

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com

Michael Odom -

MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

When the man of Benjamin saw the ark of the covenant captured by the Philistines, what Israelite did he run to tell?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Absalom - 2 Samuel 14:26

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Hosea: Lessons in Faith

Clark Dugger

A man of great courage and conviction, Hosea prophesied in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II, apparently after Amos and probably about 750 B.C. While it was a time of material prosperity in Israel (see 2:8–13), it was also a time of great wickedness as conspiracies against the throne were prevalent and outbreaks of anarchy were common. But as bad as things were politically in Israel, things were even worse morally and spiritually, for worship of the golden calf at Bethel, which in the beginning was supposed to represent Jehovah, had now turned into full-blown idolatry. Decadence and corruption had infested the land as the people rejected God and reveled in their unfaithfulness.

God commands Hosea to marry a woman who, because of the influence of these idolatrous surroundings, commits adultery and eventually drifts into prostitution. By the birth of the third child, a little boy named Loammi meaning “not-my-people” or “no-kin-of-mine,” Gomer’s infidelity is obvious and separation becomes necessary. It’s not until years later when Gomer’s beauty and charm has faded, that her

paramour puts her on the slave block and Hosea buys her for the price of a gored slave.

As we attempt to explore the faith of Hosea, we see a man with great confidence in God. He did what God told him to do, and in the process, like all obedient believers, became a partaker “of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). God uses these terrible events in Hosea’s life to give him great insight into what God Himself was enduring with Israel. Israel had rejected God’s great love and bountiful blessings and committed spiritual adultery by turning to the worship of idols. Out of his own marital tragedy Hosea came to understand more clearly than any prophet before him the depth of God’s love, God’s pain and God’s mercy.

Learning how to love. Hosea had honorably taken to himself the woman of his choice, and entered into what he anticipated would be a union of life-long happiness. This relationship began as the result of God’s command (1:2, 3). It was God who would teach him how to love even as He loves His people, a lesson the Lord teaches us today (1 John 4:10, 11, 19). It’s a love that does not depend upon circumstance nor reciprocation; a love that understands commitment and sacrifice. In spite of this great love Israel betrayed God just as Gomer rejected Hosea. But this love cannot compromise truth; the Divine standard cannot be lowered; infidelity cannot be tolerated. So God casts her off, but He never ceases to love her. In spite of all her infidelity, God still loves Israel. Hosea learns this kind of love.

Learning how to suffer. In spite of all Hosea’s faithful obedience, he still suffered. But Hosea did not look back on his tragic life with bitterness blaming God for his terrible ordeal. Instead he was able to learn from life the lessons God intended, perceive his suffering with purpose and establish a communion with God that could not have been understood apart from the experience of his own agony. He discovered what infidelity means to love, and came to know the heart break of God.

Suffering that is the result of obedience is the proving ground for faith, and as such, is “more precious than gold that perisheth” (1 Peter 1:7). The profit of such suffering is found in the production of a stronger, more enduring faith, for only through the crucible of righteous suffering can faith be proven. While one might think such suffering implies God’s rejection, in reality the opposite is true, “for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Proverbs 3:11, 12; Hebrews 12:6). Evidence of God’s love and proof of our sonship is seen in righteous suffering, a lesson that Hosea learned well.

Learning how to forgive. But the real lesson was yet to be learned, for as tragic as it is, the message of Hosea is not one of retribution, but one of redemption. In spite of her infidelity God was unwilling to give up on Israel: “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I cast thee off, Israel?... my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of my anger” (Hosea 11:8, 9). Learning to forgive others is crucial to own redemption, for “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:15). But more than this, the realization that our own sin separates us from God demands our desperate need for a Savior. For as we see ourselves upon the slave block of sin, only then will we come to understand our total dependence upon the love of God for salvation; a redemption that can only be found by faith in Jesus Christ.

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