

## Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map  
Pastor Roger W. Huffman

Amos 7:10-17  
July 10, 2016

### Pastoring is not a career. God calls shepherds to faithfully proclaim God's Word.

A Business Professor shocked his class: *If your goal is to get rich, you're pursuing the wrong career. Don't go into business. Go into the business of religion.*

- He wasn't advocating that. Just making a historic observation.
- Amaziah's way of thinking: *Go back... Earn your bread there...*
  - ◆ Priest of Bethel (not of Yahweh) his career choice
  - ◆ What he saw in other *prophets* - a way to make a profit/living

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- ❖ Consider the goals and motives of **man-made religion**.
  - Need for religion:
    - ◆ Deal with guilt - offer guidance
    - ◆ Need for companionship/community and purpose
  - Two approaches that appeal to people
    - ◆ Tell people what they **want** to hear - offer what they **think** they need
      - Paul warns against this: *For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.* 2 Timothy 4:3
      - **Human focus:** Purpose - relief and make people feel uplifted.
    - ◆ **Fear:** Impending doom. Hell fire and brimstone
  - Misuses of religion
    - ◆ **By people:** a sedative or antidepressant - sense of purpose
    - ◆ **By false prophets** (proclaimers who do not speak God's faithful word):
      - to make a profit - a living
      - For personal fulfillment, self-satisfaction: well intended, help others
    - ◆ **By kings and other government leaders:**
      - Comfort and control the people
      - Keep them happy. Endear themselves to the people.

That's what's behind the career choice of spiritual leaders in man-made religions

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- ❖ Amos' ministry - an example
  - Amos' family business: (not cookies) caretaker of sheep & sycamore-fig trees
  - Prophet in Israel - not Amos' career dream or choice
  - Raised **loving Yahweh**, his **word**, and his **mission** of saving the lost
  - Called by Yahweh: **Go prophesy** (*proclaim my word*) **to my people Israel**.
    - ◆ The Living God claimed a servant with **his word** - sent with **his word**
    - ◆ Note: this says **what** Yahweh did - not **how**.
      - People see and expect an *immediate call* from God.
      - Amos' call might have been *immediate* or through the church
      - This is **descriptive, not prescriptive**, nor what God promises
      - Even Saul's call to be Paul came through others - i.e. the church
- ❖ God calls shepherds to faithfully proclaim God's Word/Gospel
  - His word first makes him a servant of the word
    - ◆ Convicted by the word of his sin and guilt
    - ◆ Convicted by the word of God's forgiveness - freed from sin's mastery
    - ◆ Knowing and relying on the word for transformation/renewing of mind
    - ◆ All believers love the word and love souls - want to share God's word
  - Encouraged to offer self to the church for gospel ministry
    - ◆ The word works: *If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer (shepherd), he desires a noble task.* (willingness, not career choice)
    - ◆ The church, individuals and leaders, encourage those with gifts for public to offer themselves to be trained
    - ◆ Training reveals if the gifts are there or not
    - ◆ The community of believers sends to faithfully proclaim God's Word
  - Only God's word can save us from our sin's lies and deceptions
    - ◆ Our true spiritual needs are met in Christ - his way - to be his.
    - ◆ People pleasing is not equal to God pleasing.
    - ◆ God's people are pleased with **nothing less** than God's pure word
      - What an honor to serve people who want the pure word
      - What a miracle: God has raised up and called 100s of faithful men!

### Pastoring is not a career. God calls shepherds to faithfully proclaim God's Word.

Let's be careful how we encourage young men and women to consider gospel ministry. It's not a **career choice!** Servants offer themselves to their Lord. Encourage them to love Christ, his word and it's mission. Encourage those with gifts to offer themselves for ministry. The Lord will send out those he calls - not for their profit, but for the profit of God's people and his kingdom.