

Orphan Sunday 2016

Hosea 14

Context: the whole book of Hosea is about returning

- Hosea pursues Gomer, bringing her back to him
- God pursues Israel, bringing her back to Him

Returning to God isn't returning for retribution but for restoration

- The punishment is being away from Him
 - We have stumbled because of our iniquity (v.1)
 - We have trusted in Assyria to save (v.3) – political candidates, financial security, military might
 - We have bowed before the work of our own hands (v.3)
 - Monuments come in all shapes and sizes – buildings named after me, companies I lead, social media posts that get likes
- Away from Him = separation, alienation, distance in every way

Best part – God won't settle for this but pursues us with passion and determination

What's His plan?

- Not religion, self-effort, earning our way back
- Our offense is infinite – so no balancing the scales or tipping them in our favor

His Plan:

- Confession of Sin – take His perspective
- Sacrifice for Sin – Jesus, not bulls
- Commitment to Him – whole-hearted

Turns to orphans – but why? Because we give what we have been given

- In evangelism, we invite people into what we were invited into
- In finances, we are blessed to be a blessing
- In orphan ministry, we were the orphans who found mercy so we find orphans to give mercy
- Long before the blessings we would love to have (v.4-9), mercy for the orphans

Ephesians 2.8-10

Church Application:

- Participate in Bolivia – trips and child sponsorship
- Adopt or Foster
- The need – 18M in the world, 13,238 in Texas waiting to be adopted (with 27,505 churches in Texas)

Questions for Discussion:

1. How many families can you name who are involved in foster care or adoption? How close were you to their stories / journeys?
2. Read the following passages: Ephesians 1.3-6, Romans 8.14-17, Galatians 4.4-7. How do these passages correlate? How do they emphasize the Gospel (and adoption as a picture of the Gospel)?
3. Read Psalm 68.5-6, James 1.27, and Isaiah 1.12-17. What emphasis does God put on caring for the orphans? How does it reflect our relationship with Him? How does it affect our relationship to Him?
4. Name one tangible step you can take to exhibit and act in advocacy for orphans.