

**2016: Week 30**Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup> 2016*"Avoiding the Drift"***Hosea 13:4-6**

<sup>4</sup>Yet I have been the LORD your God since the land of Egypt; and you were not to know any God except Me, for there is no savior besides Me. <sup>5</sup>I cared for you in the wilderness, in the land of drought. <sup>6</sup>As they had their pasture, they became satisfied, and being satisfied, their heart became proud; **therefore they forgot Me.**" (NASB)

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On Sunday Johnnie preached from the Book of Hosea, reminding us of the importance of keeping our hearts close to the Lord. Even as those who have gratefully trusted in Christ and what He accomplished at the cross, we are very capable of drifting apart from the Lord when we become overly influenced by our culture and our circumstances. Much like Israel in the Old Testament, the believer today is given a unique and privileged relationship with the Lord. God chose us to be *His own!* Let's dig into Hosea's message this week and remind ourselves of the incredible faithfulness of God. Let us remain closely connected to the Lord, so that we avoid drifting further and further away from Him.

**1. READ Hosea 1:1-2 and Hosea 3:1**

- What was God's purpose in assigning Hosea this specific task?
- What do you think Hosea learned about the Lord throughout this process?
- Hosea's call to be faithful to his unfaithful wife was not just for a short season— it was for a lifetime. As a result, his ministry of obeying the Lord's call to love Gomer and proclaim judgment against Israel probably encompassed decades of years. Hosea's witness for the Lord was powerful from the beginning, but his ministry probably grew in significance and influence because of the extended duration of his faithfulness and obedience. How might Hosea's example motivate you to be faithful in embracing a difficult calling the Lord has given you?

**2. READ Hosea 4:1-8, 12-14**

- What were some of the reasons that Israel drifted away from the Lord?
- At this time in Israel's history, Israel was living in great prosperity and comfort. God had blessed the people in spite of their abandoning exclusive worship of Him. In 931 B.C. the northern kingdom abandoned the house of David to follow Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. This decision immediately caused those in the northern kingdom to become immersed in pagan idolatry. Unfortunately, over the next 200 years (up to the time of Hosea's prophesies), Israel became even more influenced by their pagan culture. One friend summarized Israel's era from Jeroboam to Hosea with the following words: "Israel practiced idolatry, and they 'improved' with practice." Israel's only "improvement" was that they became better at sinning— being more immersed into idolatry and further forgetting about the faithfulness of God. The people forgot the Word of God, they abandoned exclusive worship of God, they became enslaved by their many possessions, and they gradually forgot God.

How do you forget God?

What can you do better to prevent yourself from drifting apart from the Lord.

How has God been faithful to you?

**FAMILY PRAYER:** Thank the Lord for being faithful to you, even when you haven't been faithful to Him.