**“God’s Loyal Love: Who is Wise?”**

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

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 4/18/21

Our study of Hosea has been about God’s loyal love for His undeserving people. God wants us to be singularly devoted to Him. The scandal of the Gospel is God’s infinite mercy to an undeserving people. God promises to buy back His sin-stained people for Himself, through His Son, Jesus. By His Spirit and His grace, He will grant us forgiveness when we repent. Our focus today is on Hosea 14:9. It’s the exclamation point to this passage. In effect it says, “Pay attention! Now you must respond!”

 Verse 9 calls us to be wise and discerning. But most people choose their own way of wisdom. (see Prov. 16:25) True wisdom does not come from man’s sinful heart or from the majority opinion of humanity. True wisdom comes from God and is revealed to us through His Word. God’s people must not live by the prevailing views of the world around them. (see Prov. 3:5-6; Matt. 7:13-14; Rom. 12:2) (Q1)

 The “them” of verse 9 refers to the entire message of Hosea’s prophecy. God desires a marriage of intimate, reciprocal, loyal love with His people. Not just an academic understanding, but a loyal love relationship. Not just a ceremonial love, but an intimate love. As we said previously, naming God is not the same thing as knowing God. God’s people are by nature spiritually adulterous. We tend to love self, idols, military power, pragmatism, and politics. We “christianize” worldly things and try to create God in our image. So God will do WHATEVER it takes to awaken the hearts of His wayward people. (Q2)

 Read verse 9 one more time. God’s judgment of an unrepentant people is included in these “ways.” We saw in Hosea 13:7-8 (where God used the metaphor of the leopard and the bear) that God’s wrath toward sin is severe. Read Rom. 2:5-6. There is a day coming when you will be measured by a Holy God. (Q3) Are you wise? Are you prudent? The way back to God is through humbly repenting. God has graciously provided this way back through the shed blood of His only Son. Skipping God’s wrath and talking only of God’s love is a false gospel.

 True wisdom and prudence should shape your life, not merely inform your intellect. True wisdom and prudence should shape your practical, day-to-day living. Has this Gospel become a part of who you are, or is it just something you have heard in church and in Bible Studies? Jesus offers eternal life to all who surrender to Him as Savior and Lord. But it is possible to understand this and still not believe. “Religious” people who know “religious” facts can still be under the wrath of God. True wisdom is clinging to Christ as a daily reality and a daily necessity.

 God isn’t joking about His wrath toward sin. (Q4) False repentance is no repentance at all. Salvation is of the Lord: it’s not something man can work his way through. The righteous live secure in their salvation because it is God’s work. The righteous will never live in fear of judgment because they have been set free from sin’s penalty. They are being set free from sin’s power. And one day, they will be set free forever from the presence of sin. God, the author of this love story, looks at your imperfection and your rebellion and says, “I have bought you for Myself.”

 How do God’s people live as salt and light in a nation being judged for its sin?

1. By joyfully KNOWING that we are safe from His wrath.
2. By joyfully TELLING others that there is a sure way to be safe from His wrath.

Our friend Del knows he is perfectly safe from God’s wrath because of his faith in Jesus. He has spent his last years here at the Bridge being salt and light, encouraging others and telling others about the Way to be safe from God’s wrath and eternally connected to Him. His motto is “Be Kind and Humble” and he lives it out every day. How about you? Are you wise and discerning? Do you daily walk in God’s ways? (Q5)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. How do you renew your mind? How often do you renew your mind? Why do you renew your mind? (Hint: look at Rom. 12:1)
2. One reason we read our Bibles and listen to sermons is to hear reminders. What reminders do you need to hear as you live in this age of evil? Who in your life could use a reminder from you about God’s wrath? Who in your life could use a reminder about God’s love?
3. How will YOU escape judgment? John 3:16-18 should clear it up for you!
4. Read 1 Peter 2:6-10. How can one stone (Jesus) be both a cornerstone and a stumbling block?
5. Read Micah 6:8. What other “ways” should we walk in? Why? Elaborate on each of the “ways” as it applies to your situation.

“At Calvary” (Wm. Newell)

Years I spent in vanity and pride,
Caring not my Lord was crucified,
Knowing not it was for me He died
On Calvary.

Refrain:
Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty
At Calvary.

By God’s Word at last my sin I learned;
Then I trembled at the law I’d spurned,
Till my guilty soul imploring turned
To Calvary.

Now I’ve giv’n to Jesus everything,
Now I gladly own Him as my King,
Now my raptured soul can only sing
Of Calvary!