

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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*Hosea – We Become Like the
God (or god) we Worship (Pt 9)*

May 1st, 2022

Sermon Text: Hosea 5

Scripture Reading: Psalm 115

Let's begin this morning by simply reading the 3rd and 4th chapters of Hosea by way of review:

Hos 3:1-5 And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." (2) So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. (3) And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to

another man; so will I also be to you." (4) For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. (5) **Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.**

NOTE: For review at this point I refer you to Part 6 of this Hosea series where we spend time looking at that theme in 3:5 – *the latter days*. It is the theme of the true Israel, Christ's true people in the church age.

Hos 4:1-19 Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; (2) there is swearing, lying,

murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

(3) Therefore the land mourns, and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens, and even the fish of the sea are taken away.

(4) Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, **for with you is my contention, O priest.** (5) You shall stumble by day; **the prophet also shall stumble** with you by night; and I will destroy your mother. (6) **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me.** And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

(7) The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame. (8) They feed on the sin of my people; they are greedy for their iniquity. (9) And it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways and repay them for their

deeds. (10) They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the whore, but not multiply, because they have forsaken the LORD to cherish (11) whoredom, wine, and new wine, which take away the understanding.

(12) My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. **For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore.** (13) They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery. (14) I will not punish your daughters when they play the whore, nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the men themselves go aside with prostitutes and sacrifice with cult prostitutes, and a people without understanding shall come to ruin. (15) Though you play the whore, O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. Enter not into Gilgal, nor go up to Beth-aven, and swear not, "As the LORD lives." (16) Like a

stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the LORD now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture? (17) Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone. (18) When their drink is gone, they give themselves to whoring; their rulers dearly love shame. (19) A wind has wrapped them in its wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

Likewise, for a review of chapter 4, you can go to part 7 of this Hosea series (you can find it on our youtube channel, or at sermonaudio.com/crc where you can also print out a pdf). In part 7 we looked at this 4th chapter and said this:

There is a direct connection between man's behavior and the state of the creation. Man consistently chooses the wrong god to worship however, and therefore only compounds the groanings of the creation. Hosea's warnings to his fellow Israelites went, of course, unheeded except for mocking. He told them that their

land mourned because of their sin, but they would not have it.

Does that sound like our own day? It should. Any suggestion that the calamities in this world – floods, wars, disease, earthquakes, hurricanes, famine, death... - are God shouting to man to repent of his evil, is met with scorn and derision. Look to your own thinking on this. Do you realize that things which happen “naturally” in nature are *abnormal*? Our culture is actually worse than pagans of old who, when they saw a volcano, for instance, concluded that “the gods are angry with us.” Our age mocks such people as fools – but just who are the fools?

Alright then, let's move ahead and read the 5th chapter of Hosea:

Hos 5:1-15 Hear this, O priests! Pay attention, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! For the judgment is for you; for you have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread upon Tabor. (2) And the revoltors have gone deep

into slaughter, but I will discipline all of them.

(3) I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from me; for now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore; Israel is defiled. **(4) Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they know not the LORD.**

(5) The pride of Israel testifies to his face; Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in his guilt; Judah also shall stumble with them. **(6) With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the LORD, but they will not find him; he has withdrawn from them.** (7) They have dealt faithlessly with the LORD; for they have borne alien children. Now the new moon shall devour them with their fields.

(8) Blow the horn in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah. Sound the alarm at Beth-aven; we follow you, O Benjamin! (9) Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of punishment; among the tribes of Israel I make known what is sure.

(10) The princes of Judah have become like those who move the landmark; upon them I will pour out my wrath like water. (11) Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment, because he was determined to go after filth. (12) **But I am like a moth to Ephraim, and like dry rot to the house of Judah.**

(13) When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, **then Ephraim went to Assyria, and sent to the great king. But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound.** (14) For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and no one shall rescue. (15) I will return again to my place, **until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me.**

Alright, let's summarize the main points of this chapter:

1. Israel stubbornly persisted in her sin, the chief of which was

idolatry. We saw that in chapter 4 -

Hos 4:12-13 My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore. (13) They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good. Therefore your daughters play the whore, and your brides commit adultery.

2. Hosea's marriage to an adulterous woman (Gomer) and the children who were the fruit of that union are pictures of the spiritual adultery through this idolatry. They rejected the Lord and prayed to a piece of wood!
3. The Lord had withdrawn from them. His blessing was removed. He would not hear their prayers.
4. Prophet, priests and kings

were all involved. In fact, they actively promoted this wickedness.

5. Note verse 12 – God had become a moth and dry rot to them. This is very possibly the background of Jesus' words:

Mat 6:19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,

Isaiah used the same moth imagery:

Isa 51:8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool, but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.”

“Where moth and rust destroy” is an image of God's judgment. We must not love this world and lay up treasure for ourselves in it because this world is under God's judgment. It is perishing.

6. A day would come when the true Israel, people who acknowledge their sin and

earnestly call upon the Lord to save them.

Now, what I want us to spend the rest of our time this morning thinking about is that 4th verse –

(4) Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. **For the spirit of whoredom is within them**, and they know not the LORD.

The same thing was stated in the previous chapter:

My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. **For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray**, and they have left their God to play the whore.

Whoredom is *spiritual adultery*. It is here meant to describe the unfaithful Israelites forsaking the Lord and uniting with false gods. It is idolatry, and always, always, always behind idolatry is the devil.

“A spirit of whoredom” does not mean simply an attitude or some

other way of thinking all of which has its origin in man’s mind. No, this is far more than a mere human issue that goes no farther than how the nation chose to think. Note:

1. They were in bondage to this spirit of whoredom – they were not permitted to return to their God.
2. They had been led astray.

1Co 12:2 You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.

When people choose to turn away from the Lord and embrace false gods, they will find themselves enslaved, imprisoned by Satan.

Lev 17:7 So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they whore. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.

Deu 32:17 They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.

Psa 106:37 They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons;

1Co 10:19-22 What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? (20) No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. (21) You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. (22) Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Every Christian must flee from all forms of idolatry. And make no mistake, the world and culture in which we live is filled with idolatry. It is all around us. This morning we observed the Lord's table – we partook of the table of the Lord. Any professing Christian who does so while at the same time participating in some type of idolatry by being conformed to this world – is provoking the Lord to

jealously and should be in great fear.

Now, what do these idol-promoting demons lead people to? They led the Israelites to sacrifice their children to demons. Is this happening in our world today? Of course, and on a far, far larger scale that Israel ever saw. The devil is a murderer and today he is leading those who have chosen false gods to murder their children – by the millions.

What else do demons lead idol worshippers to?

1. Mutilation of the body so as to, in a way, distort the image of God in man. No Christian should be covering their bodies with tattoos or piercings to the bizarre and demonic-appearing degree we are seeing today.

1Ki 18:28 And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them.

2. Destruction of the mind and body through drugs and alcohol.
3. Distortion and even mutilation of the male/female order which God created human beings in.
4. An obsession with death – not just suicide but with people doing insane things for the purpose of, they think, defying and daring death to take them.

Mar 5:1-5 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. (2) And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. (3) He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, (4) for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him.

(5) Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

5. Nudity and all sorts of perversions of sexuality.

Rom 1:28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

That is what had happened in Israel, and that is exactly what is happening in our nation today.

There is a spirit behind every false god and anyone who rejects the Lord and bows down to an idol is entering into a fellowship with demons. Listen to Paul again:

1Co 10:20-21 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. (21) You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

1Co 10:14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

I have no doubt that there is far more of the demonic at work around us today than we realize. And it is all the result of people refusing to obey the Lord:

Exo 20:3-6 “You shall have no other gods before me. (4) “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (5) You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, (6) but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Psa 115:4-8 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. (5) They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. (6) They have ears, but do not

hear; noses, but do not smell. (7) They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. (8) Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

Let me show you one more example of how the Bible warns us that idolatry is demon-energized and that those who worship false gods will become enslaved and led astray by them.

The Pharisees (Matthew 12) demanded that Jesus give them a sign, and Jesus replied that they would be given the sign of Jonah (ie, Jesus’ resurrection). This sign, of course, they would reject and Jesus then begins to speak about demon possession, applying it to them:

Mat 12:43-45 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. (44) Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house

empty, swept, and put in order. (45) Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

you walk down Main Street or through a city mall or on a University campus – or even in many, many churches.

1Jn 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

As G.K. Beale summarizes:

“Demons were the spiritual reality behind idols, which caused the idols to have such a spiritual hold on their worshipers....the demonic realm had influenced them to commit false worship. Idol worshipers become identified with the evil demonic forces behind the tradition that was worshiped.”
[Beale, We Become What We Worship]

There was a spirit of whoredom in Israel in Hosea’s day. It was a demonic spirit that imprisoned and led astray all who worshipped false gods. And that same spirit is rampant in our nation today as well. What a man chooses as his god, matters. All you need do to see what Hosea saw is look around as