

Sunday, December Twentieth

In the classic song, *My Way*, the opening lyrics set the stage for the rest of the song: “*And now, the end is near, and so I face the final curtain.*” In today’s passage, we reach the final curtain of Hosea’s prophecy. After chapters and chapters of judgment and calls for repentance, God issues His final words to His people – words of redemption and salvation.

Read: Hosea 14:1-9

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How does God reveal a model of confession for the people of Israel? (see verses 2-3)

Even amidst their rebellion, notice how God gave His people instructions on how to confess their sin and to turn back to Him. In doing so, God would prepare them to receive His forgiveness and redemption. Today, we follow this same model. When we confess our sin, we receive His forgiveness and are reminded of our redemption in Jesus Christ!

- How do verses 4-9 speak of God’s redemption for Israel?

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

Take a few minutes to look back through Hosea. What is one thing you learned about God? What is one thing you learned about yourself? How are both repentance and redemption a part of God’s story? What is one thing you will take away from this study?

Well, that’s the end of Hosea! I pray your time in God’s Word has filled you with newfound perspective as you reflected upon this account of repentance and redemption. It has truly been a pleasure reading along with you! Merry Christmas, and I’ll be back for Lent with another book of the Bible...the Gospel of John! – Pastor Chris

Questions? Comments? Contact Pastor Chris at chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org or (727) 344-2684.

Read through the Bible



Hosea Week 2



A Ministry of the Live Love Nation

Monday, December Fourteenth

Whenever a major hurricane is projected to make landfall in a particular area, local officials spring into action and warn residents to evacuate before it's too late. Usually, a majority of people comply, and those who remain knowingly choose to 'brave the storm.' Sometimes, though, the storm is stronger than the holdouts anticipated. While emergency personnel can sometimes get to them in time to rescue them, other times, the answer is rather grim – "Sorry, there's nothing we can do. It's too late." In today's passage, Israel cries out to God for help, but it's too late.

Read: Hosea 8:1-14

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- As a result of their unfaithfulness to God, what will happen to Israel? (see verses 1-3)

Notice that only when they realized they were about to be attacked and destroyed by a neighboring people did the Israelites cry out to God for help ("O our God, we acknowledge you" – v. 2).

- What had the Israelites constructed, and what will happen to it? (see verses 4-6)
- How did the Israelites view God's law? (see verse 12)

Imagine that you decide to walk away from the Christian faith and live your life as you please. Then, one day, decades later, you open up a drawer in a hotel room, you pull out a Bible, and you begin to read it. How foreign and strange might God's Word be to you after staying away from it for so long? Israel faced this very situation. They had fallen so far away from God through their idol worship that when they were confronted with His law, it seemed foreign and strange to them.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a look again at verses 4-6. Is there an idol in your life that needs to be destroyed? Take some time to pray for discernment.

Saturday, December Nineteenth

If you go to Trader Joes right now, you might still find some gift baskets that are made entirely out of recycled newspaper. Not only are they unusually sturdy, but they also showcase a colorful array of images and words from whatever newspapers they reused. In today's passage, God reuses some of His imagery from earlier chapters in Hosea to describe Israel's judgment for their sin.

Read: Hosea 13:1-16

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What will happen to Israel? (see verse 3) How does 6:4 connect with this imagery?

In 6:4, God described Israel's love for Him as morning dew that is swept away and disappears. In the same way, this is what will happen to Israel when the judgment comes – they will be swept away from their land to a land they do not know.

- What will happen to Israel? (see verses 7-8) How does 5:14-15 connect with this imagery?

In 5:14-15, God had described Himself as a lion who would tear Israel to pieces and return to His cave until they repent of their sin. In verse 7-8 of this chapter, God provides the same warning and command for His people.

- How does Paul use verse 14 in his letter to the Corinthians? (see 1 Corinthians 15:55)

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul uses this verse from Hosea to describe how the resurrection of Jesus provided a way for us to triumph over death.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Christmas is just a few days away. Take a moment to listen to one of your favorite Christmas songs, and thank God for giving us the victory over death through His Son, Jesus!

Friday, December Eighteenth

In early 2020, a 17-year-old girl named Heaven Fitch became the first female wrestler in North Carolina history to win a high school state championship. As a kid, Fitch had watched her older brothers wrestle, and she would often join in to test her strength and skillset. After winning the state championship against a sea of boys, Fitch expressed confidence in her abilities: “I just wrestled my best, and I kind of dominated the match, if I’m being honest.” In today’s passage, God describes Israel’s rebellion as a wrestling match. Can you guess who’s going to win?

Read: Hosea 12:1-14

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How was Israel like Jacob? (see verses 2-5)

In verse 4, God refers back to the wrestling match between He and Jacob as a way of describing Israel’s current struggle with Him (see Genesis 32:24-30). In the Genesis account, Jacob had refused to submit to God. As a result, he literally found himself in a wrestling match with God.

- What does God command Israel to do? (see verse 6)
- How do Israel’s words in verse 8 and God’s words in verse 9 differ in terms of Israel’s current and future situations?

Israel’s fortune was about to change. In verse 8 (their current situation), they found themselves basking in their own wealth. But in verse 9 (their future situation), they would soon find themselves without possessions or even a home (“I will make you live in tents again”).

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

In what situations do you tend to ‘wrestle with God’? How does that wrestling lead you to ultimately submit to Him and His will? Take some time today to thank God for being patient with you in the times that you try and wrestle with Him.

Tuesday, December Fifteenth

Living in a college town is not for the faint of heart, especially when you live next door to a group of students who are constantly hosting loud, massive house parties! On any given night of the week, local residents may find themselves waking up and looking out their window at 2 am to find hundreds of students gathered in the front lawn of the house next door. The beer is flowing, the music is playing, and there seems to be no end to the party in sight. What is a tired and frustrated next-door neighbor to do? Time to call the police (for the third time this week). The college students may not realize it yet, but their party is about to be over. In today’s passage, Hosea informs Israel that their party is over.

Read: Hosea 9:1-17

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How does verse 1 suggest that Israel’s situation will be changing soon?

At the time of Hosea’s prophecy, Israel was enjoying their lives of debauchery and idol worship. However, as many of the chapters so far have articulated, all of that was about to change. God’s judgment was about to come upon His people.

- How did the Israelites view Hosea? (see verse 7)

“Wait...is this guy serious? Is he really trying to tell us that God is going to bring judgment upon us? We’re in the middle of a bountiful harvest and life is good. I mean, this guy Hosea is absolutely insane!” Israel heard Hosea’s prophecy, and they were so blinded by their own ego that they did not believe it.

- How will Israel – inhabitants of the Promised Land – be forced to live after the coming judgment? (see verse 17)

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

Hosea was not treated kindly by his fellow Israelites. Take some time today to pray for people in your life who do not always treat you kindly.

Wednesday, December Sixteenth

Lori Loughlin (former *Full House* TV star) reported to prison on October 30th to serve a two-month sentence after she and her husband participated in a college admissions scheme that allowed their daughters to attend prestigious universities. At first, the celebrity couple pleaded ‘not guilty’ in the hopes that they would avoid prison time. However, they quickly learned that they could not avoid punishment for their actions. In today’s passage, Israel learns that it cannot avoid punishment for their actions.

Read: Hosea 10:1-15

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How had God blessed Israel, and what had they done with these blessings? (see verses 1-2)
- Why didn’t Israel have an earthly king? (see verse 3) What were the problems of an earthly king? (see verses 3-4)
- When will Israel receive its judgment? (see verse 10)

Imagine how Israel might have responded after hearing that judgment would come upon them. “Hey, God, can you bring that judgment upon us in a few years? Because we’re really enjoying our sinful lives right now.” God makes it clear that He will bring judgment when He wants to, not when Israel wants Him to.

- What did God call on the people of Israel to do? (see verse 12)

At the end of chapter 5, God had asked His people to repent of their sin and turn to Him. Now, five chapters later, He repeats His plea with urgency – “it is time to seek the Lord” (v. 12).

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

During this Christmas season, we remember that God demonstrated His unconditional love for us by saving us from the eternal punishment of our sin. Take some time today to thank Him for sending His Son to take that punishment for us.

Thursday, December Seventeenth

The new St. Pete Pier has a lot of things to do, especially for families looking to spend a day outside. First, there’s a sprawling playground for kids to run around. Next, you’ll find a splash pad for kids to run through. Just a few steps away is a beach for families to relax and play by the waves. And, to top it all off, there’s a walk-up food service area where you can create your own pizza. In these ways and more, an afternoon at the new Pier can serve as a great memory maker for families. In today’s passage, God looks back on His memories with His children.

Read: Hosea 11:1-12

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What sort of imagery does God use to describe His relationship with Israel? (verses 1-4)

When children are young, it is very common for them to demonstrate love and appreciation for their parents. But once they become teenagers, that starts to change! In fact, it is very common at that age for them to rebel against their parents. As God looked back on His time with the people of Israel, He remembered them in their youth – they loved Him and followed His decrees. But as they grew older, they began to rebel against Him.

- How do verses 5-7 describe Israel’s attitude toward God?
- How do verses 8-9 demonstrate a shift in God’s attitude toward Israel?

Once again, as He had done many times before, God looked down on His people and had compassion for them.

Respond: Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

In Ephesians 4:32, Paul gives us this instruction: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” How easy or difficult is it for you to have compassion on those who wrong you? How might God’s example in Hosea and Ephesians 4:32 confirm or challenge your practice?