January 26, 2014 Sermon Application handout
"Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge"
Hosea 4

I. Introduction

1. Before you begin, spend some time in prayer. Ask God to help you to stand firm and live for Christ. Ask God to help you this day to be Salt and Light in the world. Finally, out of compassion for your country, pray earnestly for more laborers to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. Read through Hosea Chapters 1-3. Based on what you have learned so far these last few weeks, what are some major themes? What principles were you able to glean from the last few lessons in Hosea? What did you change in your own life based on these lessons for the glory of God?

3. Read Hosea 4 and make some general observations. What was the Lord accusing Israel of? What are the people being destroyed for? What had they forgotten and rejected? What did the people cherish more than the Lord? What has Israel joined itself to? How did the Lord counsel Judah at the end? What questions do you have about this chapter?

II. Israel's S_____

4. According to Hosea 4:1-3, why did the Lord have a controversy with Israel? What had they broken (see Ex. 24:3, 7)? Who suffered as a result?

5. How is Israel's sin described in verses 7-13? Was Israel getting better or worse (see v. 14)? What does this tell you about sin if it's not dealt with? Stop and think for a moment about the last time you sinned. What was feeding it? What were your thoughts behind the sin you engaged in? As you reflect, how were you viewing God in that moment?

6. The only way sin is gotten rid of is to confess it and repent of it. Stop and read Psalm 51, then go to prayer and confess your sin to the Lord. If you have offended and hurt others, make it a point to go to them today, confess your sin and ask for their forgiveness. Ask the Lord to help you to walk in the Spirit this day.

III. The S_____ of Israel's Sin

7. Survey the following verses and discern what was at the root of Israel's sin (emphasis added):

   - My people are destroyed for their lack of k_____ (v.6).
   - My people have f_____ the Lord and cherished_____, _____, and _____ which take away the _____ (v. 10).
   - My people have inquired of a piece of _____ and their _____ staff gives them oracles (12).
   - My people (Ephraim) are joined to _____ (17).

8. Read Romans 1:18-32. What was plain? Although the people *knew* God, what did they refuse to do? What was the result of this? What did they exchange God's truth for? What did they worship instead of God their Creator? What are the consequences for these continual actions? What similarities do you see between Israel and the people Paul is addressing in Romans? List out any similarities you notice between Israel and America today.

9. As you have just read in Romans 1:24-25, all people are worshippers but this is not just isolated to ethnic Israel. Maybe you don't worship as the people in Hosea did with sticks but there are many idols in which a person can set their heart on. As Martin Luther's once wrote, "to have a god is to have something in which the heart entirely trusts…thus it is with all idolatry; for it consists not merely in erecting an image and worshiping it, but rather in the heart, which stands gaping at something else, and seeks help and consolation from creatures, saints, or devils, and neither cares for God, nor looks to Him for so much good as to believe that He is willing to help, neither believes that whatever good it experiences comes from God."[1] This is exactly what Israel struggled with in Hosea's day; they rejected God for lack of knowledge, forgot His law, and looked to other things for their help and comfort. How about you? Examine your heart diligently; does it cleave to God alone? Or does it stand gaping at something else, seeking help and consolation?

IV. The S_____ of Israel's Sin for Believers Today

10. During Hosea's time, Israel had much prosperity and was by the world's standards doing very well. Israel had a godly beginning, they were delivered from Egypt and had made a covenant with the Lord that they would "obey the words the Lord had spoken to them" (Ex. 24:7). But they had lost their *knowledge* of God and as a result spiraled downward quickly by forsaking the Lord and worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. In much the same way, America who is one of the most prosperous nations is also declining morally and it seems very blind to her situation. So it begs the question, how can America continue in financial prosperity while simultaneously turning their back on God, and even mocking Him? Do you think God is allowing America to see the error of her ways by watching morality disintegrate as she turns away from His truth? Does this realization burden your heart? Does it cause you to pray for your country? Does it cause you pray for your children?

[1] Excerpt from Martin Luther's Commentary on the First Commandments: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). http://www.bookofconcord.org/lc-3-tencommandments.php.

11. If we stopped the lesson here, one could easily walk away wanting to hide oneself away in the desert in hopes of isolating oneself from the world. While that is certainly tempting, it's not what the Lord calls the believer to do. So end your time by surveying the following verses. How must believers respond in a world that is seemingly turning their back on God? How does this give you hope? What commitments will you make this week?

    - Matthew 5:13-16
    - Matthew 28:16-20
    - Romans 12:1-3; 9-21
    - 1 Thessalonians 5:17
    - Titus 3:1-8
    - James 1:22-26

RESOURCES

Specific Resources for Hosea
Hosea by Derek Kidner
Hosea: the Heart and Holiness of God by G. Campbell Morgan
With Bands of Love by David Allan Hubbard

General Resources for the Minor Prophets
The Minor Prophets by James Montgomery Boice
The Minor Prophets by Charles Feinberg
The Prophets of Israel by Leon Wood
Major Points from the Minor Prophets by John Blanchard
A Survey of Old Testament Introduction by Gleason Archer
Interpreting the Minor Prophets by Robert Chisholm Jr
The Ultimate Priority on Worship by John MacArthur
Knowing God by J.I. Packer