“God’s Loyal Love: A Song of Repentance”

Hosea 6:1 – 7:2

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 11/22/20)

 What are you thankful for? (Q1)

 I’m sure (for you children of God) that salvation tops your list! But how about repentance? Do you see that as a gift also? True repentance must be God’s work in us. Of course, we are not passive observers, but our action is a response to the gracious work of God. Our action only happens when God changes our hearts and calls us to repentance. King David knew that only God could change our hearts (Ps. 51:10). (Q2) Repentance is God’s work in Christ! Look at God’s action in Jer. 31:33: “I will put…”, “I will write…”, “I will be…” He is the One who changes our hearts. (Q3)

 Hosea 6:1-3 are words to a song of repentance. These words are a view of the healing that God could bring to His people, **BUT…** God is not moved by mere words. The people of Israel and Judah didn’t mean what they were saying. Compare Hosea 6:4 with Prov. 25:14. Hollow, empty words are worse than nothing. (Q4) Religion without true repentance is not real. In this Year of Covid, many people have been wearing masks. But many churchgoers have been wearing “masks” for years. They wanted happiness, not holiness. They wanted a change of circumstances, but not a change of character. God repeatedly warns His people about superficiality, religion that is lovely, but not loyal. 6:6 describes the mercy (loyal love) that God desires for Himself. It’s a mutual, steadfast love, like in a marriage. It’s not the drive-thru, McMercy love the people were crying for in 6:2. False contrition is no contrition at all. It’s like the people in 2Tim. 3:7 and Matt. 7:26-27, always going to Bible studies, but never really having a change of heart.

 Jesus was just as pointed in Matt. 9:13 when He quoted Hosea 6:6. He told the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, to “go and learn” what this verse meant! He told them that He had come to call sinners to Himself. They certainly didn’t think of themselves as sinners. Do you? Do you think God sees specific sin in your life, or does He say, “Oh, that’s OK. She’s only human.” Hosea 6:8-10 lays out specific sins, and then 6:11 says that Judah will meet a judgment (harvest). Judah, Israel, and later the Pharisees attempted to draw near to God without contrition. This is false repentance. It is marked by 1) A lack of acknowledgment of specific, personal guilt. 2) It fails to see sin as an offense against a Holy God, worthy of His severest condemnation. Instead some redefine sin as a sickness or a disorder. NO! IT’S SIN!

3) Finally, false repentance presumes upon the grace of God. It is foolishness to presume forgiveness and restoration if we have a callous, insincere heart. Do we (or the people of Hosea’s day) have any hope? YES! Read David’s words in Ps. 51:10 again. He knew who could change hearts!

 Hosea 7:2 is pretty sad: the people were considering in their hearts that God would not remember their wickedness. Who were they kidding?! It’s like they were saying, “God really doesn’t think my sin is that big of a deal.” Yes, He does! It’s such a big deal that He spilled His only Son’s blood on Calvary for you and for me! That work of Christ on the Cross can render Hosea 6:1-3 into a SINCERE song of repentance. (Q5) (Q6)

 Do you want to change your life, but you realize you have no power to fulfill that promise? GOOD! Rejoice, for your godly sorrow will lead to repentance. The power to change you is not in you, it’s in Jesus! “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” Amen. (Q7)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What are you thankful for in 2020?
2. Describe a “steadfast” or “right” spirit.
3. How do we put God’s law within us and on our hearts?
4. How are hollow words worse than nothing?
5. After 9/11 there was quite a return to church. How is this different than a “return to the Lord” (Hosea 6:1)?
6. What does it mean to “know the Lord” (Hosea 6:3)?
7. God can and will give you a clean heart, but you and I both know that we won’t be perfect this side of Heaven. As a group, discuss the difference between a “clean heart” and a “steadfast spirit” versus an attitude and lifestyle that accepts sin.

“Great is Thy Faithfulness”

1 “Great is Thy faithfulness,” O God my Father,

There is no shadow of turning with Thee;

Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not

As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

 “Great is Thy faithfulness!” “Great is Thy faithfulness!”

 Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—

 “Great is Thy faithfulness,” Lord, unto me!

2 Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,

Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,

Join with all nature in manifold witness

To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,

Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,

Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!