

Saying What No One Wants to Hear

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Isa. 6:8-12

1. "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)
2. "There's a lot of difference between listening and hearing." (G. K. Chesterton)
3. "It takes two to speak the truth - one to speak and another to hear." (Henry David Thoreau)
4. "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)
5. "Never allow your ego to diminish your ability to listen." (Gary Hopkins)

I. AMOS HAD TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR

A. Amos 7:1-9

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

B. Amaziah, a priest of the idols of Israel, protested Amos' message - 7:10-13

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

C. Incidentally, what happened to Amaziah? - Amos 7:14-17

II. THE MESSAGES OF THE PROPHETS WERE OFTEN REJECTED

A. Amos wasn't alone - Amos 2:11-13

B. David complained that his words were distorted - Psalm 56:5-6

C. Jeremiah wanted to quit - Jer. 20:7-10

III. PEOPLE OFTEN BLAME THEIR PROBLEMS ON THE MESSENGER

A. Ahab accused Elijah of stirring up trouble - 1Kings 18:17-18

B. People wanted Jeremiah dead - Jer. 26:8-9, 12-14

C. Jeremiah was accused of ruining the moral of the troops - Jer. 38:3-4

1. Similar charges are leveled against elders who keep the Lord's command to discipline members who persist in sin.

D. Jesus was accused of treason - John 19:12

E. Paul was accused of upsetting the whole world - Acts 17:6-7, 24:5

IV. THE PROPHETS JUST HAD TO DEAL WITH IT

- A. Isaiah had to set his face like flint - Isa. 50:7
- B. Ezekiel had to harden his countenance - Ez. 3:7-9
- C. Jeremiah had to stiffen his spine - Jer. 1:17-19
- D. We cannot be embarrassed by the message - Rom. 1:16
- E. Instead, we glorify God - 1Peter 4:16

V. GOD'S MESSENGERS DO NOT ALWAYS COME IN PRETTY PACKAGES

- A. Amos was a herdsman and a farmer and resisted the call - Amos 7:14-15
- B. Moses had difficulty speaking and tried to refuse the call - Ex. 4:10
- C. The apostles were uneducated and very flawed men - Acts 4:13
- D. The reason God calls such men is to put our focus on the message, not the messenger - 2Cor. 4:7
 - 1. If we reject the message because we don't like the messenger or his manner of delivery of the message, that's on us.

VI. LESSONS

- A. God's people don't want to hear about their sins - 2Tim. 4:1-5; Eph. 4:17-20
 - 1. If hearing about our sins causes pain, then there is still hope for us.
 - 2. Sin remains sin, regardless of the fashions of our world or the Nazi dictates of political correctness - 1Cor. 6:9-10
 - 3. Light will always be in conflict with darkness - Matt. 5:14-16; John 1:4-5
- B. Often, we are uncomfortable telling people they are trapped in sin - Eph. 5:11-13
 - 1. The righteous are often thrust into the position of being at odds with those who choose to sin - Prov. 28:4
 - 2. Rejoice in taking a stand for the truth - Matt. 5:10-12
 - 3. It is what Jesus did - Heb. 12:3