



Midtown Messenger

Volume 3

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Issue 51

Basic Facts from ... HOSEA

By: Dave Rogers

The very last of God's prophets to speak to the apostate northern kingdom of Israel, Hosea is sometimes called the "death-bed prophet of Israel." As the ten idolatrous northern tribes neared their rendezvous with Divine punishment at the hands of king Sennacherib and his Assyrian Empire, Hosea warned of the destruction coming upon them because of their faithlessness. His message was vividly illustrated by the behavior of his own wife – Gomer was as shamelessly unfaithful to him as Israel had been toward God. Hosea's message of suffering and punishment emphasizes that God's love for His people is an exclusive relationship. Just as there should have been no one other than Hosea in Gomer's affection, Israel should have loved no god other than the Lord.

The names of Gomer's three children (Hosea 1:3- 9) are significant because the meanings of these names – Jezreel, Loruhamah, and Loammi – describe how Israel had progressed away from fellowship with her God. First, God promises punishment for their sinfulness (vs. 4); next, He warns them that He will show no mercy in executing His judgement against them. This is a sharp contrast to their kinspeople in Judah (vv. 6-7). Finally, He disowns/divorces them entirely because of their persistent wickedness (vs. 9). Even in

this harsh judgement, however, the Holy Spirit inspired Hosea to hold out the hope of restoration along with Judah, through the Christ (vv. 10-11).

As God uses the agony of Hosea's betrayal by Gomer to illustrate how Israel had betrayed Him (ch. 2), He also points toward their only hope (vv. 14-15) – the symbolism of the Valley of Achor. This is a reference to Joshua 7, and the sin of Achan (theft) at the conquest of Jericho. In "cleansing" the nation of Achan's wicked influence, Joshua and the people had restored their relationship with God. Here, Hosea is emphasizing to Israel that the key to restoring their relationship with God is for them also to "get sin out of the camp!" There's no way we can expect to enjoy Heaven's blessings, and a healthy relationship with God, so long as we tolerate or encourage sin among His people.

The terrible sentence of Hosea 4:6 should serve as a permanent indictment of every lazy bible student in all time; "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Ignorance of God and His will is THE fastest, most certain method of committing spiritual "suicide" – and most people in our world are doing precisely that! Instead of focusing only on the memorable opening words of this verse, however, Christians ought to carefully and sober-

ly meditate about the consequences that Hosea goes on to say will result from such ignorance! As a parallel to Jesus' words in Matthew 7:23, it should stop every one of us "dead in our tracks" to think that God might say to any of us, "I reject you... I will also forget your children."

Chapter 4:4-6 provides a sharp commentary on the kind of "commitment" too many Christians are comfortable offering to God; "Ephraim's" love for God is said to be like morning dew, which quickly evaporates in the sunshine ("Ephraim" is national Israel). Verse 6 makes the point that what God wants from His people is consistency, steadfast commitment and familiarity with His will (knowledge), rather than spasmodic religious "gestures" (offerings) that quickly fade from memory.

Hosea 10:12 makes the plain and sharp point that having a good relationship with God, and enjoying His blessings is only one half of a two-way street. We must plant righteousness in order to harvest His love, and we cannot simply "coast" through this life if we want Him to bless us. We must take the initiative to turn the unproductive parts of our lives into useful "fields" in which He can plant righteousness (i.e., break up our own "fallow" ground).

One final thought to glean from Hosea's message echoes deafeningly in chapter 13:4- "I am the Lord your God... and besides me there is no savior" (emphasis mine, DR).

Consumed by the Lord

The apostle Paul's letters are literally packed with references to the Lord. In almost every sentence (or at least every other) you'll find some mention of God, Christ, Jesus, Lord, etc.

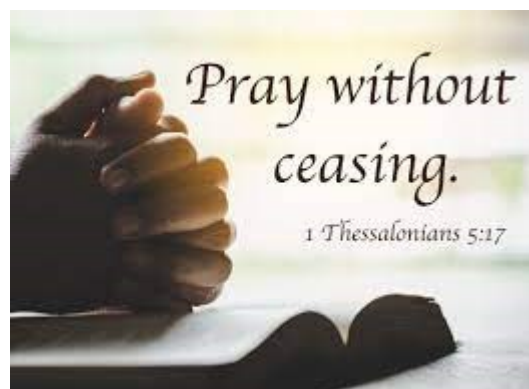
This emphasis reveals a unique perspective that Paul possessed. The Lord literally permeated and dominated all his thoughts. If a problem arose, he thought of the Lord. As he searched for solutions, he thought of the Lord. As he thought of the good things in his life, he thought of the Lord. As he thought of the positive things in the lives of others (as in this verse), he thought of the Lord.

What did this perspective do for him? First of all, it made him more thankful. He never took credit for himself. His mind was so full of the Lord, there simply was no room for self.

Second, it made him more positive. No matter how bad things looked (for himself or for others) thoughts of the Lord kept him from despair.

Finally, it made him more focused. Selfish concerns were kept at bay because all of his goals in life found their end in Christ.

-Selected-



PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of December 20, 2020

****subject to change****

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Fred Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Communion: James Cammock
Offering: Clifton Rutherford

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Lupe Escojido
A.M. Closing: Kirk FitzSimmons
P. M. Opening: Bryant Siegel
P. M. Closing: Don Lynn

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Kevin Sheeran
Sun. P.M.: Rick Bass
Wed. P.M.: Doug Jobs

Ushers: Allen Clifton

Greeters: Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devo: Kevin Sheeran

Open/Close Building: Dolans/Burleson

To Our Visitors: We welcome you to our service. Perhaps this is the first time you have visited us. It is our desire to have you return often and give us a chance to become better acquainted with you. You will find visitor cards on the back of the pew in front of you. Please fill one out.

**Sermons are available on our website
www.midtowncoc.org under Resources.**

**MidTown's Bible Classes and Worship services
can be viewed livestream on YouTube. Search
MidTown church of Christ Victoria.**

Please check the 2021 working copy of the Pocket Directory in the foyer. Make any corrections and if everything is correct, put a check mark by your family name. Thank you!

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Millie Jamison and the Morales family in the passing of our dear brother Bennie Jamison last week. Roy and Marguerite Arnot who are at home with COVID. Allen Clifton, who's brother Randy passed away last week. Letty Randle who is at home with COVID. Luann Rogers, former member of Midtown, who is in the hospital in Georgia with COVID.

Happy Birthday: Kirk FitzSimmons (20); Kasi Jobs (21); Leta Reeves (22); Athena Scherffius (23); Kelson Jacobs (28)

Upcoming Events:

Jan. 3, 2021: Men's Meeting @3pm

Feb. 13, 2021: Ladies' Day hosted by Midtown.

Janet Morales will be taking family pictures for our Bulletin Board on January 3rd & 10th, 2021.

*****FRIENDLY REMINDER TO CONTINUE
PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING*****

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Ken and Sandra Marie
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Dee Gilpatrick
Faye Henderson
Charlie Mabe
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius

Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class:	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship:	10:00 AM
Sunday Evening Worship:	5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Class:	7:00 PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of December 13, 2020

A.M. Bible Class.....	22
A.M. Worship.....	30
Sunday Evening Worship.....	NA
Wednesday Bible Class.....	20

Offering : December 13, 2020.....\$1,405.65

Reading for this week:

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

1 Timothy 1:15

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - Anthony Scherffius

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MidTown Church of Christ

5901 N. Main

Victoria, TX 77904

(361) 573-0030

midtowncoc2017@gmail.com

