

Sermon Summary
8th after Pentecost
14th July 2013

- The twentieth century has seen a major change in perceptions which broke with a long inherited pattern.
- Somewhere about 1915, Wilfred Owen's poetry made clear that the older simplistic equation of nobility, God and patriotism would no longer stand up. Bob Dylan, to music, would repeat the theme; 'With God on our side'
- Its not a new idea really.
- Amos (7:7-17) says the same thing many years earlier.
- He talks of the people of Israel and reminds them that their designation as the people of God is not an excuse-all.
- He prophesies that a nation, even God's own nation, which does not maintain faithfulness with God abrogates its place bring forth destruction.
- In short, those who put nation or earthly concerns over God, are getting it all wrong.
- This is clear from verses 12, where the establishment attempts to gag him from prophesying about the cult, and from verse 16 where he prophesies against the people.
- In both cases, the institutions which have been set up in honour of God, have become ends in themselves, considered to have priority over even God himself.
- It's all very human, and we can see it in our own age, when national interest or church interest, or institutional interest are all cited as reasons to stop justice or what is right being done.
- Nations do it, and churches do it. There is no difference between Amos' time and hours.
- Like Amos, we need to maintain our prophetic focus on doing what is right in respect of God, not the institutions which have been set up to ostensibly serve him, but which have, by a process of stealth and idolatry, abrogated for themselves the honour that truly belongs to God alone.

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