want your kind here).
- Amos was forbidden to speak in Bethel because it was the seat of government.

Amos Had To Tell People What They Didn't Want To Hear

- Incidentally, what happened to Amaziah?
 - Amos 7:14-17 - “Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepbreeder And a tender of sycamore fruit. 15 Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock, And the LORD said to me, Go, prophesy to My people Israel. 16 Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD: You say, Do not prophesy against Israel, And do not spout against the house of Isaac. 17 Therefore thus says the LORD: Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; Your land shall be divided by survey line; You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive From his own land.”

The Messages Of The Prophets Were Often Rejected

- Amos wasn't alone
 - Amos 2:11-13 - "I raised up some of your sons as prophets, And some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel? Says the LORD. 12 But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, And commanded the prophets saying, Do not prophesy! 13 Behold, I am weighed down by you, As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down."

The Messages Of The Prophets Were Often Rejected

- David complained that his words were distorted
 - Psalm 56:5-6 - “All day they twist my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. 6 They gather together, They hide, they mark my steps, When they lie in wait for my life.”

The Messages Of The Prophets Were Often Rejected

- Jeremiah wanted to quit
 - Jer. 20:7-10 - “O LORD, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; Everyone mocks me. 8 For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, Violence and plunder! Because the word of the LORD was made to me A reproach and a derision daily. 9 Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name. But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not. 10 For I heard many mocking: Fear on every side! Report, they say, and we will report it! All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, saying, Perhaps he can be induced; Then we will prevail against him, And we will take our revenge on him.”

People Often Blame Their Problems On The Messenger

- Ahab accused Elijah of stirring up trouble
 - 1Kings 18:17-18 - “Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, Is that you, O troubler of Israel? 18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals.”

People Often Blame Their Problems On The Messenger

- The people wanted Jeremiah dead
 - Jer. 26:8-9, 12-14 - “Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, You will surely die! 9 Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD... 12 Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying: The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city with all the words that you have heard. 13 Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; then the LORD will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you. 14 As for me, here I am, in your hand; do with me as seems good and proper to you.”

People Often Blame Their Problems On The Messenger

- Jeremiah was accused of ruining the moral of the troupes
 - Jer. 38:3-4 - “Thus says the LORD: This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it. 4 Therefore the princes said to the king, Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm.”
 - Similar charges are leveled against elders who keep the Lord’s command to discipline members who persist in sin

People Often Blame Their Problems On The Messenger

- Jesus was accused of treason
 - John 19:12 - “The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”
- Paul was accused of upsetting the whole world
 - Acts 17:6-7 - “...These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. 7 Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king--Jesus.”
 - Acts 24:5 - “For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.”

The Prophets Just Had To Deal With It

- Isaiah had to set his face like flint
 - Isa. 50:7 - “For the Lord GOD will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.”
- Ezekiel had to harden his countenance
 - Ez. 3:8-9 - “But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted. 8 Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. 9 Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.”

The Prophets Just Had To Deal With It

- Jeremiah had to stiffen his spine
 - Jer. 1:17-19 - “Therefore prepare yourself and arise, And speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, Lest I dismay you before them. 18 For behold, I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls against the whole land-Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land. 19 They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you, says the LORD, to deliver you.”

The Prophets Just Had To Deal With It

- We cannot be embarrassed by the message
 - Rom. 1:16 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
- Instead, we glorify God
 - 1Peter 4:16 - “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.”

God's Messengers Do Not Always Come In Pretty Packages

- Amos was a herdsman and a farmer and resisted the call - Amos 7:14-15
- Moses had difficulty speaking and tried to refuse the call - Ex. 4:10
- The apostles were uneducated and very flawed men - Acts 4:13
- The reason God calls such men is to put our focus on the message, not the messenger
 - 2Cor. 4:7 - “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”

Lessons

- God's people don't want to hear about their sins
 - 2Tim. 4:1-5 - "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

Lessons

- God's people don't want to hear about their sins
 - Eph. 4:17-20 - "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But you have not so learned Christ"

Lessons

- Sin remains sin, regardless of the fashions of our world
 - 1Cor. 6:9-10 - “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Lessons

- Light will always be in conflict with darkness
 - Matt. 5:14-16 - “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”
 - John 1:4-5 - “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

Lessons

- Often, we are uncomfortable telling people they are trapped in sin
 - Eph. 5:11-13 - “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light”
- The righteous are often thrust into the position of being at odds with those who choose to sin
 - Prov. 28:4 - “Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, But such as keep the law contend with them.”

Lessons

- Rejoice in taking a stand for the truth
 - Matt. 5:10-12 - “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
- It's what Jesus did
 - Heb. 12:3 - “For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”