**ARE WE AT EASE IN ZION?**

**Amos 6:1**

**INTRODUCTION** - Our text this morning is taken from one of the prophets who went to the nation of Israel during a time of great prosperity to warn them of their impending doom.  Amos was a sheep breeder who was called by God to prophecy to Israel during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah and Jeroboam (II), king of Israel.  He was a contemporary of Isaiah and prophesied around 780 to 740 BC, somewhere between 20 and 60 years before Israel would fall to Nineveh (Assyria).  His message was a strong warning to Israel and Judah that if they did not repent, destruction would come against them.

                While he wrote primarily to Israel, our text today was directed toward Judah AND Israel.  The text reads, *“Woe to you who are at ease in Zion, And trust in Mount Samaria…”  (6:1)* Zion, was a name given to Jerusalem, that as it was used by the prophets usually carried a double meaning – 1) a portion of Jerusalem that included the temple complex and 2) spiritual Jerusalem, or the kingdom of God’s righteous.  Because of this, many passages where it is used have a double meaning.  Including, I believe, the passage we are going to examine this morning.  Israel and Judah were physically resting on their laurels and dismissing their need for God.  They were physically corrupt and spiritually bankrupt.

Amos then proceeds to call upon them to go look at cities that have already perished and to consider their fate.  In vs. 3, Amos issues another “woe” concerning their putting off the day of doom, because destruction WILL come.

                With that background, let us consider our lesson for this morning.  Are we at ease in Zion?  By that I mean, are we developing to the degree that we ought to be?  Have we become complacent in our service to God?

***ARE WE AT EASE IN ZION –*** If we are it is not because

I.   **IT IS NOT BECAUSE** -

A.      There is nothing to do –

a.   Rest assured there is plenty to do.  The Christian’s life is to be a busy one.
AND all we do is to be done to the best of our ability –

**ECCL. 9:10**

**COL. 3:23**

**ROM. 12:11** – speaks of not lagging in diligence and being fervent in spirit.

b.   **JN. 4:35** – Jesus speaking to His disciples said, ‘Don’t say there is still four months, the harvest is ripe now.’

c.   **ACTS 10:38** - AS we follow the example of Jesus we find one “who went about doing good”

B.       We have too many workers –

a.   There is always plenty of work to be done.  Quite often we may not notice that fact because usually a handful does all the work.  The only time we DO notice is when something goes wrong – and usually what we do is complain about it.  But here is the real question, WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT!
If we are not growing as we ought to, and few would deny that we can improve, are you as involved as you ought to be?

b.   **MATT. 9:37-38** – Jesus again speaking of the harvest told His disciples that they were needed.

c.   Brethren, you can NEVER have too many personal workers.

C.       We have plenty of time –

a.   The fact is we are living on borrowed time and we don’t know how much is left.

b.   **JN. 9:4** – Jesus kept busy and on one occasion when he gave sight to a blind man said, He needed to work while it is day because the night is coming when no man can work.

c.   **2 PET. 3:10-12** – the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night … what manner of persons ought you to be?

D.      There is no reward

a.   Our rewards for service are many.  We receive some reward in this life as we see souls obey the gospel and others strengthened.
We have brethren who will lift us up and express great appreciation for what we do.

b.    As Christians all that we do will be remembered. If we remain faithful and work til the end, we WILL receive our reward.

c.   **1 COR. 15:58** – our labor is not in vain

d.   **HEB. 4:9** speaks of the rest that remains for the people of God

e.   **1 PET. 1:3-4** – an inheritance, incorruptible reserved in heaven for us.

So we can truly see, there are many reasons to NOT be at ease in Zion.  So why are so many at ease?

II. **SOME ARE AT EASE BECAUSE OF…**

A.      Worldliness – they are not willing to give up their sinful ways.

a.  This was very much the problem in Amos’ day.  Much of their sinfulness was turning to idols and away from God.  They lived in corruption, and like the nations around them.

b.   Many today don’t want to deal with their “ease” because it would mean having to make some difficult choices.  It would mean having to change the way they live their lives.

c.    **JAMES 4:4** – Friendship with the world is enmity with God.  Notice vs. 1-3 as the cause

d.   **EPH. 4:22** - Describes the old man and his ways we are to put off.

B.    Ignorance – there are many who do not realize what they are expected to do as Christians.

a.    One reason is because they don’t take the time to learn.  Instead they rely on what others have told them and what they ASSUME is right.

b.   **HOS. 4:6** - “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.   Hosea proceeds to point out that it was because they rejected knowledge and they had forgotten the law of God.  This also described the plight of Israel in Amos’ day.

c. **2 TIM. 2:15** - We have to continually study God’s word

d. **JAMES 1:21** – receive it with meekness

C.       Presumptions –

a.   Israel and Judah assumed that God was with them and He would always be there to “bail them out” just as He has always done.

b.  They were arrogant and over confident – both physically and spiritually.
Often they thought they were invincible and that they didn’t need God.  They turned to neighboring allies and physical resources.
Others presumed that God didn’t see what was going on.  The list of their arrogance is long.

c.   Presumption is a dangerous thing, even today.  How many presume that it doesn’t matter what they do – they are going to be saved?  The doctrine, “once saved, always saved” teaches that!
Others presume they have plenty of time – we have already addressed that.
We also presume that we are all-right.  We know about sin and we know OTHERS are guilty, but we are fine the way we are.

d.   Paul assumed he was all right as he persecuted Christians – **1 TIM. 1:13, ACTS 26:9**.  But he wasn’t and he needed to be saved.

D.      They don’t want to do the work

a.   This keeps many “at ease”.  It is easier (notice that word) to sit back and let someone else do the work than to get busy yourself.
AND there are the unpleasant tasks that we just don’t want to do.  Maybe we reason that we can put them off until later, etc.

b.   We have also already noted that we HAVE TO keep busy.
God despises idleness –
 **ECCL. 10:18** - “Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks.”

c.    **MATT. 25:14-30** – the unprofitable servant buried his talent and returned it to his master  (24-30).

d.   **HEB. 6:11** - “And we desire that each of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end.”

E.       Indifference – they didn’t care.

a.   Many are at ease because they really don’t care about what is going on.  They are comfortable where they are at and they don’t plan to or want to change.
Brethren, if we cannot be convinced to care, we are NOT going to give the effort needed to please God.

b.   The church at Laodicea was like this – **REV. 3:15-17**

III. **OVERCOMING OUR EASE** -

A.   It’s time to WAKE UP!  2016 is rapidly approaching.  This is a good time to take an assessment of your life.  **2 COR. 13:5** tells us to examine ourselves.

a.   **2 COR. 6:2** – behold, NOW is the time…

B.   Repent – resolve to do better. Anytime we determine we are not what we ought to and there is sin in our lives we need to repent. True repentance leads to change as it is needed
**1 JN. 1:7** - Forgiveness only comes when we are willing to do what we are commanded

C.  Return to the Old Paths – when you were what you ought to be

a.    **HEB. 10:32** – Recall the former days…, 35-36 – you have need of endurance.

b.    **REV. 2:5** – to the church at Ephesus, they were warned to Remember where you have fallen from.

D.      **GAL. 6:9** - Get to work – don’t lose heart, don’t grow weary, and don’t quit.

**CONCLUSION** –

If we find that we are at ease, there is no easy answer.

We have to determine we are going to change and then we have to work at it.

With the New Year fast approaching, if you want to see this church and your personal life flourish in Him we have to wake up.

There is no better time than now to start.