

Sermon Title: **“Who Can Sit at the Lord’s Feet?”**

Bible: **Amos 8:1-12 & Luke 10:38-42**

When: on Sunday, July 17th, 2022

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, you called all of us as your people, and as your disciples. Please be with us and use us for your people and your kingdom. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. I could not be in the kitchen!

When I was young, I could not be in the kitchen. What I mean is that I could not cook any food, and could not even help. At that time, I was taught that it was because of the dangers of fire and knives. For the young little boy, the kitchen was not a safe place. But I slowly realized that it was because I was a boy and I was male. When there was a big holiday, all families and relatives gathered together. And we celebrated the holiday, while greeting each other and sharing a lot of stories. And we needed to eat. Because it was a holiday, we needed to cook our own meals. My grandma, my mom, my aunts, and my sister were busy cooking because we needed to feed a big family. Even though I did not know how to cook, I thought I should be able to help. When I went to the kitchen, my grandma stopped me, and asked me to wait at the table with my father, my uncles, and my nephews. I needed to listen to my grandma. So, I had to wait at the table. To me, the kitchen has been kind of a place where I

want to dream and go. It was the place that I was not allowed to be in for a long time. The kitchen was somewhat my dream of where I desired to be, but it was an uncomfortable place.

But ironically, when I did my mandatory military service in Korea for a little more than two years, my assigned place of military service was the kitchen. In Korea, military service is required of every healthy young man. To protect my country, I did my military service. What I learned is not only how to protect my country, but also how to feed people. After my two-month basic military training, I was deployed. I was asked, “Many men do not know how to cook. But can you learn how to cook?” As a soldier, my answer was always “Yes, Sir!” I learned how to cook in the military service. But where? In the kitchen!! My grandma did not allow me to go into the kitchen, because I was a man, but my country called me to serve in the kitchen, because I was a healthy young man. So, I learned how to cut with a knife, how to use a pan, how to use seasoning, and how to clean, and how to do the dishes.

I do not feel uncomfortable in the kitchen anymore. I believe that my grandma understands me, and loves to see me in the kitchen. The kitchen became my place in my home. But I have my wife who is my main chef and my boss. As an assistant, I respect her and I help her. Usually, I cut the vegetables, clean, and do the dishes, while my main chef does seasoning, and cooks the food. Sometimes, I cook as well. Now that my boss is on vacation, I become the main chef temporarily. So I can cook more. Actually, my boss orders me to cook healthy food. So, I need to take some photos and report them. It is kind of a big deal to use her kitchen. Can I say that it is **our** kitchen?

2. Who Can Sit at the Lord's feet?

I believe that many of you have heard about a story from today's Gospel reading of Luke. There are many ways to read this story. I would like to read this story, as an invitation. Who can sit at the Lord's feet and listen to him? This is how to describe a disciple in the Gospel of Luke. In Luke 8:35, after Jesus healed a man who had demons, this man was sitting at the feet of Jesus. At that time, it could be a problem for women to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to Jesus. There were many tasks that women could do. But not this one of sitting at Jesus' feet to listen. In our Christian history, women could do many tasks and many services. They could serve in the kitchen, they could serve in Sunday school. They could be teachers. They could be church leaders. However, for women to stand at the pulpit, to be preachers, and to be pastors was not allowed for a long time. But Jesus confirmed to Mary that to do what she was doing would not be taken away from her.

3. The Prophet Amos

Do you like today's reading of Amos? The book of Amos has 9 chapters, and Chapter 8 describes the fourth vision out of five visions, about the basket of summer fruit. It shows the end, the day of the Lord, the divine judgment. Do you like this chapter? I believe that the most famous Bible verse from Amos is Amos 5:24. It says, "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." How about this Bible verse? Do you like this Amos 5:24? So, we can call Amos the prophet of justice! Like Amos, we are not only the people of God's love but also the people of God's justice!

Who is the prophet Amos? In Amos 7:14-15, Amos described himself.

¹⁴ Then Amos answered Amaziah, “I am no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, ¹⁵ and the Lord said to me, “Go, prophesy to my people Israel.”

Amos was a common person. But God called and used him, and Amos followed. And who is Amaziah? He was the priest of Bethel. He was against Amos, and told him to go away to the land of Judah and to prophesy there, because Amos was from the land of Judah. When Amaziah challenged Amos, the above was Amos’ answer. To speak up for God’s justice itself is not easy. To speak up for God’s justice in a different or foreign place is not fun and is very challenging. When there was a challenge, Amos knew who and what he was, and Amos just followed God’s calling to speak up!

4. God Uses All of Us!

Jesus welcomed Mary at his feet as a disciple. God used Amos as the prophet. There is no barrier to serve the Lord. There is no glass ceiling to serve the church. There is no requirement of a degree to speak up. As you love the Lord, and as you love our church, you can serve anywhere. You can even speak in the pulpit, when God is calling you. As a pastor of this church, I take full responsibility for this pulpit. But this pulpit is not mine. This pulpit is given to us through God. The reason why it is given to us—without pews, the pulpit is nothing. Without the audience, the preacher is nothing. This pulpit is given to you and me. So, when God calls you to speak up, please let me know. As always, I am looking forward to

God's message through you, our awesome preachers. That's why I come to the worship to listen, even when I do not preach. That's because I would like to be the greatest audience, just like you. I know that many of you are already great preachers. But if you feel a need or a desire to be a better speaker and become the best preacher you can be, there are many courses and training sessions in our Annual Conference: Lay Servant Ministries Courses. If you are interested, please come to me.

Through our Baptism, we are all called to ministry. We are all God's people. We are all Jesus' disciples. We are all God's prophets. We know that there are many challenges. But we will go and prophesy! We will go and speak up! We will go and serve! We will go and live. That's because God is calling all of us! And it is OUR calling.

Closing Prayer

Jesus welcomed Mary as a disciple. God used Amos to speak up. Like them please use us for your people and your kingdom. We are here, Lord. We know that you are calling us. Please help to answer your call. In Jesus' name. Amen.