“Hosea: Repentance and Restoration for God’s People”

Hosea, chapter 7

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 1/10/21)

 Hosea described a nation that was dying, but the people assumed its greatness would continue forever. Sin ruled their hearts and contributed to their downfall. A foolish disregard for the truth always leads to downfall. These words of Hosea 7 are dark and grim, but they’re meant to make us ask ourselves, “Is there hope for a people caught up by sin’s deception?”

 What do we know about this man, Hosea? He lived among a people obsessed with themselves. Instead of trusting God, they made alliances with Assyria and Egypt. Hosea knew the whiplash of living in a time of quickening, unwelcome change. Chapter 7 was written not just to give us a glimpse of history, but it was meant to give us a picture of people like us- people who abandon God, not in word, but in deed. A people sickened by the viral spread of selfishness. But there was, and is, a hint of hope: Read verses 7:7 and 7:13 again. Even in the face of God’s judgment, He wants to help. He wants His people to call upon Him. (Q1)

 Hosea 7 shows what happens when people are deceived by sin and abandon God. There were 3 lies that people believed back then:

1. **“My sin will not be remembered by God.”** This lie is all about faking it and thinking that God won’t see my sin, or at least He’ll ignore it. This is saying the right words and singing the right songs, but not really believing your faith enough to live it out. Pastor Steve called it “Functional Unbelief”. You believe it in your head, but your life doesn’t show it. We see people today that think they can hide these sins from God and others: pornography, pride, greed, prejudice, and others. How do I know? Because, regrettably, I’ve done it myself. Let us all remember that these sins are against the Lord, and they will not stay hidden (Numbers 32:23).
2. **“My sin can be contained.”** People think they can manage sin. In Hosea’s day (Hosea 7:8, 11) Israel turned to alliances instead of turning to God. In 2021 it may take the form of pragmatism, instead of faith. We do something because we think “this will make it all work out”, as opposed to doing something solely because God says so. Israel of Hosea’s day thought she could manage sin. But she was just like the adulterous wife of Hosea, coming back for security, but still sleeping around. God wants to accept you and take you back, if you will come back to Him completely. Satan wants you to believe the lie that your sin can be contained and managed (i.e., you can serve two masters). (Q2)
3. **“My sin will not lead to judgment.”** No, God says His nets will catch the sinner (Hosea 7:12-13). We can’t say, “How pathetic. Aren’t we glad we’re not like them?” No, by nature our sin causes us to believe the same 3 lies! Just as Gomer and Israel were by nature adulterers to God, we are constant breakers of God’s moral law. But we deceive ourselves into thinking that we’re just not that bad, really…

God longs for us to return to Him, just as did the father of the prodigal son. In Lev. 20:26 He says, “Be holy, as I am holy.” Here’s the $64,000 question: Why would God command a people to do that which, by nature, they cannot do? **BECAUSE GOD HAS DONE FOR US WHAT WE CANNOT DO FOR OURSELVES!** That is why Jesus came, died, and was raised from the dead. It was all FOR US! God planned this from the beginning (see Luke 1:68-70). You don’t get adopted into His family by keeping the law; you get adopted by faith in the grace of Jesus’ work. Have you been reborn in Christ? A mark of a regenerated heart is a hatred of sin. Over time, and through grace, you are being made to look more and more like your Heavenly Father. His saving grace is accompanied by His sanctifying grace (see Titus 2:11-14). Don’t believe these 3 lies! Live by this truth: Jesus will either be your Savior or your Judge. He wants to redeem you (Hosea 7:13). (Q3) (Q4)

 Our hope is not attached to not getting sick or getting our way politically. Our hope is not in anything temporal. Our hope is in Jesus and being with Him forever. Amen.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Why wouldn’t the Israelites turn back to God? Why don’t many people today repent and turn to God? What holds them back? How can we help them?
2. Who or what do most Americans turn to for their security? As a group, discuss how one lives in this world, yet as a member of another kingdom, God’s kingdom.
3. How would you explain sanctification to a new Christian?
4. Read John 3:16-21;36. How does one get saved? How does one get condemned? Who in your circle of family and friends needs to hear this truth? How will you get it to them?

“Like a River Glorious” (Havergal)

 Like a river glorious is God’s perfect peace,

 Over all victorious, in its bright increase;

 Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day,

 Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.

 Refrain:

 Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest

 Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

 Every joy or trial falleth from above,

 Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love;

 We may trust Him fully, all for us to do;

 They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.