

Monday - 24 September 2007

You can never benefit from crime

Read: Genesis 3:1-7 and Proverbs 1:10-19
(Also read Proverbs 5:22-23 and 12:12)

Why do people sin? Why do they break the law? They do it because they believe they will benefit from it. Why do people lie about income tax, prices and information? Why do employees lie to their employers about things that go missing or vehicles that have been scratched or bumped? Why do husbands swear at their wives and children? Why do people resort to violence? Why do people twist the truth when filing an insurance claim? Isn't it all because people think they will benefit by it?

That is exactly what the devil told Adam and Eve in paradise: *Eat for you will gain by it. You will become*

like God! The sinners used the same promise to entice the young man to attack the harmless in Proverbs 1: *throw in your lot with us, and we will share a common purse* (verse 14).

That you will benefit from corruption, crime and violence is a lie spread by the devil. Yet many people believe it. See what misery Adam and Eve caused all of creation by believing the lie. Crime does not pay! You cannot and never will benefit from it. If people or the devil try to mislead you, do what the writer of Proverbs tells his son to do. Don't give in!!! (verse 10) Turn your back on crime - all crime!!

CHALLENGE:

Tell at least five people that sin (and also crime) is never to our benefit. Challenge them to stop sinning and to stop committing crime and violence.

AMOS:

- * Pray that we will always be willing to confess our sin and put a stop to it. It is so easy for Christians to try to justify their sin in one way or another.
- * Pray that the Lord will keep us from believing the devil's lies.

RURAL AND FARMING COMMUNITY:

- * Pray against gangster violence.

- * Pray against corruption in the SAPD and for effective service.
- * Pray against the practice of hiring or bribing people (even children) to assist in crime.
- * Pray that more and more criminals will realise that crime does not pay. Pray that they will turn their back on crime.
- * Pray for the rural and farming community in **Zambia**.

Tuesday - 25 September 2007
You can never benefit from corruption!

READ: Proverbs 10:2; Proverbs 20:17; Proverbs 21:6; Proverbs 22:5; Proverbs 28:6 & 8 and Jeremiah 17:11

God created the world with great wisdom. He created certain *laws of nature* that we cannot ignore, no matter how hard we try. One such law is the law of gravity: Everything has mass and always immediately falls to the ground when you let go. But in His wisdom God also created certain *economic laws* according to which He governs His creation. One such law is that **money and all things gained by dishonest means will never lead to prosperity**. Although you may not see the effect of this law immediately as is the case with the law of gravity, it is just as true because God has decided that it should be so.

No matter what you may think, nothing acquired by corruption will

bring you prosperity or happiness. Therefore: Do not exploit people who are in trouble to enrich yourself. Don't cheat when filing your tax return or with any other figures or measurements and weights. Don't lie to try to enrich yourself in some unlawful way. Don't make false statements to obtain a state pension (old-age, child or disability pension, etcetera) you are not entitled to. Even if you get such a pension, you will not benefit by it. Remember: **Money and things gained by dishonest means will never lead to prosperity!**

The Lord condemns all who try to enrich themselves by means of deceit, corruption, lies and extortion (Jeremiah 5:27-29 and 22:13 and following scriptures).

CHALLENGE:

Thousands of people receive state pensions they are not entitled to. Many have a job and a regular income but lie about it. What are you going to do about it? If you do nothing, you are condoning crime and corruption.

AMOS:

- * Pray that we will always spend our funds judiciously in the interest of the vision *Living and Farming God's Way*;
- * Pray for honesty and reliability in handling money.

RURAL AND FARMING COMMUNITY:

- * Pray for good stewardship and honest business acumen;
- * Pray that corruption in the agricultural sector will be revealed;
- * Pray against the theft of stock and agricultural produce which runs into millions of rand each year;
- * Pray for members of the stock theft unit of the SAPD;
- * Pray against corruption in the handling of land claims;
- * Pray against theft of pensioners' pensions and large scale alcohol consumption when pensions are paid;
- * Pray that corruption regarding state pensions will be revealed and will be rooted out.

MORNING PRAYER

Lord, show me what I must see;
 Teach me what I must know;
 Tell me what I must do, and
 Make me what I must be -
 A reflection of You!

AMEN

Wednesday - 26 September 2007

What are we saying? (1)

Don't call bad good!

READ: Isaiah 5:20

Isaiah 5:20 is typical of our time! What is right is called wrong, and what is wrong, right. Just think of the jokes told at wedding receptions - even those of Christians. Everyone knows that Christ paid a high price for extra-marital affairs and sexual licentiousness, and yet it is often portrayed as funny and acceptable. Marriage, holy and instituted by God, is portrayed as a noose and many other negative images. And then we are surprised when people aren't interested in getting married or are quick to get divorced!

There are many examples of our inverted sense of good and bad. One of my black friends told me about advertisements for the Lotto in Soweto that reads *Greed is good!* What about Ephesians 5:5?

Look at the television soaps, films and the media. Hero's handle their problems with alcohol, violence and

CHALLENGE:

Memorise Isaiah 5:20. If you are guilty of this, confess it to the Lord and stop doing it immediately.

lies and it is acceptable. Extra-marital relationships are portrayed as true love and the terrible consequences ignored. Fortune telling and consulting spirits (who are really demons - 2 Corinthians 11:14-15) are portrayed as innocent pastimes. Same-sex marriages are portrayed as being perfectly normal. The judiciary system calls the injustice of abortion *the right of the individual*. Blatant corruption is called good business acumen. God's Word is no longer the norm for right and wrong. Everyone has the right to decide for himself/herself.

Worst of all, Christians who have the courage to condemn the above as sin on the basis of God's Word, are called loveless and hypocrites. While the Word states that love equals obedience to God (1 John 5:3) and not whitewashing the evil people do. Read Proverbs 27:6.

AMOS:

- * Our mission is to grant every person in Africa who is part of the rural and farming community an opportunity to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and ***to live and farm according to Biblical values and norms.*** Pray that the Lord will richly bless us in this task.

RURAL AND FARMING COMMUNITY:

- * Pray against intimidation that is still rife in rural areas and on farms.
- * Pray that ministers, pastors and other church leaders will proclaim the truth to agriculturalists without fear because only the truth can set people free.
- * Pray that Biblical values and norms will be accepted and *lived* in agriculture.
- * Pray against large scale confusion that church leaders and theologians cause amongst people when they say things that do not concur with God's Word.
- * Pray for the rural and farming community in **Malawi**.

Thursday - 27 September 2007

What are we saying? (2)

Stick to the truth!

READ: Exodus 20:16 and Ephesians 4:25

If you want people to choose your soup amongst many pots of soup, you should add enough *colour and flavour*. The same is true about stories about crime and violence. There are so many that people are inclined to add a lot of *colour and flavour* to their stories so that they are more juicy. But that is exactly what God forbids us to do in His Word: lies, half-truths and twisted truths are wrong. They rob those

listening to your story of the opportunity to form an honest and objective view about what really happened. Lies equal corruption!

Be sure to stick to the truth when discussing crime. The devil is the father of the lie. Don't promote his case by adding all kinds of tails to tales about crime! Don't make too many hasty conclusions from the little information you have. Be

careful because stories are easily tainted by racism. The impression is created that victims usually belong to one race and criminals to another. That is not true! Most violence (up to 90%) occurs in our homes amongst people of the same race and also the same family!!!

Crime is colour blind! We are usually just more aware of things that occur in our immediate vicinity or that have an immediate effect on us.

It is better to say nothing than to spread half-truths and lies.

CHALLENGE:

- * Don't add colour and flavour to stories about crime to make them sound better. Stick to the truth!

AMOS:

- * Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:5). He is the Truth that sets us free (John 8:31-36). Pray that AMOS will always proclaim the truth about the TRUTH.

RURAL AND FARMING COMMUNITY:

- * Pray for editors of agricultural magazines and agricultural reporters. Pray that they will love the truth.
- * Pray against gross generalisations that label groups on the basis of the unacceptable behaviour of individuals. Generalisations are nothing other than lies.
- * Pray that the truth, the real cause for so many failed agricultural projects will come to light so that the problem can be effectively addressed and solved.
- * Pray for the rural and farming community in **Tanzania**.

Friday - 28 September 2007

What are we saying? (3)

Say the right things at the right time in the right way

READ: Ephesians 4:25-32 and Proverbs 16:23

When you and I discuss crime we must make sure that our facts are right. We must speak the truth. But the Lord has another guideline: *Only say what is good and positive so that those who are listening will gain by it.*

People are more interested in terrible stories than in good news. There is a saying *no news is good news*. But where newspapers and the media are concerned the opposite is true, i.e. *Good news is no news*. Good news doesn't sell newspapers. People want sensation. But it isn't good for us to hear these stories all the time, even if the facts are true. They fill us with revulsion and fear and we suffer from sleeplessness!

CHALLENGE:

Stay away from negative discussions that encourage fear, racism, prejudice and division. Confess your involvement in such discussions. When telling a story, ask yourself, *Why am I telling it? What is the point I am trying to make? What will the consequences be of my telling this story?*

AMOS:

- * Pray that AMOS will remain an instrument in the Lord's hand that will encourage unity and reconciliation in the agricultural sector.

When we as Christians talk about negative things such as crime and violence, the way we do it should encourage and teach people and give them insight into the real problem. Those who listen to you should be better people once you are done. What you say should help others to go and make a difference!

It is easy to frighten people and make them negative by your stories of crime. It is easy to tell a story in such a way that it will increase hate and division. Don't fan people's bias, racism or bitterness. By doing so you will be encouraging crime instead of fighting it.

- * Ask the Lord to provide more and more intercessors for AMOS.

RURAL AND FARMING COMMUNITY:

- * Pray for greater unity and reconciliation in the agricultural sector. Pray against racism and conflict about land;
- * Pray for positive communication in the agricultural sector;
- * Pray against negative speeches that incite people to violence, and the throwing around of accusations in the media;
- * Pray that the Lord will bless agricultural leaders. Pray for wisdom, skill, and integrity (Read the prayer on page 36)
- * Pray for the rural and farming community in the DRC.

Saturday - 29 September 2007

What are we saying? (4)

Are we loving and sensitive?

READ: Matthew 7:12 and 22:39, and 1 Corinthians 13:3-7

Being robbed of your possessions is painful. It is even more painful when someone robs you of your health by physically attacking you. But the greatest pain victims suffer is emotional. They feel helpless and humiliated because their privacy has been invaded. For months they feel as though their every movement is being watched.

As though this isn't bad enough, their lives are made public by photo's and stories in the media and insensitive gossip. Not only the victim suffers but also the victim's family and friends. Imagine what a mother feels like when her daughter

is raped by an important family member? What do children feel like when their father is unexpectedly taken into custody?

This pain often prevents victims from talking. They are not up to sharing their deepest emotions with someone because it may be made public. Even the church often displays a lack of sensitivity. People's pain is passed on in detail as in the secular world. The only difference is that the phrase, *Please pray for ...* is added at the end.

The church should be a loving community in which victims and

their families can feel safe enough to talk about their pain and humiliation without fear of rejection

or that their story will be made public.

CHALLENGE:

Put yourself in the victim's place (or the family of the victim). Be sensitive to their feelings. Handle the issue the way you would like people to handle it if you or someone from your family were the victim. And remember: Everything that can be said needn't be said, because love covers many things and not everything will have a positive influence on the listener.

AMOS AND THE RURAL AND FARMING COMMUNITY:

- * Pray that believers will respect other people's good name and privacy and that they will not get involved in gossip.
- * Pray for more sensitivity in handling people's pain.
- * Pray for children who experience trauma when having to testify in court.

Sunday - 30 September 2007

Government is responsible for keeping law and order in the country. According to the Word God gives them their authority and they are in His service. The words that describe the authorities in Romans 13 (even though they were heathens) are *diakonos* and *leiturgos*. The words *authority* and *authorities* in Romans 13 not only refers to the Roman emperor and senate, but also all the senior and junior officials representing Roman authority in all corners of the empire.

Against this background I want to encourage you to pay special attention to members of the SAPD, Correctional Services and the South African Defence Force, and everyone in the Department of Justice who must represent God in carrying out justice (cf 2 Chronicles 19:4-11). Not only ministers, pastors and missionaries are in God's service, but also each and every believer in every occupation. Therefore it is fitting to bless believers (of all races) who are doing service for God in government with the prayers of the congregation.

Suggestion:

- * Ask your pastor to preach on the calling of believers in the world, specifically the calling of those who are part of government.
- * Let members of the SAPD, Correctional Services, Justice Department and SADF come forward at the end of the service.
- * Pray that the Lord will bless them with wisdom, insight, skill, integrity and all they need to fulfill their task to His glory and to the benefit of the entire country. Pray for protection against physical danger and emotional pain. (They are exposed to the most gruesome scenes and stories, and dangerous circumstances each day.)
- * Present them with a certificate or some small token to remind them that they are in God's service and that you as believers appreciate the service they render.
- * Send them out to do their work with the assurance that the congregation will pray for them, support them physically and emotionally and give them their full co-operation.



Monday - 1 October 2007

Small things make a big difference (1)

Control your temper

READ: Proverbs 11:12; Proverbs 19:11 & 19; Proverbs 22:24-25; Proverbs 29:11 and Ephesians 4:29-32.

If we want to root out crime and violence in our country, we must start at the root of the problem. We must learn to control our tempers. When you are angry, say so. Don't lose control and swear, shout and scream, slam doors, throw things at people or lay into someone with your fists or with a knife. God's Word says you are a fool if you are bad- or short-tempered. These actions demonstrate weakness, not

strength. It puts your life in danger. Read Proverbs 22:24-25 and remind yourself what happens to a rugby player who loses his temper on the field. Wise, clever people exercise self-control. They live under the control of the Holy Spirit. To them it is a question of honour to forgive rather than lose their temper.

The Lord warns us not to befriend someone who is quick to anger.