“God’s Loyal Love: Idolatry Exposed and Expelled”

Hosea, chapter 9

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 1/24/21)

[NOTE: Today’s Bible study presents severe, yet necessary words. To better understand this passage, I suggest you read it first in a “thought for thought” paraphrase (like The Message or The Living Bible), and then read it again in a “word for word” translation (like the NASB or the NKJV.]

 Imagine someone rushing into our church service and screaming, “You have no right to do this!” We’d certainly be offended, among other emotions. But this is exactly what Hosea was called to do. And you know what? Hosea was right! The people had no right to worship as they did. But the people of his day didn’t listen, even as a vast army was massing to overtake them. The lesson? God’s wrath is kindled against those who sing praises to Him, yet worship in a way of their own imagining. We are called to embrace God as He is, not as we imagine Him to be.

 Hosea 9 is set at the harvest festival, a joyous time intended as a time to thank God for His bounty. Why would God want to quash this celebration? It was because of their idolatry. Even though they knew better, they sinned by choice. God loved Israel. He faithfully proved His love for her over and over and over again. But Israel cheated on God. His heart was broken and His wrath was kindled. How about you? Have you lived as if God is not all-knowing? Have you lived believing that God thinks some sin doesn’t matter? (Q1) The people of Israel were to rejoice in God alone, not the work of their own hands, and not the fertility gods of Canaan.

 Israel was a people who named God, but didn’t follow Him. God redeemed His people from Egypt so that they might worship Him and serve Him. Salvation is ultimately about bringing glory to God. We are to worship Him for His sake. It’s why we have been rescued. Your daily life reflects who or what you truly worship and who you believe God to be. (Q2)

 The Book of Hosea is about IDOLATRY EXPOSED AND EXPELLED. Today’s lesson is presented so that we might learn from Israel’s idolatry. First, **idolatry results from a shallow view of God’s holiness.** God cannot tolerate the slightest sin. (see Hab. 1:12-13 and Ps. 11:7) Sin kindles His wrath and will culminate in judgment. Second, **idolatry results from a shallow view of sin.** Do you categorize sins into those that matter and those that don’t? Or that his sins matter, but my sins don’t? Do you mistake God’s forbearance for disinterest? Better watch out!

Thirdly, **idolatry results from a shallow view of God’s wrath.** Some of God’s people live like judgment is not a reality. But God says that He will remove His hand of blessing if you keep going down this dark path. Read Heb. 9:27-28, Rom. 1:18, and Is. 5:20-21. Judgment is coming. This warning is not just for ancient Israel; it’s also for us. Finally, **idolatry results from a shallow view of God’s love for His own.** (Q3)Jesus paid the price for you, just as Hosea redeemed Gomer. Jesus humbled Himself and became like the people He loved (yet without sin) so that He would have a lasting relationship with them (see Phil. 2:5-8 and 1 Pet. 2:24-25). Is He calling you out of the shallows of idolatry and wrong thinking and wrong living so that you might adore Him and worship Him?

 Hosea 9 is a harsh word from God. He is holy. He is wrathful. And He is love. It’s an exclusive love- that is why you should let go of any idols. True joy lasts and it flows from an exclusive relationship with God through Christ. WORSHIP HIM ONLY! (Q4)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. I’m ashamed to say that I have lived this way. But God exposed my sin (my idolatry) and I repented and turned back to Him. Is there hope for me? How do you know? What scriptures declare that hope?
2. Gibeah (referred to in Hos. 9:9) is right down there with Sodom and Gomorrah. We have plenty of our own sins right here in 2021 America. Care to name a few?
3. Discuss: What is **God’s view** of holiness? What is **God’s view** of sin? Why would God have wrath against man? How great is God’s love for His own?
4. Why would a pastor in 2021 America choose to preach from the Book of Hosea?! Do you really believe that all of God’s Word is profitable for us (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17)? In your own words, what is the warning you are hearing from Hosea 9? Share your written response with the group.

“And Can It Be” (Charles Wesley)

And can it be that I should gain

An int’rest in the Savior’s blood?

Died He for me, who caused His pain?

For me, who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! how can it be

That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Amazing love! how can it be

That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father’s throne above,

So free, so infinite His grace;

Emptied Himself of all but love,

And bled for Adam’s helpless race:

’Tis mercy all, immense and free;

For, O my God, it found out me.

’Tis mercy all, immense and free;

For, O my God, it found out me.