“Troublemakers”

Scripture: Amos 7:10-17; Luke 4:16-30

Rev. Lewis Galloway

November 1, 2026

We are deep into the national political scene – election mania. In debates, media interviews and advertisements, accusations are fired by one candidate against another. No matter what our particular political view may be, I believe we would all agree it is a national free-for-all. The more outrageous the accusations become, the greater the media feeding frenzy. The nation is disturbed. The land is troubled by so many words. Is it for good or ill? Who is right and who is wrong?

In ancient Israel there is conflict in the land. Accusations between the prophet and the king fly back and forth. King Jeroboam and religious puppet, Amaziah, who serves as priest at the royal sanctuary at Bethel, says that the prophet Amos is troubling the land. Amaziah is no righteous priest; he knows who butters his bread. Amaziah serves as a compliant court chaplain rather than as a priest of God. God calls Amos from his labors as a simple herdsman to be a prophet. He is no church professional. He did not go to seminary. He did not study theology or political science. God sends Amos from the southern kingdom of Judah to the northern kingdom of Israel to speak against the corruption of the king and court. He accuses the king of injustice. The wealthy are living lives of idle luxury at the expense of the poor. There is rampant sexual immorality, self-indulgence, greed, drunkenness, and callous indifference. Amos is a prophetic troublemaker who stands for the justice of God in the face of the king’s injustice that troubles and ruins the land.

“Troublemakers”

Scripture: Amos 7:10-17; Luke 4:16-30

Rev. Lewis Galloway

November 1, 2026

So, I ask you, “Who is the troubler of Israel?” They both are. One for good and one for evil. We like to think of Jesus as gentle, meek and mild, but Jesus was also a troublemaker. In his hometown synagogue, Jesus read the scroll from Isaiah about the one who would come to bring good new to the poor, sight to the blind, release to the captives and freedom for the oppressed. He told them that these words were fulfilled in their hearing. They gushed in amazement over the local boy who “done good”. Then he told them that in a time of famine, the prophet Elijah provided food for a widow of Zarephath, a foreign woman of Sidon. In the days of the prophet Elisha, there were many people with skin diseases, but the prophet cured the Syrian General Naaman. When he told them that God’s mercy is not just for them but for all people including gentiles and foreigners, they tried to throw him off a cliff.

Jesus was a troublemaker. He disrupted Temple worship and said that God’s house is to be a house of prayer for all people. Jesus was a troublemaker. He exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. He touched the lepers and welcomed the sinners. Jesus was a troublemaker. He shattered class divisions and religious rules to create a new community of faith. Jesus was a troublemaker. He gave people a second chance in a culture that did not believe in second chances.

“Troublemakers”

Scripture: Amos 7:10-17; Luke 4:16-30

Rev. Lewis Galloway

November 1, 2026

We need prophetic troublemakers lest we forget what God demands and become too comfortable with the way things are when there is injustice in the land. This is not about our current political debates, but about ordinary followers of Jesus like you and me who love God and love our neighbors. Anyone can be a troublemaker. It isn’t enough to have a loud voice or serve a pet cause. Some, like the kings and queens of ancient Israel, trouble the land in pursuit of their own self-interest and narrow objectives. God’s troublemakers have their eyes fixed on the kingdom of God and strive to help our human community embody the abundant life that God intends for all creation. God’s troublemakers have ever before them the needs of their neighbors and especially the needs of those who are forgotten, downtrodden, powerless, hungry, and poverty stricken. We need prophetic troublemakers in schools, businesses, and neighborhoods. God’s troublemakers have a love for the Lord, a passion for justice, and a heart of compassion.

To be a prophetic troublemaker is not about power or position, but about being open where you are to the word of God, to the needs around you, and to the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is important to understand God’s will and God’s way as revealed in the Bible lest we put all of our time and energy into serving some god of our own making. The Bible teaches us to see the world from God’s perspective, to assimilate into our own lives the values of Jesus, to learn what it means to love as God loves and to seek first

the kingdom of God. Prophetic troublemakers embody the vision of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. As we worship, study, pray, and serve together we become more and more the prophetic community that Jesus envisions. So may the Holy Spirit speak to us in this contemplative service.

Where is God calling you to be a troublemaker? Where is God calling you to speak about injustice and stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. The world may call you a troublemaker and tell you to be quiet, to not rock the boat, and to not disturb the status quo. I remember the session meeting many years ago at the church I was serving in Norfolk. The idea came up to have a joint worship service with a predominately African-American church. There was a rather heated debate. One elder said, "I don't think it is a good idea. It will rock the boat." To which another elder replied, "If this is going to rock the boat, maybe it is time for that boat to be rocked."

Pause for a moment and think about a situation, a cause, an injustice, or a community need that troubles you. The trouble you feel in your heart may be the Holy Spirit speaking to you. Listen to the Spirit. When God gives you a word to speak, a cause to embrace, an act to do, you are following in the footsteps of Jesus and are making the right kind of trouble. God will call you blessed. I say to all you prophetic troublemakers: Have courage; do what is right; and God will be with you.