

Sermon for 20 July 2025 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Scriptures: Amos 8:1-12; Psalm 52 (Insert: *Alternate leader and people*); Colossians 1:15-28;  
Luke 10:38-42

Sermon

Once every three years we read Amos several fierce Sundays.

Because what he predicted came true nearly a century after he predicted it, his powerful language became imbedded in the conscience of his people, and now in our own as their successors, both Jews and Christians.

He had no political power, and no reason except that of his own conscience, to speak out.

When I first seriously heard and studied him in 1959 and 1960 in seminary, I was captivated, and his impact has never stopped growing on me.

This year, this summer, his effect on me is so large I can't preach anything else when he comes up in our assigned readings.

Every news program we read or watch or discuss ...or avoid, in gatherings and alone; every reflection, even every prayer we lift up with others, has echoes of Amos, to me. So that, when I stand up and try to fulfill my obligation before you to lift your imagination to thoughts of Jesus, and his incredible power to inspire and engage us, I find Amos in the foreground. When Martha asks him to intervene between her and her sister, Mary, I hear him saying, "Martha, listen to Amos. The values he's expressed are what I'm here to bring alive. There's no time to waste. Sit here and think with me about his point, now, while there's time."

Just this week a colleague shared an article with me about the influence people all over the world are able to have on their governments, their communities, schools, through peaceful, non-violent protests and actions. The consistent message the scholar who studied this topic in recent history is that 3.5% of any population is enough to achieve major positive change in country after country. Peaceful, totally devoid of weaponry, movements can make major progress toward better arrangements and practices.

It reminded me of a book I read in 2016 titled, "This Is an Uprising," by two brothers who found the same thing in country after country in this current century.

That's just a few years back ... and yet here we feel hopeless, and either avoid or argue more than we do anything else in so many ways.

So, without even studying the other scriptures we've shared today, I'll sum up my insight as a Christian spokesperson among friends in a dedicated moment together: Let us pray Amos this

part of July 2025, often and seriously. He's alive among us. He expresses himself quite powerfully. He, like ourselves, sees something that needs attention among us; something that builds on the values and achievements of our most savvy and principled relatives and friends; something about love and respect that is most important for now, and for tomorrow.

Then you, then we, will, as Jesus told Martha, have chosen the most important thing.

Amen.

References: "The '3.5% rule': How a small minority can change the world. David Robson, Features correspondent, BBC/13 May 2019.

"This Is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-first Century," by Mark Engler and Paul Engler (Copyright©2016 by Mark Engler and Paul Engler. Published by Nation Books, A Member of the Perseus Books Group, 116 East 16<sup>th</sup> Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10003.