

## **Please leave your message after the tone!**

**By Martin Huburn - 08/09/2011**

Good morning my adelphoi, this morning I'm going to start my sermon series on the book of Amos. I pray that this book will be every much a blessing to everyone here as it has been to me. Today we will be looking at how to respond when God calls us and how we should respond when we hear His message.

Now I don't know about you but I really dislike answering machines. You never know what to say and its really uncomfortable knowing your speaking to a machine. But could you imagine if one day God decided He isn't going to listen to our prayers and put an automated answering service in place. It would be a bit like this.

Thank you for calling heaven,  
Please select one of the following  
For request, press one,  
For thanksgiving, press two,  
To confess sins press three,  
For anything else please press four."

To return to the main menu please press the hash key.

Unfortunately our angels and saints are busy at the moment, please hold the line your call is important to us.

How frequently do we put God on hold? When God calls us, we really should do what he tells us rather than ask Him to leave a message.

Let me first of all share a bit of background information about the Book. Amos' mission was around 750 BC. Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa in Judah. The town of Tekoa was made up of mainly wilderness and desert land.

Let's look at Amos 1:1, it says

**"The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel two years before the earthquake."**

In Amos 7: 14 - it says he was neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet. Amos was an ordinary man with an ordinary job from an ordinary place and he had no real Biblical grounding prior to His call. But God is going to use the ordinary to preach an extraordinary message. The leaders of Israel were no longer following God. Generations had fallen away and they were continuing in their wicked ways. Amos was called by God to preach to the people of Israel who had fallen away from God and their king was Jeroboam II.

2 Kings 14: 24 says

**24"Jeroboam did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all of the sins of Jeroboam I, son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin."**

So God is going to send His message to the people of Israel with Amos.

The name Amos means "Burden bearer", and he is on his way to bear God's burden to the people of Israel.

I remember being the person who had to bear the bad news to my family about the loss of one of my uncles. It was an extremely un-pleasant event in my life. I don't know if anyone here has had to do this but its uncomfortable knowing that the message isn't going to be well received and people are going to be shocked and upset.

I'm sure Amos knew the people of Israel were going to get upset with the message he was bringing but he knew, unfortunately, it had to be done.

### ***The call from God.***

As we saw in Amos 1:1 and 7:14, We don't have to come from a church background or from a prestigious background to do Gods work. If we look in Amos 7: 15, Amos was called by God and answered the call.

In the New Testament, we see Simon Peter and his brother Andrew were fishermen from Galilee, called to become fishers of men and sent to preach the gospel.

Matthew 4: 18 - 19 says

**18 Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.**

**19 And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.""**

God isn't looking for the extraordinary, he uses people from all walks of life to deliver His message and to do His work.

Some of you may be saying, Martin that's a good message, But how does God call us?

### *How does God call us?*

In the former day, God called the prophets using unique methods from a burning bush (**Exodus 3: 2 - 6**) and even a talking donkey (**Numbers 22 : 28 - 30**). He then used His prophets to transmit His message to the people of Israel and witnesses to write down these messages (**Exodus 24: 4**). This written message became the book we call the Bible.

Today God speaks to us through the Bible using preachers and teachers to spread and share His Holy word.

As Paul tells Timothy in **2 Timothy 3: 14 – 17**, it says

**14 “You, however continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,  
15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

**16 All scripture is God breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;**

**17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”**

The holy word convicts our heart to move and gives us all of the tools we need to do God's work.

### *Answering God's Call.*

So when God does call us, how and when should we answer to it?

Amos 7: 15 we see Amos followed God instruction by leaving his flock of sheep and “Go prophecy” to God's people in Israel.

And in Matthew 4: 20, we see that Simon Peter and Andrew got up and left their nets “immediately”. Not in a week, not in 5 minutes, not when they felt like it but when the Lord called.

See we should be willing to drop whatever it is we are doing to do what God has convicted us to do. How frequent do we tell God “I'll do it but when I'm ready?” or “I'll do it when my situation has improved?” or “I'll do it as long as it's not going to burden me and my life.”

Paul tells the church in Rome in Romans 8: 28 – 30

**28 “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**

<sup>29</sup> For those whom He foreknew, He also **predestined** to become conformed to the image of His son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

<sup>30</sup> For those **whom He predestined**, He also **called**; and these whom He called, He also **justified**; and these whom He justified, He also **glorified**.”

All of us that are called by God were predestined, part of God’s plan. We are called for His purpose, not ours.

Paul tells us those that were predestined were called to obey God, those of us that are called to obey God, we are justified by obeying the gospel and those of us who are justified by the gospel are glorified by God. How amazing is that? That all of us that are called by God are to be glorified. **WOW!**

Then Paul goes on to say in Romans 8: 31

<sup>31</sup> “In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

What an ally we have in God. The same God that created the world, the same God that rescued His people from Egypt, the same God that let his chosen people be persecuted for going astray.

### ***Putting God on Hold***

Amos 1:2 says

“The Lord roars from Zion  
And from Jerusalem He utters His voice;  
And the shepherd’ pasture grounds mourn,  
And the summit of Carmel dries up.”

God had become angry with His chosen people, they had strayed from God and from God’s law. They had put God on hold. So God sent Amos to deliver His message telling them God was angry and the punishment that would follow.

### ***God leaves a message.***

When God is put on hold, He becomes angry and leaves a message. He uses His prophets to deliver His message directly to the people. How Amos delivers God’s message, in my opinion, is sheer brilliance. He gets the people of Israel onside by telling them how God is going to punish all of their neighbouring enemies. **(Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon,**

**Moab and Judah)** We'll look at this more in depth in my next sermon, God willing of course. But then tells them how God is going to punish them.

I can just imagine it. Amos is telling them how God is going to punish their enemies and the Israelites are standing up, cheering, shouting and whooping. But then he delivers God's message that is for them. Telling the people of Israel where they have gone astray. All of a sudden, Silence, followed by heckles and scowling, quite possibly even anger and rage and people wanting to have Amos lynched. What makes matters worse, Amos was from the Southern Kingdom of Judah and he was preaching God's message in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

It's interesting that the message God has Amos take to Israel was a message of Judgement and Rebuke. Israel and Judah didn't see eye to eye and there was a rivalry between the two Kingdoms. I guess to put this into today's perspective, it would be like a person from Scotland coming down to England and telling us where we are going wrong.

Hmmm..... 😊

And there's another perspective. Could you imagine being Amos, coming from a rival country and preaching rebuke and Judgement to them. How scary that must have been?!

Amos wasn't the first to preach in an alien land. Moses and Aaron had done it many years before. They were foreigners in the Land of Egypt and were called by God to preach to Pharaoh to free the Israelite slaves.

It says in Exodus 7: 8 – 13

<sup>8</sup> "Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying

<sup>9</sup> "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Work a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.'"

<sup>10</sup> So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the LORD had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent.

<sup>11</sup> Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts.

<sup>12</sup> For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents, But Aarons staff swallowed up their staffs.

<sup>13</sup> Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said."

Here we see two examples. One of Moses and Aaron answering the call of God and obeying His command and the second we see Pharaoh not listening to God. Pharaoh's heart was hardened. Just like the people of Israel and it's neighbours and like the world today And it's just like when we are corrected or told to do something we don't want to do or told something we don't want to hear.

We need to become humble, soften our hearts and get rid of that self pride. I remember back to childhood. I used to be an avid Star Wars fan and I used to collect the figurines of the characters. My mom every other Monday would take me into town and let me pick a new figurine. I remember one day I had miss-behaved, so my mom said I wasn't allowed to have a figurine that next Monday and pointed out the reason why. When that Monday came I was as good as gold, hoping my mom would see change her mind about my punishment. So I asked her, as I had been such a good boy, would she change her mind. She told me that acting in such a way doesn't warrant a reward and the only way I would learn is from her standing by her word. I realised that if I break her rules then I wouldn't receive my reward. The point I'm making is sometimes we need to think about what we have done wrong and realise that God won't reward us if we continue in our fleshly ways.

### Exodus 17: 1 – 7

There was no water in the desert for the people to drink and the people of Israel were complaining to Moses. Moses asks them **“Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?”**

Moses asks God what he should do.

**<sup>6</sup> I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the LORD saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”**

Massah means testing.

Meribah means quarrelling.

This event is mentioned by the Psalmist many years later in Psalm 95: 7-8, it says: -

**<sup>7</sup> “For He is our God,**

**And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.**

**Today, if you would here His voice,**

**<sup>8</sup> Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,**

**As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,”**

The Israelites were sinning against God and didn't understand why God was angry or why they were being corrected. Their hearts had become hardened and eventually over the course of time they stopped taking God's calls. All they wanted was to be told what they want to hear.

Paul warned Timothy that the world will be like this.

In **2 Timothy 4: 3 -4**, Paul says,

**<sup>3</sup> “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,**

**<sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.**

James Hetfield the lead singer of the hard rock band, Metallica once sang in one of their songs “Hearing what you want to hear, but knowing only what you heard.” So many people have selective hearing. We want our ears tickled with things we want to hear, but what happens when we are told something we don't like? It's a hard pill to swallow. But we have to get rid of pride and be humble about being corrected when we are wrong.

So when God calls us, are we going to answer?

Or are we going to let the answer machine pick it up so we can respond when and how “we” want to respond?

So let me ask all of us here, what is it God is telling you today?

Is it come to God? Press 1.

Is it to serve God? Press 2.

Is it to share the gospel? Press 3.

Is it to stop sinning? – Press 4.

Don't be like the people of Israel, when God calls, we must listen and obey His word.