**“God’s Loyal Love: I Will Love Them Freely”**

Hosea 14:1-4,9 Key Verse: Hosea 14:4

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 3/21/21

God’s message through Hosea was painful, but purposeful. Hosea was a living picture of God’s faithful love to His people, Israel, even though they had sinned greatly. Their sin? They named Adonai, but bowed to idols. They named Yahweh, but looked to earthly political leaders. They boasted of their allegiance to God, yet they relied on themselves. They continually betrayed Him. So here at the end of the book of Hosea, the righteous judgment of God is about to fall. It seems as if the nation of Israel will no longer exist. But then God says, “Return… to the Lord your God… I will heal… and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them.” (Hosea 14:1,4) (Q1)

The destruction by the Assyrians will be thorough and irreparable. Then Hosea looks ahead and gives a glimpse of hope in the future: God’s redeeming love for His people is as certain as God’s judgment of their sin. 14:1 lets them know that He is still their God, even though they have been unfaithful. (Q2) They (and we) are a sinful people. It’s in our nature, in our DNA. (see Psalm 51:5) Even though we were created to be a reflection of God, we are predisposed to distort that reflection. God’s wrath is directed towards that sin. But God also gives us grace. Unless we understand the wrath of God for sin, we won’t understand the grace of God in Christ. (Q3)

God lovingly welcomes His wayward people when they repent and turn to Him. I’m not talking about good intentions or getting religion or self-improvement or remorseful feelings, but a return all the way to the Lord. God even lovingly instructs his wayward people in 14:2 with the words to say. But He doesn’t want just lip service, He wants your whole heart. He doesn’t desire cheap talk; He desires communion with Him. (Q4) Just saying “sorry” doesn’t quite cut it. The one who truly repents places his trust in who God is and what He does. Forgiveness from God is received by faith in the very nature of God Himself. Forgiveness is based on God’s character. God is EAGER to forgive His repentant people. He even supplies the grace to make it happen! To repent is to surrender all and pledge allegiance to God alone. Hosea prophesies that one day there will be a remnant of God’s people who will truly repent.

Does it seem to you that God is a God of wrath in the Old Testament and a God of love in the New Testament? Did God change? NO! His holy wrath still burns against all sin. But forgiveness is offered to us sinful people because our sin has been (past tense) judged in Jesus Christ. The GOOD NEWS of the GOSPEL is this: at the cross, God’s anger is poured out on His only Son so that it won’t be poured out on His people who have repented and turned to Him. This is Love’s initiative: a restored relationship with God is **all a work of God.** It is from God, by God, through God, and it brings glory to God. And we are the fortunate, miraculous recipients of this grace. Hallelujah!!!!! (Q5)

When Hosea bought Gomer, he said, “I bought her for myself.” God says the same thing about His people: “I bought them for Myself.” Repentance is a work of God’s grace. It is a gift. Repentance doesn’t buy mercy; repentance receives mercy. (see Acts 5:31) This gracious plan of redemption is for all people. (see Acts 11:18) God had it planned that way from the beginning. (see Gen. 12:3) The true Israel is composed of those who trust in God’s Son for their salvation. The entire Bible tells of God’s loyal love through the ages as He restores His people through the work of the Son, for His glory. Amen. (Q6)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Read Mark 5:19. How has He healed you? How has He had mercy on you?
2. Have you been faithful? Did you measure your faithfulness by God’s standard? What is God’s standard of faithfulness?
3. God gives us grace for the sin within (our sin nature) and the sin without (the evil in this fallen world). When did all this sin start? Why did God allow it to start?
4. What is communion with God? Can we help one another with that? How?
5. Think. How does your repentance bring glory to God?
6. Read Hosea 14:9 again. What are “the ways of the Lord” that we should walk in? As a group, come up with at least 5 of them.

“Oh! For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” (Wesley)

Oh! For a thousand tongues to sing

My great Redeemer’s praise

The glories of my God and King

The triumphs of His grace

My gracious Master and my God

Assist me to proclaim

To spread through all the earth abroad

The honors of Thy name

Jesus! the name that charms our fears

That bids our sorrows cease

’Tis music in the sinner’s ears

’Tis life and health and peace

He breaks the power of canceled sin

He sets the prisoner free

His blood can make the foulest clean

His blood availed for me