

## What God wants (Hosea 6 and Matthew 12:1-8) 18-June-2017

G'day Church Family!

Please have your Bibles turned to Hosea chapter 6.

There's an outline in the bulletin to follow and take notes, if you wish

First - let me ask God for his help and guidance in understanding His Holy Word.

Let's pray...

### Intro/Recap

[Powerpoint 1-Intro]

Last week, in Hosea chapter 5, we finished up where God had withdrawn from His unfaithful people, Israel.

God had withdrawn from them, so that they would come to their senses

And so that they would - as it says in chapter 5 - verse 16

*In their misery they will earnestly seek me*

So this week, in chapter 6, we unpack what God means by

"earnestly seek me"

And we find out what God wants...

And it's all about being sincere

So we'd better define sincere

[Powerpoint 2-Sincere definition]

Sincere means

*Free from pretence or deceit, proceeding from genuine feelings*

*A person saying what they genuinely feel or believe – not dishonest or hypocritical*

### **Sincere Repentance (Hosea 6:1-3)**

So first off - God wants sincere repentance...

What is repentance?

**[Powerpoint 3-Repentance]**

*To turn from sin [breaking God's rules] and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life - and to feel sorrow and regret for that sin*

Look at verses 1 to 3

**[Powerpoint 4-Sincere Repentance]**

Look at Israel's motives for returning to God

*He has torn us to pieces (v1)*

*He has injured us (v1)*

Is that a good reason for returning to God - because they are suffering?

And they have another motive for returning to God

*He will heal us (v1)*

*He will bind up our wounds (v1)*

*He will revive us (v2)*

*He will restore us (v2)*

*And we may live in His presence (v2)*

*If we acknowledge Him - He will appear to us (v3)*

These are all good reasons for returning to God - but notice they about all the benefits they get by returning to God - healing, revival and restoration, and life! Is that sincere repentance though?

American evangelist and writer - Dwight Moody - gives this example:

*There's a story of a man who wanted to become a Christian*

*He approached a friend about this*

*They talked about the man's life and he admitted that he had a problem with stealing*

*The friend asked - "Do you take your boss' money?"*

*The man admitted "Yes I do"*

*"How much have you stolen" - the friend asked*

*"Oh about \$1500 or so - I'm not sure - I don't keep a record" - the man replied*

*The friend said "Now - I don't believe in rushing with these things. How about you don't steal more than \$1000 this year, and next year no more than \$500, and in the course of a few years, you won't steal anymore! If your boss catches you - just tell him you are being converted and eventually you won't be stealing anymore!"*

(pause)

That's not repentance!

God want us to sincerely repent - it's all or nothing

Is there something in our life - we need to repent of - something that we are "gradually" repenting of - that's not what God wants!

(pause)

Repentance is a complete U-turn - a complete change of direction - turning from walking away from God - and turning towards walking with God and following His rules for your life

And part of that U-turn is genuinely saying sorry

Did you notice that the Israelites didn't say sorry to God?

They just came back to God because they were in trouble?

God wants sincere repentance

(pause)

And did you notice they didn't come back to God because they love Him and miss Him?

What about returning to God because they love Him?

Which is our next point...

### **Sincere Love (Hosea 6:4-5)**

God wants sincere love...

Look at verses 4 and 5

**[Powerpoint 5-Sincere Love]**

God is disappointed in Ephraim and Judah's [Both kingdoms] love!

Their love is temporary

Like the morning mist and early dew - that soon disappears (v4)

God wants love that is sincere!

*There's the story of a man who attended a Country Show*

*Where there was a Grand-Champion Lamb - owned by a little girl*

*This champion lamb was up for auction*

*As the bids came in for the champion lamb*

*The little girl began to cry*

*As the bids got higher and higher - the girl cried more and more*

*Eventually the lamb was sold for \$3000*

*The businessman who bought the lamb - announced he was donating the lamb back to the poor little girl - who loved this lamb so much*

*All the crowd applauded!*

*Months later, it so happen, the man who had attended the show and witnessed this amazing event - happened to be a judge at a statewide essay competition and he came across an essay from a girl who told about her grand-champion lamb being auctioned*

*The little girl wrote: "The prices began to get so high during the bidding - I cried with happiness. I never dreamed the man who bought the lamb would return it to me. When I got home, Daddy barbecued the lamb and we had roast lamb - it was delicious"*

*(pause)*

*God doesn't want love like that*

*God wants sincere love*

*So He uses the words of people like Prophet Hosea - and other prophets in the Bible - see v5 - to cut us to pieces - not literally - but His words penetrate our*

hearts and minds - and convict us - and lead us to make choices to follow God and His rule for us - but only if we bother to pick up the Bible...

The same evangelist, Dwight Moody, which mentioned earlier, had this saying:

*The Bible will keep you from sin - or sin will keep you from the Bible!*

### **Sincere Mercy (Hosea 6:6a and Hosea 6:2)**

Along with sincere repentance and sincere love, God wants sincere mercy

Look at verse 6a

[Powerpoint 6-Sincere Mercy]

God says - "I desire mercy - not sacrifice"

What does God mean by "I desire mercy - not sacrifice"?

Well - our NT passage from Matthew 12 can help us with that - because Jesus quotes this verse 6 - from Hosea chapter 6

Please turn to Matthew 12 - verses 1 to 8 - briefly

The gist of the story in Matthew 12 is that:

Jesus and his disciples are walking through some grain fields and they are hungry and so they pick some heads of grain and eat them - which they are entitled to do.

But - the religious fanatics - the Pharisees - pull Jesus up for letting his disciples do this on the Sabbath Day

The Sabbath Day is supposed to be a day of rest - that is God's rule - so that means no working

The Pharisees see picking a few heads of grain as working!

Jesus' reply is basically that the welfare of people is more important than you're pedantic rules - Pharisees!

It's much more compassionate and merciful to feed someone who's hungry on the Sabbath - than to watch them go hungry because you dare not work - by picking them some grain or some fruit or even cooking them a meal

I wonder if we are guilty of following the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law

Showing someone kindness and mercy - trumps being legalistic and pedantic about the rules

If someone comes to us this morning after church - and they need food

Do we say - sorry - it's Sunday - can't help you - it's my rest day - come back tomorrow?

If someone's car gets a flat battery on Sunday - do we say sorry - can't jump start your car until tomorrow - I'm resting!

If I'm walking to the prayer meeting on Thursday morning and someone stops me for help or advice - do I say, sorry I'm off to a prayer meeting, I can't help you?

Is that what God wants?

(pause)

The people of Israel had made their worship of God - a ritual -

Yes it was God who asked them to bring sacrifices

But when they brought sacrifices to God - and had their sin covered over - nothing was changing for them on the inside

On the inside they weren't sorry - they weren't kind or compassionate or loving  
or merciful

But they brought their sacrifices along day after day - week after week - for the  
High Priest to cover over their sins

Meanwhile they carried on their lives - without sincere repentance - without  
sincere love - and without sincere mercy for their fellow human beings

It was all just lip service to God

I wonder if our worship is like that

We come to church on Sunday and tick the box - that says - Yep - attended  
church on Sunday - Tick!

Now let's forget about God and other people for the rest of the week - and I'll be  
back and tick the box next Sunday!

Meanwhile - during the week we come across half a dozen people we could have  
helped - but we go - nope - it's my time - I need some time for me - they'll have to  
find someone else to help

The apostle James says our faith without good works - in other words our faith  
without sincere mercy - is dead (James 2:14-26)

(pause)

Remember mercy is what God shows us

Mercy is not punishing us as our sins deserve

God didn't write us off as hopeless sinners

He gave us a way out of our sin

We see a glimpse of that mercy in Hosea 6 verse 2

After two days he will revive us;  
 on the third day he will restore us,  
 that we may live in his presence.

You see this verse points to what Jesus does for us

He revive us and restores us

His death on the cross - revives us from our life of sin

And restores our relationship with God - by offering forgiveness of our sins

And as this verse says on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day

He restore us to live in God's presence

We don't only have the opportunity to live in God's presence - forgiven right now

But we also have the opportunity of living in His presence forever - because when

Jesus rose to life on that 3<sup>rd</sup> day - it meant we can also be raised to life - leading  
 to eternal life

Now that's God's mercy!

We didn't deserve or earn it!

But God showed us mercy!

What God wants is for us to show that same sincere mercy to others

Are we doing that?

(pause)

### **Sincere Acknowledgement of God (Hosea 6:6b-10)**

So sacrifices and ritual burnt offerings - and ritual worship - without sincerely  
 repenting, sincerely loving and sincerely showing mercy - is basically fake

Now God adds one further ingredient that goes hand in hand with all of this

There has to be a sincere acknowledgment of God

[Powerpoint 7-Sincere Acknowledgment of God]

We find that in verses 6b to 11

God doesn't want ritual burnt offerings (v6b)

Especially if the people are still breaking the covenant of Adam (v7)

The covenant (or agreement) God made with Adam - was for Adam to keep the rule God had given them

God has given the people of Israel rules to follow - the 10 commandments -

And here in verses 7 to 10

They are breaking them all

They've been unfaithful to Him (v7) - just like Gomer has been unfaithful to Hosea

They're are cities like Gilead - full of evil - and bloodshed (v8)

There are robbers in verse 9 - even the priests are joining in and murdering people and carrying out wicked schemes

And they've given themselves over to literal and spiritual prostitution (v10)

So much for their words in verse 1

"Come let us return to the Lord..."

It's all just a farce isn't it?

They haven't changed

They are being hypocrites - saying one thing and doing the opposite!

How does that compare to us this morning

Do we say to ourselves or our family?

Come let us return to the Lord - let's go to church today and worship God

Meanwhile in our hearts - we actually have a few people we really dislike - even hate

Meanwhile we have a few things in our hearts - we really need to confess and sincerely repent of

Meanwhile in our hearts - we know - we haven't devoted any time to God this week - we've been too busy - our quiet times have got out the window

Meanwhile in our hearts - we know - there were opportunities God gave us to help someone - but we ignored that - and kept going about our very important business!

How much are we like the Israelites?

We talk the talk - but we don't walk the walk?

(pause)

*Someone once wrote to Buckingham Palace to ask "What is the correct procedure when one is invited to dinner at Buckingham Place but one has a prior engagement"*

*The reply they received was: "An invitation to dine at Buckingham Palace is a command, and it automatically cancels any other engagement"*

God commands us to:

Sincere repentance

Sincere love

Sincere mercy

And sincere acknowledgement

There's NOTHING more important than Him

His invite to fellowship with Him cancels everything else!

That's what the Israelites didn't get

(pause)

### **Conclusion (Hosea 6:11a)**

To finish off then - this morning

Verse 11a of Hosea 6

### **[Powerpoint 8-Conclusion]**

Mentions that even Judah (the Southern Kingdom) watching what is happening to their northern neighbours - Israel

Even for Judah there is a harvest appointed

What might this harvest be?

Well to understand that - we need to understand a parable Jesus tells in Matthew 13:24-30 [Explained in Matthew 13:36-43]

Basically there are two types of seeds - that represent two types of people

Good seed - are the people who are right with God because they have followed

Jesus and followed God's commandments - they've basically been sincere in

repentance, love, mercy and acknowledging God

And then there's the bad seed that produces weeds

The two types of seeds grow together in the field side by side

Just like the people who are right with God and the people who not right with God

live side by side together in this world

Sooner or later there will be harvest of the field - in other words a harvest for the world - and God will harvest the people right with God and the people not right with God - the good seed and the weeds

Let's just say - no one wants to be one of the weeds

Matthew 13:42 tells us what God's angels will do with the weeds - the people not right with God...

They [the angels] will throw them [the weeds - the people not right with God] into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

All of us need to make sure we are right with God

That's what God wants (2 Peter 3:9)

Let's pray...