

New Hope Lutheran Church
Eight Sunday After Pentecost
July 14, 2024



Introduction

When Amos reports his vision of God judging Israel for its mistreatment of the poor, he becomes a threat to the power of the priests and the king. John the Baptist also speaks truth to power, and Herod has him killed. In Herod's fear that Jesus is John returned from the dead, we may hear hope for the oppressed: all the prophets killed through the ages are alive in Jesus. We are called to witness to justice in company with them, and to proclaim God's saving love.

First Reading: Amos 7:7-15

Amos is not the kind of prophet attached to temples or royal courts. Rather, he is an ordinary farmer from Judah (the southern kingdom) called by God to speak to Israel (the northern kingdom). God's word of judgment through Amos conflicts with the king's court prophet Amaziah, whom Amos encounters at Bethel.

⁷This is what [the Lord GOD] showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said,

"See, I am setting a plumb line

in the midst of my people Israel;
I will never again pass them by;

⁹the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,
and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”

¹⁰Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel,
saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the very center of the house of
Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹For thus Amos has said,
‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land.’”

¹²And Amaziah said to Amos, “O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah,
earn your bread there, and prophesy there; ¹³but never again prophesy at
Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.”

¹⁴Then Amos answered Amaziah, “I am no prophet, nor a prophet’s son;
but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, ¹⁵and the LORD took
me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my
people Israel.’”

Psalm: Psalm 85:8-13

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying. (Ps. 85:8)

⁸I will listen to what the Lord | God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn
their | hearts to you.

⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to | those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell | in our land. R

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have | met together;
righteousness and peace have | kissed each other.

¹¹ Faithfulness shall spring up | from the earth,
and righteousness shall look | down from heaven.

¹² The Lord will indeed | grant prosperity,
and our land will | yield its increase.

¹³ Righteousness shall go be- | fore the Lord
and shall prepare for | God a pathway. R

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had

believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel: Mark 6:14-29

As Jesus and his disciples begin to attract attention, Mark recalls the story of John the Baptist's martyrdom. Like John, Jesus and his disciples will also suffer at the hands of those opposed to the gospel of salvation.

¹⁴ King Herod heard of [the disciples' preaching,] for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." ¹⁵ But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. ¹⁸ For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹ And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. ²¹ But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ²² When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." ²³ And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." ²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the

baptizer.”²⁵ Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”²⁶ The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her.²⁷ Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John’s head. He went and beheaded him in the prison,²⁸ brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.²⁹ When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.