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Tillamook, Oregon

*You Must be Born Again!*

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## *Hosea – The Power of the Word*

*May 29, 2022*

**Sermon Text:** Hosea 6

**Scripture Reading:** Colossians 1

Hos 5:14-15 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.

Hos 6:1-11 “Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. (2) After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.

(3) Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”

(4) What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away.

**(5) Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light.**

(6) For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

(7) But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me. (8) Gilead is a city of evildoers,

tracked with blood. (9) As robbers lie in wait for a man, so the priests band together; they murder on the way to Shechem; they commit villainy.

(10) In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing; Ephraim's whoredom is there; Israel is defiled. (11) For you also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed. When I restore the fortunes of my people, [continues into chapter 7]

This chapter begins with Hosea calling his fellow countrymen to repent of their evil and return to the Lord. He tells them:

1. The *Lord* has torn them and struck them. It is the *Lord* who is bringing calamities upon them.
2. He urges them to repent, to put away their idols and return to the Lord
3. If they will pursue the Lord and know Him, He will bring the showers of covenant blessing to them.

Once more – and this is an often

recurring theme in the prophets – *It is the Lord who is bringing judgment upon Israel. And He is doing this because of their ongoing sin.* There is a cause and effect dynamic here. Continuing in sin, refusing to love and obey the Lord, will eventually bring judgment upon individuals and upon the entire nation. This is a repeated theme in the preaching of the prophets:

Hos 4:2-3 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.

Isa 1:3-7 The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” (4) Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of

Israel, they are utterly estranged. (5) Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. (6) From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil. (7) Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.

The application to our own time and nation is obvious, is it not? What do we see with rapidly increasing rate:

- Insane and wicked perversions of marriage, family, sexuality
- Longstanding expulsion of any mention of the Lord in schools, government. To quote the Bible is to be guilty of hate speech.
- Violence, murder, often without consequence
- War and fears of world war

- A crashing economy
- Slaughter of millions of babies

And yet, what is the attitude? Any suggestion that these things are God's judgment upon us for longstanding, evil, wickedness is met with mockery and hatred.

For the majority of people, including many who claim to be Christians, *none of these evils could possibly be due to God's action because, they insist, He is either:*

- Non-existent
- Does not involve himself in the affairs of our lives (and yet people call out to Him in times of peril!)
- Too loving to ever bring such things upon us

The horrible, horrible murder of 19 little children and two teachers – not to mention of probably lifelong trauma the survivors are going to be enduring – elicits many different ideas about how future horrors like this can be prevented. There are

some practical things that do need to be done:

- Locked doors
- Armed security
- Better radar for the red flags that these mass murderers send out
- Keeping firearms and weapons out of the hands of maniacs
- Better resources to deal with mental illness
- Addressing the breakdown of the family
- The role of violent video games
- The radicalization of particularly young men on social media

But largely, as you have no doubt watched the news reports this past week, one theme seems to be recurrent:

*No one really knows why this keeps happening nor how to stop it.*

It was unusual and encouraging (though the message is far from

being a major one) that I heard at least 3 people speak out on national news that this nation's problem *is spiritual*. That it is due to sin, and of reaping the terrible harvest of that sin.

- A Baptist pastor in Texas
- An ex-NFL player, now an evangelist
- The Lieutenant Governor of Texas

All of these men quoted Scripture and called for repentance and a turning to Christ. They are to be commended. They are correct. We are experiencing the evil fruits of rebellion against God – but most people still refuse to repent – or *even admit to the foolish, stupid notion (as they see it) that these evils are the active hand of God against us for sin.*

If you are really a Christian, that is to say – if you are born again – then you are experiencing the same thing that Lot did as he lived in Sodom:

2Pe 2:7-8 and if he rescued

righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (8) (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);

NOTE: There are people who would claim that these actions of judgment by God against Israel in OT times was restricted to Israel because they were in covenant relation with God. Well let's make two notes in response:

- Sodom was not in covenant with God, yet God rained fire upon it
- The church today is in covenant with the Lord and can expect His discipline as, for instance, described in 1 Cor 11 ("some of you are sick and a number of you sleep), and the letters to the churches in Revelation. (See also Hosea 6:7. In Adam we are all in covenant with God and like him we all have broken that covenant)

We are experiencing the terrible judgments and results of years and years of wickedness. Our sin as a nation has put blood on our hands. We are creating young people, especially young men, who are filled with rage, who have no anchor of family or of a father or mother, who are surrounded by drugs and death – and as we are going to be seeing in our study of The Revelation as we come to the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet judgment, there is an unleashing of the devil and his demons among us. Who will deny – is it really that crazy of a notion – that what we are seeing around us can only be *demonic*. Satan is a murderer and a liar come to destroy and deceive.

### **The Power of God's Word**

Now, let's look more closely at these verses:

Hos 6:4-5 What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. (5)  
**Therefore I have hewn them by**

**the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light.**

Now we see the reaction of the Israelites to Hosea's preaching. They have sinned wickedly, God has been striking them in judgment, but if they will return to Him He will forgive and bless.

Nope. Not gonna do it. That is why there is such a change of tone now – “What shall I do with you...?”

Hos 6:8-10 Gilead is a city of evildoers, tracked with blood. (9) As robbers lie in wait for a man, so the priests band together; they murder on the way to Shechem; they commit villainy. (10) In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing; Ephraim's whoredom is there; Israel is defiled.

Verse 5 is a very interesting and amazing statement:

Hos 6:5 Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain

them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light.

Let's think very carefully now about what this says regarding *the power of God's Word*. Surely the Apostle must have had this verse in mind when he wrote this:

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

God's Word, says Hosea, *hews and slays*. Now, those things are the work of a *sword*. When the Lord speaks, His Word effects what He says. “Let there be light,” and there was light. Just like that. Listen to Isaiah say it:

Isa 55:10-11 “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, (11) so shall

my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Notice how Hosea's words and God's words are equated:

Hos 6:5 Therefore I have hewn them **by the prophets**; I have slain them **by the words of my mouth**, and my judgment goes forth as the light.

See it?

- Hewn them by the *prophets*
- Slain them by the words of *my mouth*

This tells us that God's Word, when it is announced, preached, read, faithfully – *effects by its power what it proclaims just as much as if it were spoken directly by God Himself*. Here it is again:

Jer 1:8-10 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD.” (9) Then the LORD put out his hand

and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. (10) See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Jer 5:12-14 They have spoken falsely of the LORD and have said, ‘He will do nothing; no disaster will come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine. (13) The prophets will become wind; the word is not in them. Thus shall it be done to them!’” (14) Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts: “Because you have spoken this word, behold, **I am making my words in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and the fire shall consume them.**

God's powerful word, you see. Now, this is extremely vital for us to realize.

Mat 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Luk 4:32 and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.

Luk 4:36 And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!”

Rom 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

1Co 1:18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1Th 1:5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

Heb 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the

Majesty on high,

1Pe 1:23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

2Pe 3:5-7 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, (6) and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. (7) But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

All of these verses, and no doubt many others, include this same fact: God’s Word not only is powerful, *it is power*. It effects and accomplishes that which it declares. It is a “going forth” of God’s power. *And somehow all of this is at least part of what is meant when Christ is called the Word.*

And it is also what is meant here:



Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

The Word of God is *God* going forth to effect what He declares.

And all of this is one primary answer to this question:

*Why should I go to church?*

Now, when I say “church” here, I mean a true church. A place where God’s people are, a place where Christ is known, a place where God’s Word is faithfully proclaimed and believed. Why should we go to such a place on, for example, the Lord’s Day?

Well, because when God’s truth is preached and taught, when Scripture is read and correctly explained, God’s power is going forth. In that Word, the Lord is mightily working and accomplishing all kinds of things:

- He is exposing sin and bringing us under conviction
- He is powerfully working conviction in us
- His Word, the gospel, is working faith in the lost and powerfully working salvation
- He is strengthening the faith of His people
- It is through and by the Word that the Spirit works in us
- The Word exposes the hypocrite

And no doubt much more. Look at this:

1Co 14:24-25 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, (25) the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Yes, this power operates in an individual Christian – think of John Bunyan in his prison cell all alone. But it seems that the Word especially goes out in power when

the church is gathered together, hearing God's Word proclaimed –

Eph 4:11-16 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, (12) to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (13) **until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God**, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, (14) so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. (15) Rather, speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up** in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow **so that it builds itself up in love.**

to be brought to a realization that the only remedy for our terrible woes is to acknowledge and return to the Lord in genuine repentance, confessing out sin, and turning to Christ.

And it is God's powerful Word preached and announced that has always been the key means by which the Lord brings that kind of sweeping revival. This is why we must never be ashamed of the gospel. It is the remedy. The only remedy. And it all explains why the devil has always been doing his diabolical best to silence the preaching of the Word – because He knows its power.

What then is it our nation needs? What is it the churches need? It is