

Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

October 23, 2022

Hosea 6:1-7:2

The Restoration Requirement

Situational Context: God's discipline and His notification of coming judgment has caused Israel and Judah to desire the bonds and blessings of the prior relationship. However the people's desire for God's blessing contained no acknowledgement for their sins. In their minds, returning meant going back to their rituals without rending their hearts and not their garments, **Hosea 5:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ **I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me. Joel 2:13 (ESV)** ¹³ **and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.**

Lesson Theme: Hosea 6:4-6 The Lord detects an insincere motive and manner for returning to faithfulness to Him.

1. The Need: Hosea 6:1-3 (ESV) ¹ **"Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.** ² **After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.** ³ **Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth."**

Interpretation: It is unclear who is speaking, the people or the Priests. The call to return to the Lord is one of the central messages of the book. True repentance and conversion bring reconciliation that includes healing of wounds. Some, who view this as a prediction of Christ's resurrection, understand Paul to allude to this verse in 1Co 15:4. The call to true knowledge of the Lord is central to Hosea's message.

Supporting Texts:

Deuteronomy 32:39 (ESV) ³⁹ ““See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

1 Corinthians 15:4 (ESV) ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

Hosea 4:1 (ESV) ¹ Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land;

John 17:3 (ESV) ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Discussion Starters:

How can we tell that the promise is empty?

How do verses two and three expose their lack of knowing God?

Why were they so assured?

2. God’s Requirement: Hosea 6:4-6 (ESV) ⁴ What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. ⁵ **Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light.** ⁶ **For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.**

Interpretation: Continuing the use of images from nature, God laments the temporary, transitory quality of Israel and Judah’s covenant love, in contrast with His own faithfulness (v. 3). Like the light of the sun whose rising dispels the darkness, God’s justice consistently and inevitably goes forth, exposing the sins of those who have broken the covenant. Covenant faithfulness or loyalty, not mere ritual, were required of the covenant people.

Supporting Texts:

Psalm 37:6 (ESV) ⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Micah 6:6-8 (ESV) ⁶ “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” ⁸ He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Discussion Starters:

How does judgment go forth as light?

What are the indications of steadfast love?

What has God provided them so that they know Him?

3. Judgment: Hosea 6:7-7:2 (ESV) ⁷ But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me. ⁸ Gilead is a city of evildoers, tracked with blood. ⁹ As robbers lie in wait for a man, so the priests band together; they murder on the way to Shechem; they commit villainy. ¹⁰ In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing; Ephraim’s whoredom is there; Israel is defiled. ¹¹ **For you also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed, when I restore the fortunes of my people. ¹ When I would heal Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim is revealed, and the evil deeds of Samaria; for they deal falsely; the thief breaks in, and the bandits raid outside. ² But they do not consider that I remember all their evil. Now their deeds surround them; they are before my face.**

Interpretation: Because the elements of a covenant were present in God’s relationship with Adam, the doctrine of God’s covenant with Adam does not depend upon the interpretation of this text. Israel was typologically speaking a corporate Adam. A horrible thing suggests a religious sin, or the involvement of priests or prophets in gross wrongdoing. Whoredom is a common figure here for

religious infidelity. Harvest is a metaphor for God's judgment. [Ephraim . . . Samaria.] Both terms refer to the northern kingdom, of which Samaria was the capital. They do not consider means they have deceived even themselves.

Supporting Texts:

Jeremiah 5:30-31 (ESV) ³⁰ An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: ³¹ the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?

Jeremiah 51:33 (ESV) ³³ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time when it is trodden; yet a little while and the time of her harvest will come.”

Galatians 6:7 (ESV) ⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

Genesis 1:27 (ESV) ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,

Discussion Starters:

How is Israel compared to Adam?

What was God's covenant with Adam?

What were the terms of God's covenant with Adam?