

May 31st Sunday
Hosea: God's pursuit of an unfaithful people...
Hosea 14:1-9

HIS WORD...

Hear and listen to HIS CALL...

What is it? RETURN and REPENT

Why the call? Our sin

1 Return O Israel, to the Lord your God, for your sin has been your downfall!

Step one: Here God's call. It never ends he is calling for all of us to return and come closer to him that is what he always wanted.

Step two to returning: Take ownership of why you fell hard. YOUR SIN IS THE ISSUE it always will be!

It was your sin that led to your downfall you stumbled and fell hard...

Be brutally honest and admit it was your sin...

2 Return to the Lord and repent!

OUR CONFESSION...

Spoken to HIM...

Say to him: "Completely forgive my iniquity; accept our penitential prayer, that we may offer the praise of our lips as sacrificial bulls.

Step three: Returning to God will always involve repentance.

Here are three things we should speak to God...14:2

1. Completely forgive.
2. Accept my humble prayer of repentance
3. Praises of our lips

Here is the multi-layer confession/promise that they make...14:3

1. Assyria will not save us.
2. We will not ride warhorses.
3. No more will we say 'our gods' to what we made with our own hands.
4. Man's resources and abilities will never meet our deepest and eternal needs.
5. We understand and believe you are the only one who can.

3 Assyria cannot save us; we will not ride warhorses. We will never again say, 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made. For only you will show compassion to Orphan Israel!"

HIS WORD...

God speaks: Words of healing and love...

4 "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger will turn away from them.

Three 'I will' statements...

I WILL HEAL...

They needed a healing, being wayward or rebellious was a disease that only God could heal, it was a sickness that would lead to death, they were living that death and God says there was a healing a new life that can happen if they turn from their sin and return to him.

What is waywardness? Turning away, 'I will heal their turning away from me...'

I WILL LOVE...

The Hebrew word for freely is used most often for the freewill offering, a sacrifice given without compulsion or requirement. It appears in Psalms 68:9 as the word abundant...

O God, you cause abundant showers to fall on your chosen people. When they are tired, you sustain them.

Showers/rain in abundance freely, to a land and people that badly needed to be replenished!
Dominican Republic and a 2:00am shower!

HIS WORD...

God speaks: I have the ability I also have the desire!

I will be life-giving moisture (rain/dew) that will cause the following...

Who will be? I (God) will be...

1. Growth
2. Depth and stability
3. Abundance
4. Protection
5. Community
6. His Glory

5 I will be like dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily, he will send down his roots like a cedar of Lebanon. 6 His young shoots will grow; his splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. 7 People will reside again in his shade; they will plant and harvest grain in abundance. They will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the wine of Lebanon.

When we surrender, submit, believe, in who God is and what He can do, we will be the people that he has created and designed us to be and experience what he has for us.

The people of Israel knew about Lebanon, there was abundance there. So here are people who are being called to turn from the wilderness and desolation to hear their loving God will send what they truly need for life to flourish. They will understand that all good gifts come from God who heals and loves and when you have lived in a desert that is dry and hot and empty and filled with emptiness the promise of a well-watered, shaded, abundant harvest should be so inviting.

Is there a way we can know, really know that we have heard and believed the good news of the abundant life? There is evidence! There is a spill-over of acts of love freely given and returned. Remember Israel was filled with injustice, disputing, selfishness, stubbornness, as they refused to repent and they moved farther away from God. However when we hear his call and respond there is evidence.

Caring

Speaking and acting against injustice

Acts of kindness

Sharing and showing the gospel

'People don't care what you know until they know that you care...'

HIS WORD...

God speaks: I want you to always remember...

Who you are

No more idols...

Some more I wills...

I will answer

I will care

I cause your fruitfulness.

O Ephraim...

You are called to fruitful

You are called to be wise

8 O Ephraim, I do not want to have anything to do with idols anymore! I will answer him and care for him. I am like a luxuriant cypress tree; your fruitfulness comes from me!

9 Who is wise? Let him discern these things! Who is discerning? Let him understand them! For the ways of the Lord are right: the godly walk in them, but in them the rebellious stumble.

We need to hear these words of God. God is telling Ephraim who he is and how we can live in his presence. Why we were created and what he has for us to be part of. He does this knowing there are many other false voices trying to lead us down the wrong roads.

Forgetting who we are will take us always in the wrong direction...

You are my son....

Tell the story of the scene from the movie 'Blood Diamond'...

Applications and discussion questions:

1. Why is it so hard for us to admit that we have broken a promise?
2. When it comes to keeping our promises to God why is it so important to remember who we are and why we were created?
3. What does it mean to confess to one another? Go ahead and try to unpack what that word means?
4. In the message there were a number of statements where God said 'I will'. Which one means the most to you and why?
5. In the New Testament it says that we are 'in Christ' what does that mean?
6. If we are 'in Christ' what does that look like as we relate to others?
7. Looking at your life can you see evidence that you truly believe that Jesus has given you the abundant life? Share with us how you can see that...