February 9, 2014 Sermon Application handout
"God's Word Pictures"
Hosea 6:7-7:16

I. Introduction

1. Before you begin, spend some time in prayer. Thank the Lord that He does far more abundantly beyond all that you ask and think, according to the power that is at work in you. Ask God to help you to look to Him for your help, your strength, and your contentment. Ask God to help you be sensitive toward any sin that might be festering in your heart.

2. Read Hosea 7 and make some general observations. What had Israel's lack of love for God produced? Starting back to Hosea 6:7, list out all the words Hosea uses to describe their sin.

II. A Hot Oven; Sin is D_____(Hosea 7:4-7)

3. To better understand this section in Hosea, it's important to know the historical context. Read 2 Kings 15:8-14, 23-25, 30. How many kings were there after Jeroboam? How many were assassinated?

4. What word picture does God use to describe Israel's sin in Hosea 7:4-7? How is this word picture described? Who is Hosea speaking of? What is the focus?

5. How does Hosea describe what is happening to the kings prior to their assassination in 5-7? What is the king engaging in? Who is the king befriending? What finally happened to them in verse 7?

6. What's the point of using an oven as a word picture to explain this particular sin? What's driving these people (the plotters, the scoffers, and the assassins)? What do they want? When this particular sin is left smoldering, what does it finally result in?

7. What about you? Have you ever experienced a similar "heat" in your heart? Have you ever been so fixated on something that you desire that you resort to plotting, scheming, or even revenge? Have you ever wanted something so bad, that you were willing to sin to get it? Read 1 John 2:15-17; what specifically drove that behavior? Were these desires from God the Father? When you chose to engage in this kind of wickedness, who were you choosing to take your cues from? When you recognized what was going on, did you confess your sin to the Lord? Did you confess your sin to those whom you hurt as a result? Have you turned from this sin and returned back to God? If not, please take a few moments to pray and do that now.

III. A Burnt Pita: Sin is D_____(Hosea 7:8-10)

8. What is the second word picture that Hosea uses to describe Israel's sin (vv. 8-10)?

9. Who was Israel "mixing" in with? What ingredients were they adding to their life? Was it a good blend? Did it make a delicious cake (round flat bread)?

10. Was Israel left without instructions? What had the Lord instructed Israel to do before they entered into the promised-land many years before that would ensure their success (Deut 7:1-6)? So why are they now being compared to a "burnt pita?" What crucial ingredient(s) had Israel left out according to Hosea?

11. It's always so heartbreaking to read about Israel mixing in with pagan idolators while turning their backs on the Lord. But even today as a believer, one who has also been set apart by the Lord (Col 3:12) is just as easily susceptible to this sin. Survey the verses below. How are believers instructed by God to "not mix in?" List out the dangers when we follow our own recipe as described below.

    - Friendship with the world is h_____ with God (James 4:4)
    - Don't love the w_____ or anything in it (1 John 2:15).
    - Don't be misled: b_____ c_____ corrupts good morals (1 Cor. 15:33).

12. Unfortunately Israel wasn't even cognizant of the effects of their sin (v.9). What was at this root of their sin? What was it that was preventing them from seeing it or turning from it to God (v. 10)?

13. Like burnt bread which is inedible and undesirable to the person desiring to consume it, so is sin which is disgusting to the Lord (Prov. 6:16). Do you think of your sin that way? Do you see it as disgusting and nauseating to God? Do you understand what is at the root of your sin? Other than confession and repentance, what are some practical steps you can take today to keep far away from the particular sin(s) you struggle with?

IV. A Silly Dove: Sin is D_____ (Hosea 7:11-14)

14. What is the third word picture given in vv. 11-12? What had they become like? Why is Hosea using this word picture (See 2 Kings 15:19-20, 29; 1:4-6)? Who had Israel put all their hope in—God or man (Hos 7:7)? What were the consequences for Israel (v. 12)?

15. Sin is dumb, isn't it? Especially when you think about what people will do or what they are willing to give up to sin—and yet they still do it. Write out an example from your own life where you know this to be true. Did that choice bring lasting happiness, help, or hope to the person(s) involved?

16. Where does true hope and help come from (Psalm 121)? So when believers choose to engage in sin, what are they ultimately saying in their heart that is similar to what Israel said in theirs (Hos. 7:7)?

IV. A Faulty Bow: Sin is D_____(Hosea 7:13-16)

17. What is the last picture we are given in Hosea 7:13-16? What does this cause God to declare?

18. How does God see Israel's sin? Would you say it is intensely personal to Him or just some abstract concept? What would you say the message is especially in light of the fact that the Lord sees Himself as a Father to Israel?

- They have s_____ from God (v. 13).
- They have r_____ against God (v. 13).
- They s_____ likes against God (v. 13).
- They do not c_____ to God (v. 14).
- They t_____ a_____ from God (v. 14).
- They d_____ evil against God (v. 15)

19. Any sin is intensely personal to our Lord. It grieves Him especially when it comes from his children. That is the point of the word pictures; God wants his children to better see sin through His eyes. Remind yourself of these images often to help motivate you to flee sin.

- The power and resolve of sin (oven).
- The disgusting nature of sin (unturned bread).
- The silliness or flightiness of sin (silly dove).
- The treacherous and deceitfulness of sin (faulty bow).

20. End your time in prayer by thinking Him for the following:
    That He is:
    - The Master Baker who can douse the oven of passion.
    - The Master Bird Trainer who can keep us from straying from Him.
    - The Master Craftsman who can shape us and mold us and make us a tool fit for the Kingdom.

    That we have been freed and forgiven:
    - Through Christ, we have been forgiven of our sin and made into a new creature.
    - In Christ, God chooses not to remember our sin.
    - That in Christ, we can because of our redeemed heart walk by His Spirit and not carry out the desires of the flesh.
    - In Christ, we have His example to follow and press on.

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