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Topic: Amos 8:11: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD God, that I will send a famine in the land... of hearing the words of the LORD (of hearing God's revelations)"

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It is a privilege to serve the Lord. It is a privilege to believe him, a privilege to know him personally.

That reminds me of yesterday. I bought a small item in a shop in Krefeld, and there was a nice young man there. There were no other people there, just a sales assistant. And I asked him across the counter, "Have you ever had a personal experience with God?" And I asked it straight from the heart. And he looked at me and said, "No, not yet." I said, "But it can still happen."

Let's see what God does. Somehow, and at some point, God will call out the last ones. We do not know where they are, but God knows his own. And in so far as his own are saved, they will also know him.

Let us feel at ease in God's presence. Let us thank him for every word that comes to us and for all the blessings he has already given and for what is yet to come.

You know of course that in earlier years I was a very fast preacher. I'm getting slower and slower. Not because I'm getting older. The singers have sung a lovely song after all. Things do not stay the same for the young. They also move towards old age. And even the youngest among us realize that they are getting older.

Those who are 18 today think back to how it was when they were 14. The 14-year-olds think back to when school began. And the 30-year-olds too, everyone looks back.

And we all experience earthly growth. And we also hope to experience spiritual growth.

And the blessed hope that we all who have become believers carry within us is surely that we shall soon be delivered from this body, taken out of it, and be young in a resurrection body, in which we can never again be tired, sick, or anything else, but remain as we are for all eternity.

Then there will be no more growing old, no more sickness. Does that not fill you with joy, especially for us who are growing older, when everything no longer works

quite as it should, when our limbs no longer move as smoothly?

Let us always remember that our Lord is coming soon, and that then the glorious morning will dawn for us too.

And that day will never come to an end. The Lord himself will shine like the sun and will then wipe away every tear from our eyes.

I would like to follow on from the Word we have read and then move on to the prophets and the New Testament.

From Psalm 34 we have read, "***I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.***" [Psa 34:1]

This verse is actually a test for us all. We think of the words of the Apostle Paul, "***Give thanks to God for everything in every situation, for this is God's will.***" [1Th 5:18]

And how often do I, and perhaps all of us, find it difficult when trials come upon us, when days arrive that we do not like, when much that is unpleasant, unjust, and whatever else may be associated with it, comes upon us.

Then we do not feel at all comfortable with it, especially when injustice gets the upper hand. When it runs rampant amongst others and in the world, it doesn't bother us all that much.

But when it strikes us, when we are drawn into situations where we feel injustice descending upon us, then things look quite different again.

It is easier to bear the burdens of others than one's own, and to judge and endure the trials of others better than one's own trials.

But let us allow these words to speak to my heart and to everyone's heart. "***I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.***" [Psa 34:1]

For we are not to praise people, but the Lord, and the Lord has not caused us suffering in difficult situations. He has been our comfort, our confidence, our help.

And so, even in difficult situations, we can give glory to our Lord, even if pain may fill our hearts.

Then it continues: "***My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.***" [Psa 34:2]

The others will not come at all where the name of the Lord is praised, but the humble who have truly humbled themselves before God.

For thus it is written, "***God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.***" [Jam 4:6]

A person must first submit to the mighty hand of God. They must acknowledge God. They must respect God's plan for humanity, and thus submit to the mighty hand of God, so that the Lord may lift them out of the dust and set them upon a rock.

And when that happens, there is singing of praise, there is joy, there is peace in our hearts.

And as it is written, "***the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad***" [Psa 34:2], when the Lord is praised from the heart and with all one's soul.

Just be honest with yourselves. In all the trials that might befall us, must it not be the case that Satan might on top of everything else turn us against the Lord?

For that is very often the case. First he wants to plunge us into some trouble, and then say, "See, this is what the Lord has allowed."

Let us please always be vigilant, and place our trust entirely in God and in his grace, and give Satan no chance whatsoever to instill any thoughts in us that might cause us to stumble.

Then it says, as has been read, "***Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.***" [Psa 34:3]

I sometimes really wish, and I think God wants that too, that in our midst there would be more singing of praise, more worship, and a free expression of what each individual feels in the presence of God.

Whoever wishes to praise, let them praise. Whoever wishes to say amen, let them say amen. Whoever wishes to cry out hallelujah, let them cry out hallelujah.

That we might simply be freed from our straitjacket and be able to thank the Lord freely, whether for his Word, for his grace, or for what he has done for us.

In any case, the affairs of daily life must not weigh us down so heavily that our joy in the Lord can no longer be our strength, but rather that in every situation, under all circumstances, our joy in the Lord remains our strength. [Neh 8:10]

And then he will surely also grant us the grace to pray for our enemies, and then we might fare as Job did, who prayed for his friends and God turned his fortunes around. [Job 42:10]

And it may be that if we can pray sincerely and honestly for such people who wish to do us harm, if we pray for them, then God might also turn our fortunes around and reveal his mighty arm. May it come to pass.

Since it has already been mentioned that we are here to hear God's Word, I would like to read a few well-known scriptures. The first is from Amos chapter 8, verse 11.

[11] ***Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing***

the words of the Lord.

If you have different translations, you will find the phrase "to hear the instructions of the Lord God, to hear the revelations of the Lord God." There are various translations, but they all convey or reveal the same meaning.

In decisive days and times of significance in the plan of salvation, it is not merely a matter of someone reading a few passages from Matthew 13 or from Mark 12 or Luke 24 and then offering their commentary on them.

In such decisive times as we have now reached, the relevant passages intended by God for his people must be sought out and found, so that we too may learn of the promises that belong to us from the Word, believe them, and then experience them.

This is actually what distinguishes the church of the living God from all other denominations.

And here in all humility we claim that God's holy Word has been revealed to us through the Holy Spirit.

Here it is not people who have interpreted or spread their opinions. We have heard God's holy Word, and it has truly been revealed to us through the Holy Spirit in its context and meaning.

We say this with gratitude before the Almighty God.

So when it is written here that "***days will come when God would send a famine upon the land, not a famine for bread or water, but a famine to hear the words,***" the instructions, the revelations of the Lord God, that is why we are here today from various countries and nations. Have we understood that?

For we are living in these days in which God has sent this hunger. It is truly the time of which the prophet spoke back then.

There have been special periods in the plan of salvation, just as there have been special periods in the history of mankind.

And then we have people who stand out particularly in this history of mankind, whether they were kings, whether they were emperors, whether military leaders, whether they were scientists, whatever.

There are people who stand out within humanity.

Then within the history of the plan of salvation we have men of God in the Old and New Testament who simply stand out.

Not everyone was Abraham, not everyone was Moses, not everyone was Elijah, not everyone was Paul, not everyone was Peter or John.

But God had people who simply stood out within the history of the plan of salvation.

And these were men who knew of a divine calling, who not only preached, but through whom God could speak, through whom God could work, through whom he could bring everything up to date in his kingdom.

And we believe that God works today in the same way as he has always done.

And we believe that he must have a mouth on earth to speak through. He must be able to work, he must be able to reveal himself.

Our longing is that the longer it goes on, the more God might reveal himself.

Not all prophets were great men, but when God had called them to it—I am thinking particularly of Amos, from whom we have just read, through whom God spoke—he speaks a very significant word in chapter 7.

Amos chapter 7, verse 12, a beautiful passage. It says here:

[12] ***Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:***

[13] ***But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.***

Today one would say a bishop's town, with a beautiful cathedral, something quite outstanding.

And there a prophet of the Lord, a seer, should not speak at all. Why not? Because the people were not prepared to listen to what God had shown this man.

The word "seer" appears time and again in the Old Testament. But here it is used directly in conjunction with the term "prophet".

"***Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer...***" [Amo 7:12]

So biblical prophets were seers. They saw in visions what God revealed and showed them, and then through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit presented what they had seen to the people and passed it on in the name of the Lord.

And as I said, this man who said, "***go away, eat your bread elsewhere and so on, and do not prophesy here, for Bethel is a royal sanctuary and a royal residence.***" [Amo 7:12-13]

The higher people think of themselves, the more important they consider themselves, or the association to which they belong, the greater the danger of rejecting God's simplicity and failing entirely to grasp that it is God who means well with them.

And this may be added here: as long as God still speaks and sends prophets at all times, he has not yet given us up, then he still has mercy on us, then he still means well by us, then there is still hope for us.

Have we understood that?

Thus in the Old Testament, God sent his servants at all times.

As it is written in one passage, "***I have hewed them by the prophets...***" [Hos 6:5]

It's literally written.

And what was it? People did not realize how well God means by them, that he still sends a man to them, a seer, so that he may speak to them through him.

There is a passage in the New Testament: "***God has graciously visited us.***" And in connection with this, they called Jesus a prophet in his day. [Luk 7:16]

Beloved, he was a prophet, he was a priest, he was a mediator, and still is today an intercessor and so on, but he is more than a prophet.

He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

He, who was in glory, left it behind, came to us so that we might have the opportunity to come to him.

I shall continue reading from verse 14.

[14] ***Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit.***

Do you see? He said exactly what he is.

David could have said, "I'm a shepherd." Anyone could have said what they were or are by nature.

But then came a day of divine calling, and that was it. A divine decision had been made. Blessed is every person who understands the ABCs of being a believer, namely to respect divine decisions.

Anyone who cannot respect divine decisions must not expect to reach their spiritual destination with God at all.

I recently said to someone—I don't want to be too explicit here, but I did manage to get the words out and said: "You are missing the point of what God is doing now. You mock it, you blaspheme against it, it has nothing to say to you." And I then added this sentence: "You are despisers of what God is doing now and have ended up in a very pious form that bears no divine life within it."

Beloved, that was not a judgment, it was merely an assessment based on the Word of God.

For it is still written: "***he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.***" [1Co 2:15]

So writes Paul to the Corinthians. Here we have a man of God. As for him, he could say:

[14] ***Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit.***

Now comes the explanation in verse 15:

"***But...***", this "***but***".

[15] ***But the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me...***

Amen.

But the Lord—not he himself—he was, as he said, who he was: "***a herdman, a mulberry grower***," and so on.

And then comes the explanation: "***But the Lord took me as I followed the flock***" [Amo 7:15]

At this moment I'm actually thinking of Elisha, who had twelve yoke of oxen before him. [1Ki 19:19]

And even to this day, there are men who follow the oxen without realizing that a prophet has been in the land. And they go and they plow, and they do not realize—it makes no difference whether there are two pairs of oxen or twelve—but they march behind the oxen without realizing what God has done in the land.

It was only then, when the day came and suddenly something was passed on: the cloak.

You know what happened there. At that moment it was over. Oxen remained oxen; indeed twelve yoke of oxen before him. and that was the right thing to do. [1Ki 19:21]

Then one can never go back to following the oxen again. The harness was used for the fire.

It burned well after all. The oxen were eaten after they had been nicely stewed.

And just like that, the old was over. Something completely new began, and there was no going back to the old.

Beloved, when God calls us, when he comes upon us and reveals his power to us, then all bridges are broken; there's no turning back, only moving forward with God from that day on.

Have we all understood this? May God truly grant us grace.

It continues in this Word: "***But the Lord took me as I followed the flock and the Lord said unto me...***" [Amo 7:15]

How wonderful! But now hear this too: Although the Lord had called, commanded, and sent him, Amaziah said: "***Not here!, Here you must not proclaim anything in the name of the Lord. Get up and go away.***" [Amo 7:12-13]

Do we realize what matters? What matters is that at the appointed time—and now we are living, we are living now, we did not live in Amaziah's time or in other times, we are living now—and what matters now is to accept and listen to, to receive what the Lord has to say to the church today through the Spirit and through the Word.

It is always easy to adorn the tombs of the prophets. And then the Lord says to our faces: "***Your fathers put them there.***" [Mat 23:29-30]

So we must indeed take care not to follow in the footsteps of those who rejected him, but to find and accept the way of the righteous, to thank the Lord for it, and then to follow him.

But it goes even further:

[16] ***Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.***

[17] ***Therefore thus saith the Lord; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.*** [Amo 7:17]

A very serious word. You know, sometimes the Bible also uses certain terms in prophetic words, such as wife or bride, or when referring to the apostate, whores or harlots. I didn't invent these terms; they are written in the Bible. And God uses them to bring unfaithfulness before our eyes. He didn't just coin a harsh term; he wanted to bring home to us just how bad the situation is when spiritual fornication, when spiritual adultery is practiced. He wanted to bring this matter before our eyes so that we might understand it.

And if we look at the Old Testament, adulterers had to be stoned. [Lev 20:10]

And you all know the story. And here, something very terrible was foretold to this Amaziah. And why? Because he was not prepared to listen to the Word of the living God. And I say to you today: whoever is not prepared to listen to the Word of the living God in these days will go to the harlot, will go into intermingling, will continue to practice spiritual fornication, perhaps in a different form, but he will not come to the clear and true proclamation of the Word of God, for we can only reach it by the path laid out and determined by God, not by our own way, and certainly not if we reject men of God.

Have we understood that?

That was the consequence back then. How many made a good start? And then they searched until they seemingly found something, as was told to me just yesterday

over the phone: "We have found much that is unbiblical among you." I would like to have before me the one who can lay his hand on a Scripture. I would like to have him before me. But one can say it over the phone. It is simply so with God: whoever does not take in the love of the truth, whoever does not go along with it inwardly, must believe the lie. [2Th 2:10-11]

And whoever believes the lie is under the satanic influence of the old serpent, the ancient liar.

I don't know why this is on my mind right now. And I hope you will sing the songs written by Pastor Paul in our songbook here, that you will continue to sing them as you have done until now.

But when this man lay on his deathbed—you know, he didn't want to be baptized biblically, he clung to the tradition right to the end. And two sentences which were probably his last—I have them written down here—were: "I have kissed the old serpent." Men who sang in the Spirit, who rejoiced, shouted, and praised in tongues for hours, have heard the truth. Emil Meyer was already proclaiming baptism in the name of Jesus Christ back then, along with other biblical truths. And there were men who passed that by.

But then comes the deathbed. And then one suddenly realizes that one has not drunk from the cup of blessing, of which Paul says: "***The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ?***" [1Co 10:16]

"***And how can you drink at the same time from the cup of***"…please, what does it say in 1 Corinthians 10? Shall I read it to you? "***How can you drink at the same time from the cup of demons and from the cup of the Lord?***" [1Co 10:21]

That is what it says in all our Bibles. I'm reading it to you so that you may know that it is written. It's in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. 1 Corinthians chapter 10. We read here from verses—perhaps verse 21 and 22.

[21] ***Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.***

[22] ***Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?***

If these words were read out loud, horror would sweep through the whole hall. And everyone would say in outrage: "Us at the table of devils? I wouldn't dream of it, leave me alone!"

Beloved, what does Peter write? "***In the last days, doctrines of devils will be proclaimed.***" [1Ti 4:1]

Have you all read this? Wherever the Holy Spirit does not provide inspiration and the clear and true Word of God is not proclaimed, but instead things are twisted,

distorted, and contrived, there the enemy has a hand in it, just as in the Garden of Eden with Eve, where he simply twisted the Word. [Gen 3:1-5]

And as you know, he did it elegantly. He also spoke of trees and of fruit. The Lord did so too, but he turned the whole thing on its head. And there it was; it had happened.

Amaziah's wife had to endure such a fate as punishment for the fact that he—this man, and he was the ruler after all—he had not received whom God sent. [Amo 7:17]

Why did the Lord Jesus say: "***If I send someone, whoever receives him receives me***"? [Mat 10:40, Joh 13:20]

"***Whoever hears you hears me***." [Luk 10:16]

So it is written in the Word of God. "***Do not worry about what you are to say, for I will put the words in your mouth***." [Mat 10:19-20, Luk 12:11-12]

Beloved, and this must be emphasized once again: we are dealing with a great deal of spiritual fornication, much spiritual fornication, certainly in a spiritual sense. But God doesn't want this. God wants a bride without spot or wrinkle. [Eph 5:27]

God does not want us to sit where doctrines of devils originate, but where the Lord's table is, where God's Word is proclaimed to us, where it is fulfilled:

"***I will send days, saith the Lord God, I will send a famine upon the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord***." [Amo 8:11]

And such people will be torn away from all spiritual confusion and placed into the kingdom of God. They long for the pure milk of the gospel.

And then it goes on and on towards instruction, towards all that God has prepared for us.

I believe that this is a very great lesson for us.

And this too must be emphasized once more: there have always been people who have praised God for what he did at some point in the past, and who are already praising him for what he will do in the future, for when he does something, he will surely do it for them—they feel entitled to it because they are waiting for it. But they pass by what God is doing right now. And we have repeatedly emphasized and highlighted this point: what matters is to connect with God's work and then to go along with what God is doing with all our heart.

I do not intend to draw a comparison. I am neither a prophet nor a mulberry grower nor any sort of farmer. I'm actually nothing at all, and it does not take long to realize that.

But one thing we may say: we have received the Word of our Lord, and we carry a divine treasure in earthen vessels—and not I alone, but all of us who have heard God's Word in these days from the mouth of the Lord. [2Co 4:7]

You know, in the days of Moses, the Lord said to him: "***You shall be Aaron's god, and he shall be your prophet***." [Exo 4:16, Exo 7:1]

That's quite a statement. If anyone were to say that today, people would run away and say: "Hold on a moment, this man is going far too far!"

But in this we actually have the exact transmission of the Word received from God. I don't know if I have read it here, but we can just quickly read it, and with that we will come to a close.

It says here in Exodus chapter 4—you all know the calling of the prophet Moses, who was previously a shepherd. He tended the flock of his father-in-law, the Midianite Jethro, but the Lord took him away from there. [Exo 3:1]

There was a day of divine calling in his life. And then came the divine commission. At first we read of the two signs, and then from verse 10 a further conversation between the Lord and Moses. And then it says here from verse 15. Exodus 4, verse 15:

[15] ***And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth...***

Strange, here's someone to whom God has spoken, is to put these words received from God into the mouth of another who is to pass on the Word. Why should it be so? Aaron was not to pass on his own thoughts, but the holy Word that came from the mouth of the Almighty God. And this Word will never return void, but will accomplish what God sent it to do; for God watches over his Word to fulfill it. [Isa 55:11, Jer 1:12]

[15] ***And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth.***

Amen, hallelujah! God was not only with the mouths of the prophets and apostles; God wishes to be with our mouths. If the same words that God revealed to them come from our mouths, then he is with us by his grace. Blessed be his glorious name! And we will be careful not to say anything other than the Word of the living God.

I rejoice that the Lord has deemed us worthy to believe his precious and holy Word and to preserve and take it to heart.

[15] ... ***And I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do***.

[16] ***And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.***

Where did I read that? In the newspaper? No. In some critical book? No. In the Bible. In the book of God I read it aloud.

Why did the Lord tell the prophets: "***Ye are gods***"? [Psa 82:6, Joh 10:34-35]

Why? Because they have absorbed the divine substance of the Word and have become partakers of the divine nature. [2Pe 1:4]

God doesn't want people who make up stories about his Word. He wants to make us partakers of his divine nature.

And therefore we must be born again by the seed of the Word of God and by the Spirit of God who makes it alive.

So referring to Aaron it says:

[16] ***And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.***

Here we have divine order. God sends his servants and prophets at all times. Whether they were previously shepherds, grew mulberries, tended sheep, or were farmers is irrelevant. We must respect God's decisions.

Blessed are the people, blessed are the people who recognize this divine order to this very day and give thanks to God for it.

What did Paul write to his fellow worker Timothy? "***You have heard the things that were taught, entrust them to others, so that they too may teach others in turn.***" [2Ti 2:2]

It must be the same teaching, the same Word. In the end, everything must be as it was in the beginning.

Such are God's ways with his people in these days. God is sending, indeed, God has sent a hunger among the people. [Amo 8:11]

Woe to those who fail to recognize the times and who reject a prophetic ministry as Amaziah did in his day.

Then only one thing remains: to continue in spiritual fornication, in whatever form, by whatever means. And this is the very spirit of the denominations in which people consult one another and make decisions.

We are not dealing here with decisions made by people. Here we must respect the divine decisions, and we do so with all our heart and all our soul.

His Word is our Word. His life is our life. His decisions are our decisions. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Rom 8:39]

We live in a prophetic age. There was a need for correction and for divine instruction and the revelation of all the mysteries. And so the Lord has graciously bestowed this upon us. Let us thank him for this from the bottom of our heart.

And as we read in the opening Word, let us praise the Lord together and give glory to him who has looked upon his people with favor.

Blessed are those who now have ears to hear, who do not have hardened hearts and say: "This is not for us; get thee hence; we believe what we have always believed; we do not need this."

I ask you to take what is written here in the Word as a warning. Take it with you on your way.

We are not trying to frighten anyone here, but the matter is so serious. It is a matter of life and death. It is a matter of everything. Surely anyone who goes against God cannot be with him, right? Am I wrong? We must walk with God in order to be with him. Whoever goes against what he does cannot be for him. And the Lord says: "***Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters***." [Mat 12:30, Luk 11:23]

Let us be among those who walk with him, who gather with him, who come together in his presence to hear his Word and thank him from the heart for everything, he has done great things for us.

To him, the Almighty God, be praise and honor, glory and worship, now and forever. Hallelujah, Amen.

Let us stand and pray. Would you pray, Brother Russ?

Heavenly Father, we thank you once again together for your precious, holy, and true Word which has spoken to our hearts again this evening.

Lord, we pray that there may be no one among us who rejects your Word, who questions your words, Lord. Oh Lord, preserve all who are here that we may accept your Word, that we may believe it, and that we may offer you thanks, honor, and worship, Lord.

We speak with one voice, Lord, for you mean only good for your people. You have led your people out, Lord, and those who do not belong to your flock will forsake you, Lord. But your sheep hear your voice, Lord, and they follow you, Lord, wherever you may lead them.

And we know, Lord, where you lead them, Lord. You lead them to green pastures, Lord, and you water them at fresh springs, Lord.

Praise and honor, thanks and worship be to you, the Lamb.

We worship you and praise your glorious and wonderful name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Amen.