

A prophetic model (Amos 7:1-17)

Christians struggle to be prophetic in the world. Amos could help.

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In this day and age, where there is so much violence and so much hate, one would think the church would have a more profound voice in our world. That the church of Jesus Christ would be a radical, subversive change agent in the midst of the empire.

We have been entrusted with the gospel, the Good News that changes the world. This Good News is not in bed with the powers and principalities. It does not capitulate to the status quo or baptize oppression and marginalization. This light of ours is supposed to shine bright, but so often it truly stays under a bushel. Perhaps we are more worried about filling our church pews than being the hands and feet of Jesus in this hurting world. Perhaps we do not even know how to be prophetic in this world.

Amos could help us with our problem. As a person who is not of the “company of prophets,” he is not a trained prophet. He does not have a fancy title. He is not in “church leadership.” He is a herdsman and a farmer.

But he has one thing: he is called by God to speak a prophetic word. And Amos is obedient. Even though it might cost him, he obeys God. His words get the attention of the religious establishment. He is not afraid to speak against the king and to confront the priest.

And here we see our model:

1. Amos is called by God and is obedient.
2. He is honest and does not back down.
3. He confronts the powerful.

I am convinced that some of our problem with being prophetic in the church is that we do not look at the lives, examples, challenges, missteps, and triumphs of the prophets in scripture. What were the challenges of their day? How did they address them? Who did they advocate for? Who came to their defense? Who opposed them? How did they handle the opposition?

We have received a treasure in these texts: the ability to look at the lives of the prophets, to see what it looks like to carry the word of God into a broken and hurting world. How God has used unlikely characters in the past to say, "Thus says the Lord!"