April 13, 2014 Sermon Application handout
"A Word to the Wise"
Hosea 13-14

I. Introduction

1. Before you begin, spend some time in prayer. Ask God to help you to understand that He is *all* you need. Thank Him for His Word and for those who have walked before you that were written about for your instruction so that you can learn and know more about the Lord and how to follow Him with full faith and trust.

2. Read Hosea 13-14 and make some general observations. Who is Hosea addressing in this section? What were some things they were engaged in? How did the Lord feel about their behavior? What was His overall exhortation to them?

II. A Final W_____ (Hosea 13)

3. According to Hosea 13:1-2, who is the first tribe Hosea is addressing in verse one, and what did they foster in Israel according to verse 2? How did they interact with what they worshipped? How did Hosea describe God's judgment as a result (pay close attention to the metaphors in verse 3)?

4. What did God remind this tribe of in verses 4-6? What was it about that time that God wanted them to remember in their history (See Exodus 20:1-17 to help formulate your answer)? What kind of agreement had they entered into? Did it have an end date?

5. Read Deuteronomy 5-6:1-12 and compare it with Hosea 13:5-8. What were some of the tenets of the covenant that the people entered into with the Lord? According to Hosea, had they kept their vow? How does God answer that question in vivid language according to verses 7-8?

6. When Hosea says that Israel forgot the Lord in verse 6, what he means is they forgot the Lord by showing Him no honor or gratitude; not trusting Him or depending upon Him, rebelling against His commands, giving their affections to false gods, and ignoring the prophets sent to warn them. As you contemplate this, think through times you too have sinned in this way. Although today we no longer have prophets to warn us, think of times when you ignored God's Word or rebelled against His commands. What were some of the consequences you experienced when you forgot the Lord and leaned on your own understanding? How did you remedy this situation? What were some measures you took to guard your heart against those particular sins in the future?

7. According to verses 9-11, what had Israel relied upon to provide their security and help? Was that help provided to them now?

8. Because Ephraim did not rely on the Lord, what nation would come from the east and sweep them away (see 2 Kings)? What would happen to the land that was once fruitful?

9. Does it shock you that God would treat His people in this way? Did they deserve to experience God's wrath? Was God just in His actions? Filter your answers through two of His attributes mentioned below to help you answer these questions.

   - Reflect on God's Holiness for a moment. He is "high and exalted," living on a "high and holy place." God is pure; He is separate from moral evil or sin. In fact in His Holiness, He is the law and He sets the standard. Because God is morally pure and cannot condone evil, how must He deal with sin?

   - Why did God have to send his Son to bear the punishment for sin instead of simply forgetting about it and allowing anyone into heaven? How does God think of your sins today in Christ—forgiven or unforgiven? In what way does this encourage you and motivate you to continue to walk in a manner worthy of your calling?

   - There is another attribute that is inferred in the text (cf. 2 Peter 3:9). Consider for a moment that Hosea had been warning the people of judgment for at least 30 years. Also keep in mind that Hosea was not the only prophet that was warning them. And yet God continued to give them one more warning, one more chance, one more opportunity to repent. What attribute comes to mind? How does the Lord continue to express this attribute with sinful man today? What is His hearts' desire? How does this give you hope?

III. A Final E_____(Hosea 14:1-7)

10. What final exhortation does Hosea give in verse one of chapter 14? Is this phrase familiar? What does it mean? Can you think of yet another attribute of God that is connected with what is being expressed here? I'll give you a hint: It is undeserved and unearned and yet, "not wishing that any should perish but for all to come to repentance"…God extends it to Israel anyway.

11. As you consider Hosea crying out to his fellow countrymen to "Return to the Lord!" To "flee from their sin" and "trust in God!" In what ways are you persistent with people in your own life who need to hear the same message? List out three people below that you need to continue to share the gospel with. Pray and commit before the Lord that you will not give up on them. Remind yourself that the power is in the Word.

12. What is Hosea giving Israel an example of in verses 2-3? What is he trying to illustrate to them? Can you glean at least 4 characteristics of what he is talking about? A R_____ heart:

    - Confesses that they are a s_____(v. 2; Ps. 51:3-4)
    - Recognizes that you need f_____(v. 2; Ps. 51:1-2)
    - Chooses to Trust in G _____alone (v. 2-3; Isa 31:1)
    - Reckons to walk in h_____(v. 3; Lk 18:9-14; Eph. 4:1)

13. Read Hosea 14:4-7 carefully. If Israel comes to God with a genuine broken and contrite heart; recognizes the greatness of their sin, and their need for forgiveness; what does God promise to do to them (cf. 1:10-11; 2:14-23; 3:5 and 11:8-11; Jeremiah 31; Romans 11)? What does this mean for Israel?

III. A Final W_____ (Hosea 14:8-9)

14. What is God's final word to Israel? Do you see the primary theme in Hosea's book? What was it that Israel just didn't seem to understand? Consider the points below and respond to each one.
    - What were the things people looked to for meaning, hope, joy, and peace?

    - What were the things the people looked to for comfort?

15. Reread verses 8-9. List out all of the "I am" statements. What is God saying to Israel that they needed to understand about Him?

16. Jesus echoed these same words over and over again. Read each verse below. What does Jesus say about Himself? How does this compare to the idols that others turn to for their own peace, joy, hope, and comfort? Which option truly satisfies and brings fullness of joy? Who is all that you need?

    - John 4:13
    - John 6:35
    - John 11:25
    - Matt 11:28

17. How does Hosea encourage the original audience (Judah) to consider these words that He has spoken and written? Why do you think that was? How does Jesus reiterate this same message to us today in Matthew 7:24-27? How about Jesus' brother in James 1:21?

"The longer a redeemed sinner lives — the more he will want to know Christ. The brighter the revelation of Christ to his soul — the blacker *SELF* will be in his apprehension. The more his heart is warmed with a sense of the love of his God — the more he will mourn because of his coldness and deadness. This is a *paradox* which no hypocrite or mere professor can understand. As the child of God grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and . . .sees more of His beauty, enjoys more of His bounty, and feels more of His blessedness — the more he is brought into a true conception of what he is in himself — as a wretched, ruined, undeserving, and Hell-deserving sinner! Yet he discovers something else — a heart, yearning, longing, panting and desiring after communion with a glorious God, and fellowship with a precious Christ! As he grows in grace, ***Christ* is exalted — and *Self* is abased!**" (Thomas Bradbury)

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