

## COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON THE LESSONS FOR SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

### Amos 6:1a, 4-7

- What is your relationship to wealth? Every lesson this week confronts us with this question. Amos speaks of how comfortable Israel has become. Israel is not condemned for their wealth. They are condemned for using their wealth for their own comfort and security while ignoring the plight of their neighbor. When it speaks of “the ruin of Joseph,” Amos refers not to those within Israel but to the nation near them. Amos calls the country to see our interconnectedness with the whole world. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:26, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.”

### Psalm 146

- What is your relationship to wealth? The psalm deals with this issue when we remember that “as God is, so we are called to be.” The psalm tells us from God’s example how we are called to be:
  - Give justice to those who are oppressed
  - Give food to those who hunger
  - Set the captive free
  - Open the eyes of the blind – perhaps symbolically – enlighten, teach others
  - Lift up those who are bowed down
  - Care for the stranger
  - Sustain the orphan and widow
  - Frustrate the way of the wicked

How then does this psalm challenge you to be? What steps can you as an individual or we as a church take to live out these characteristics?

### 1 Timothy 6:6-19

- What is your relationship to wealth? Here in this chapter we have practical steps and warnings about wealth.
  - First, “we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it.”
  - Be content with your needs (food and clothing).
  - The desire to be rich leads to “senseless and harmful desires” – what does this look like for you?
  - The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil –it doesn’t say “money” but “love of money.”
  - In your wealth, do not be haughty or set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches.
  - Remember that is God “who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”
  - Be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share.

### Luke 16:19-31

- What is your relationship to wealth? As Amos warns about not ignoring the plight of nations nearby, so Jesus warns us to not ignore the plight of the poor nearby. The values of God are not the values of the world as demonstrated by the position of the rich man and Lazarus in the afterlife. If God so values the life of Lazarus, then we are called to do the same.
- There is an interesting relationship between the Lazarus of the Lucan parable and the Lazarus in John 11. In Luke, Mary and Martha occur as friends of Jesus (not in Matthew and Mark) but with no brother. In John they also occur but we know they have a brother named Lazarus. In Luke the rich man asks Abraham to send a raised Lazarus to warn his brothers. In John, Lazarus is raised, but he does not change the attitudes of the Jewish leaders who witness it.
- Perhaps the most distressing line in the parable is the last: “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” What will it take for us to change our ways? What will it take for anyone?