

**Message #8****Hosea 6:1-11**

One of the most moving stories that was ever told by Jesus Christ is the story of the Prodigal Son found in Luke 15. This son was a true son and he took off and wallowed around in the world and ended up totally and completely destitute. He ended up a broken down wreck. He decided to go home to his dad, not even thinking his dad would treat him any better than some slave. But when he finally did go home, he was treated with great respect and honor and he was welcomed back into a wonderful relationship again with his family and father. Even though he had done evil, sinful things his dad wanted him back and when he came back, his dad restored him again.

That beautiful story is a story that has been played out many times with individuals who are God's people. I have told this story before, but William Cowper was a man who wandered far away from God and fell into a state of sin and deep depression. By the sovereignty of God, he moved in 1767 to a city where John Newton (Amazing Grace) was pastor of a church. During that time he rededicated his life to the Lord and God used him to write "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood drawn from Immanuel's Veins." God was there waiting for Cowper and when he finally turned to the Lord, he was restored.

This story is clearly developed in this book of Hosea. Never is that point more obvious than when we come to Hosea 6. As we saw last week, God's people were a disastrous mess. They were proud, immoral and dedicated to religion that was not dedicated to the Word and will of God. In fact, as the chapter ended, God said, "I will go away and return to My place, until they acknowledge their guilt..." (5:15). These people were pathetic and yet God wanted them back. It is absolutely amazing, God wanted these people back. Why? Because they were His people and He loved them. What we see here is this:

**GOD LOVES HIS FAMILY AND EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE DONE HORRIBLE THINGS, AT TIMES HE WANTS HIS FAMILY TO RETURN TO HIM AND WHEN THEY DO, NOT ONLY WILL HE RESTORE A RELATIONSHIP, BUT HE WILL RESTORE HIS FULL BLESSINGS.**

Perhaps you are here today and you are a believer and you have been slopping around in some filthy, vile, sinful stuff. Perhaps you have been living in a proud defiance of God and His Word. Turn back to the Lord today and watch what God will do with you and for you. He will take any prodigal child back and do great things with them and for them if they will come back to Him.

God's people in Hosea's day had done and were doing "horrible things" (6:10). Yet God still graciously invited His people to come back to Him. If they would do that, He not only would forgive them; He would actually start blessing them and using them.

Now this chapter reveals five main themes:

**THEME #1** – God’s wayward people need to return to God and purpose to know God. **6:1-3**

Now these verses are very clear to say if you are a child of God who has fallen into some sin, you need to face it and get back to a right relationship with God.

Now there are two main admonitions that are presented in these verses. Both of these admonitions reveal that there are times when God will use some disciplinary judgment as a means of getting His people to respond to Him and His Word. God has an arsenal of weapons He can use to draw His people to Himself:

**Admonition #1** - The admonition for God’s people to return to the LORD. **6:1-2**

Now there are four main reasons why God’s wayward people need to return to the LORD:

**(Reason #1)** - Because the LORD who has torn His people will heal His people. **6:1b**

God, at times, causes hurtful things to hit His own people because they are in rebellion against Him. One old Bible scholar said that he had heard a lot of different testimonies of people as to how they were drawn back into a right relationship with God. He said many people described some catastrophe that drew them back. Some had gone through a business failure, some a personal illness; some went through an illness or death of a loved one. God’s goal in sovereignly permitting these things was to get His people to turn back to Him so He might bless them. If people who are being torn about will turn to God, He will heal them.

Now I think there is a real Grace Age physical application to this. There are times when God will cause His own people to literally get sick because they refuse to face some sin in their life. Paul warned the Corinthians that some of them were sick because they were proud and were not dealing with things (I Cor. 11:30) and James said that sickness can be a judgment of God for sin in the life of a believer (James 5:14-15).

If a believer is actually experiencing a sickness as a judgment of God, if that believer will turn back to God, God will heal His people because that is the whole point of the sickness. God can tear a person down physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually in order to get that person to turn back to Him and when he does, he will be healed.

**(Reason #2)** - Because the LORD who has wounded His people will bandage His people.  
**6:1c**

Do not overlook what is said here. God is the One who wounds His people and God is the One who can bandage His people. You cannot be bandaged by a counselor or a psychologist or psychiatrist. God is the only One, at times, who can fix the problem.

**(Reason #3)** - Because the LORD will revive His people. **6:2a**

Do you see this? God can revive His people. He can cause them to sing again. God can transform and revive a person who has been pathetic.

**(Reason #4)** - Because the LORD will raise His people. **6:2b**

The promise here is that if God's people will return to Him, He will not only revive them; He will completely raise them up and restore them. They will be blessed by God and used by God. The numerical reference to this happening after a total of three days has to do with a couple of things.

First, it has to do with the fact that when God's people return to the Lord, everything does not happen on one day. Things immediately start to happen that are positive for a believer, but there is a time element for everything to happen.

Second, this has to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the One who makes it possible for God to unconditionally love His people and forgive His people.

**Admonition #2** - The admonition for God's people to know the LORD. **6:3**

God's people are admonished to get to know the LORD. The Hebrew here is very strong here; God wants His people aggressively pursuing knowledge of Him and His Word (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 758). This clearly indicates the necessity to carefully crawl through the Scriptures. People who have returned to the LORD will be drawn to a place where they can carefully learn the Scriptures so they may get to know God.

If God's people will purpose to know God through His Word and application of His Word, then according to **verse 3**, His people will have: 1) Certainty in the relationship; 2) God's close personal presence in the relationship; and 3) God's refreshment in the relationship.

**THEME #2** – God describes why He does negative things to His own family. **6:4-5**

**It is clear from these verses that God does negative things to His family because their loyalty is fickle.** God says in **verse 4** that My judgments are on you because your loyalty is like a morning cloud or dew that you see for about a moment and then it is gone.

I have gone out to mow in the morning and determined that the dew made it too wet to mow and then I have gone out just a few minutes later and determined that it is okay to mow because the dew is gone.

God says that is the way it is with the loyalty of My people. It is fickle. It seems to be there for a brief moment, but then it is gone. God does not want His people to be fickle, shallow people.

How many times have we promised God we will do something and then just forget about it because we are so fickle? How many times have we been convicted by the Holy Spirit in a service at church and we know we need to make an adjustment and then we leave the service and the conviction before we drive out of the parking lot? It was gone just as fast as the dew. God says in **verse 5** that I have often brought My own people under conviction through the Word of God. I have used My prophets to communicate My words to My people that they need to turn to Me, but they refuse.

Therefore, my judgment comes. I chasten them because of their unfaithfulness because of their lack of loyalty. God says I actually send My negative judgments against you just like the light that comes day in and day out. God says I continually hit My people with a series of negative chastising judgments because they will not get serious about Me and My Word.

**THEME #3** – God describes for His people what actually delights Him. **6:6**

There are two key realities that delight God. When His people do these things, He is absolutely delighted:

**Reality #1** - God delights in loyalty rather than sacrifice. **6:6a**

Let me put this in a marriage context like the book of Hosea; let's see if I can illustrate the point. If you are not loyal to your mate, do you think your mate cares about sacrificial gifts you buy him or her? What do you think your mate would prefer—your love and loyalty or some gift card to the mall? You are out involved in not being faithful to your spouse and you have to be almost out of your mind to think that you can make your spouse happy by making some financial sacrifice. Any right thinking husband or wife prefers loyalty to sacrifice.

So it is with God. There are people who are unfaithful to God. They are not loyal to Him or His Word and then they go to church and they give their offerings. Do you think that pleases God? No way. God delights in loyalty, not sacrifice.

**Reality #2** - God delights in knowledge rather than burnt offerings. **6:6b**

God wants His people knowledgeable of His Word and doctrines. He delights when people go to church to get knowledge of Him. This is why it is so important that a church be given to carefully expounding the Scriptures.

One of the major problems with the people of God is that they become very lopsided in their perspective of God because they don't know much about the Word of God. For example, some believe that God is so loving that He could never be angry or judgmental with His people. They did not get this idea from a careful study of the Word of God; they got it from their own delusional mind.

There are many people who go to church and just go through motions. They give their offerings and pray their prayers and sing their hymns; but the fact is they are shallow because they do not care if they ever grow deep in their knowledge of the Word of God. If they were serious about the knowledge of the Scriptures, they would get in a church that would feed them deep knowledge.

**THEME #4** – God describes what He actually sees. **6:7-10**

God does not see loyalty or commitment to His Word. Instead, He sees eight horrible acts:

**Horrible Act #1** - God's people have transgressed the covenant. **6:7a**

What this statement means is that God's people didn't obey God's Word; they did just the opposite like Adam. They didn't pay any attention to the Word of God.

**Horrible Act #2** - God's people have dealt treacherously against God. **6:7b**

The word "treacherous" is interesting because what it means is that these people were frauds who intentionally clothed themselves to look like they were right with God when, in fact, they were not (*Ibid.*, pp. 101-102).

**Horrible Act #3** - God's people were tolerating corrupt cities. **6:8a**

God singles out specific places like Gilead, which apparently were known for evil crimes.

**Horrible Act #4** - God's people had bloody footprints. **6:8b**

They were going to worship services having committed horrible crimes.

**Horrible Act #5** - God's priests were committing murders. **6:9**

What they did was connected to Shechem? Truth is we don't know. But it is very clear that these priests were not interested in pursuing knowledge of the Word of God. They were doing evil things. The religious leaders were ruthless. They were lurking men not seeking to get people the knowledge of God, but seeking to destroy them for personal gain.

If we turn back the clock to the Reformation, we can see a literal illustration of this very evil. Priests of the Roman Church were lurking in an attempt to kill Martin Luther. But God's sovereign, protective hand was on Luther and they did not succeed.

**Horrible Act #6** - God's people did horrible things. **6:10a**

The word "horrible" describes something extremely bad (*Ibid.*, p. 843). God does not tell us what it is, but if God classifies it as horrible, it must be something very depraved beyond the norm.

**Horrible Act #7** - God's people did immoral things. **6:10b**

Immoral sex has always been a problem around some of God's people. These people are heading for the judgment of God.

**Horrible Act #8** - God's people defiled themselves. **6:10c**

This word "defile" means God's people were doing things God classified as unclean and impure (*Ibid.*, p. 322).

God's people were a sinful mess. Now we would expect at this point to read a text in which God would say, "I will blast My people." "I will damn My people." "I will destroy My people." But look at the next theme.

**THEME #5** – God describes what He will eventually do to His people. **6:11**

Look carefully at the end of **verse 11**. You read this verse and you say, you have got to be kidding me. God will restore the fortunes of His people.

His people have done evil and perverse things and God says I will "restore the fortunes of My people."

Now we must ask why in the world would God do that? Because God's people are God's family and He still loves His family.

What an amazing God. I do not know how far you have wandered away from God. I do not know all of the perverse sin that is in your life. What I do know is that if you, as a prodigal, will turn back to God, He will restore His blessings on you because He loves you. That is the message of Hosea 6.

Come back to God and go after the knowledge of God and God's blessings will be yours.