

THE DEMANDS OF LOVE AND DUTY

Amos 1:1 This message was given to Amos, a shepherd from the town of Tekoa in Judah. He received this message in visions two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam II, the son of Jehoash, was king of Israel. NET

Amos 7:8b-9 [The Lord said to Amos,] “I will no longer overlook [Israel’s] sin. ⁹ Isaac’s centers of worship will become desolate; Israel’s holy places will be in ruins. I will attack Jeroboam’s dynasty with the sword.” NET

Amos 7:12-17 Amaziah [the priest of Bethel] then said to Amos, “Leave, you visionary! Run away to the land of Judah. Earn your living and prophesy there! ¹³ Don’t prophesy at Bethel any longer, for a royal temple and palace are here.”

¹⁴ Amos replied to Amaziah, “I was not a prophet by profession. No, I was a herdsman who also took care of sycamore fig trees. ¹⁵ Then the Lord took me from tending flocks and gave me this commission, ‘Go! Prophesy to my people Israel.’ ¹⁶ So now listen to the Lord’s message! You say, ‘Don’t prophesy against Israel! Don’t preach against the family of Isaac!’

¹⁷ “Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘Your wife will become a prostitute in the streets and your sons and daughters will die violently. Your land will be given to others and you will die in a foreign land. Israel will certainly be carried into exile away from its land.’” NET

Jonah 1:1-3a The Lord’s message came to Jonah son of Amittai, ² “Go immediately to Nineveh, that large capital city, and announce judgment against its people because their wickedness has come to my attention.”

³ Instead, Jonah immediately headed off to Tarshish to escape from the commission of the Lord. NET

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came up and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” NET

The Demand of Love

For several pages now, we have been examining the examples of Christ, of Paul, and of the early church to answer one simple question: “Does Christ actually intend for all Christians to take personal responsibility for fulfilling His commission?” The weight of these examples is compelling. But even if these examples were missing, wouldn’t love demand the same conclusions? What if Jesus had never said, “Lose your life for the gospel’s sake?” What if Paul had never said, “Imitate me?” What if the New Testament failed to record the example of the early church? Reason and love would demand the same conclusions from us.

Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). And again, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (John 14:6). If these simple statements are true, if there is truly salvation in no one else, if we have any love for God or compassion for men, then why do we need carefully reasoned arguments to persuade us of the obvious? Even if God did not command us to fill the earth with the gospel, love demands it. Two-and-a-half billion people have never heard the gospel. Certainly, love demands that anyone who has the Bread of Life should take action to relieve such incredible spiritual famine.

Often, the evening news presents us with great physical famine in the world. When non-Christians see this need, they do not need anyone to tell them that they should respond or why they should respond. Simple human compassion says, “Others need and I have. I must give what I have.” Is spiritual famine so different that it stirs up no compassion in us? We have been given the love of Christ. That alone should motivate us to action.

Andrew Murray, great pastor and author of the last century, agrees: “Every believer [has] been saved with the express purpose that he should make the saving of other souls the main, the supreme end of his existence in the world... You have been redeemed to be the witnesses and messengers of Christ’s love. To fit you for it, His love has been given you, and shed abroad in your heart. As He loves you, He loves the whole world. He wants those who know it to tell those who don’t know it. His love to you and to them, your love to Him and to them, call you to do it. It is your highest privilege; it will be your highest happiness and perfection. As Christ gave Himself, give yourself wholly to this work of love.”¹

Paul Abbott, *God’s Will for Your Life*,
Great Commission International, 1984, 1988

1 Peter 4:10-11 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. NIV

¹ Andrew Murray, *Key to the Missionary Problem*, Christian Literature Crusade, Ft. Washington, Pa., 1903, pp. 125-136