

HOSEA

STUDY HANDOUT

Theme: God's faithfulness to unfaithful people

1. Intro

- a. Background and History
 - i. Ministering before Assyrian invasion
 - ii. Israel was in poor moral and spiritual state
- b. Who is Hosea?
 - i. Prophet of Northern Kingdom
 - ii. Ministry from 755-710 BC
 - iii. During 6 kings from Zechariah to Hoshea
- c. Main Theme
 - i. It shows condemnation but also portrays God's love and mercy to unfaithful people. Mercy over judgement.

2. Main Points

- a. Illustration of Hosea's Marriage (ch. 1-3)
 - i. A marriage is the best picture of a relationship people should have with God (that's why he used this example)
 - ii. Hosea took a wife who was most likely not a whore, but later became one (shows that Israel was pure at first when God helped them but later turned to worship other Gods)
 1. Gomer's children have symbolic names for ex Lo-ruhama mean "not loved/no mercy". God's patience was ending because he is perfect and could no longer tolerate Israel's sins and rebellion
 2. Lo-Ammi "not my people"
 - iii. Israel as a nation is compared to the mother in 2:2-7 and the children are the Israelites individually
 - iv. God says I will hedge you up with thorns (God is willing to forgive Israel but must do it in a painful way in order for them to see their sin) nowadays God is always willing to bring his people back to him even if that means taking them through difficult situations

1. God's way of punishing Israel was to take away all their harvest and wealth that they thanked Baal for getting when really it was just God's mercy
- v. Hosea reaches back out to Gomer even though she has left him, and asks to bring her back to him and him alone.
 1. He bought her indicating that Gomer was most likely in debt (shows that the only redemption we can have is through God's grace)

b. Israel's unfaithfulness to God (ch. 4-8)

- i. God gives an account for all the wickedness happening in Israel, swearing, lying, murder, stealing, adultery.
 1. But isn't that the same exact world we live in today?
 2. Do we as Christians always lie, steal. So how upset is God with us today
 - a. Are we worried of the way he will bring us back to him because it may be painful
- ii. The people have rejected knowledge (or getting to know God)
 1. No personal relationship with God, just rituals
- iii. The priest or leaders of the nations were going along with the sin and were only saying things that people wanted to hear.
 1. As leaders and Christians are we leading the people around us to say no to sin or are we simply living life because to tell people about Christ is uncomfortable.
 2. The scary part is that God knows and will judge even harsher people that have influence in the church or work and do nothing
 3. We must be familiar with God's word in order to understand what we are hearing and determine whether it is truth
- iv. 5:10 talks about moving the landmark, this is where the spiritual leaders on earth would move God's own law and adjust it, and when you would move a landmark this was considered stealing, so in a way the leaders were robbing God of a place to move in the people of Israel
- v. 6:6 talks about steadfast love over sacrifice, in this God is showing us that he desires a true and honest loyal devotion to him. Not just a burning desire one day and gone the next like the mist that he describes it as in verse 4. He wants a love not sacrifice because sacrifice without love is meaningless.

- vi. Israel mixed with other nations even though God told them that they could not marry outside of their nation, people did and because of this they brought in many different Gods and turned from the true God. They wanted to become like the nations and world around them and became corrupt in their culture and lifestyle. We must not be afraid to share the gospel because it is hard or uncomfortable, and we should boldly proclaim that we are Christians because Christ says “he who denies me before men I will deny before my father”
 - vii. 8:4 Israel would choose leaders who were good for their standards but they weren’t in God's standards. Even Paul talks about this when he says they their will come a time when people will be choose ministers based on what please them rather than choosing someone who meets Gods standards
 - viii. 8:12 speaks about how God had written all these laws for Israel but they were neglected and did not obey them. The sad part is many Christians today don't actually pick up their bible and read it or even obey the laws they read they must follow. Sadly in this day and age people take God's laws more like suggestions then commands.
- c. Punishment for Israel (ch. 9-10)
- i. 9:3 God is saying that Israel will return to Egypt. What he means is that they will become slaves that were miserable under Egypt but this time they will be miserable under the Assyrians.
 - ii. 9:7 The prophet is a fool, Many times the Israel nation would reject and be violent towards God's prophets because they wouldn't want to hear what they had to say. Oftentimes today preachers get accused of different things when they challenge the church to a higher standard. And people reject and accuse the preacher of not living a correct life so that it would be easier on their conscience, because they know they aren’t living a christ like life.
 - iii. 9:11-12 God speaks on how he will curse Israel, but not just the nation now, but even their children. God's curses don't just last for this generation but for all generations until they are completely wiped out.
 - iv. 10:1 The more Israel prospered the more they took advantage of God, they started taking God's blessing for granted and started worshiping other Gods, This happens nowadays so much because we say God if you just give us more for example more money i will give more. However this is not true because God tells us to be

faithful in the small then we will be faithful in the large, because if you aren't giving money now or praying with what little time you have now, you won't start sacrificing more when you have been given more time

d. Restoration/Forgiveness of Israel (ch. 11-14)

- i. God refers to Israel as a son
 1. That later becomes disobedient
 2. 2-4 Talks about a parent's role and shows how God led Israel even when they didn't know it.
 3. They have drifted so far off that they have forgotten what he had done for them
- ii. At the end God still promises to forgive Israel
- iii. God is shown as a Father who loves, gets mad but then forgives Israel (Prodigal Son)

3. Lessons For Today

- a. God remains faithful no matter what - theme of the book
- b. Mercy over sacrifice 6:6
- c. Personal Knowledge of the Lord over "rituals" 4:6, 6:6
- d. Trust in God not Political Alliances 7:11

4. Conclusion

- a. Overall summary