

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church

Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz

March 30, 2014 Lent 4 Series A.

Hosea 5:15-6:3



¹⁵ Then I will return to my lair until they have borne their guilt and seek my face – in their misery they will earnestly seek me.”

Israel Unrepentant

6.1 “Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. ² After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. ³ Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

There is a 16 year old boy who has very rich parents – not that there’s anything wrong with that. But they are really rich. This 16 year old young man – and some of his friends can be seen on a store surveillance video stealing 2 cases of beer – which they drank. Then this young man with 7 passengers in his Ford F-350 truck went speeding. He was 3 times the legal limit – drunk 3 times over – when he crashed into 4 pedestrians – and killed them all! A youth minister died, 2 young ladies – and one of these ladies mom died. The young man who was pretty obviously guilty of at least manslaughter by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle – could have been sentenced to 20 years in prison. But – his defense attorneys – the best that money can buy – argued because this young man’s mom and dad were so rich – his childhood so colored by their money – he couldn’t be held responsible for what he had done! And the judge agreed. This young man has received 10 years’ *probation*. The first year or two he will spend in a rehab place – at a cost of just a little less than half a million \$ per year by Newport Beach, CA. I would imagine the rooms, the food and the view are pretty nice! Is he sorry? Only Jesus and he know and it’s not for us to judge. It is fair to say – the kind of repentance the LORD is looking for is an admission of guilt that says like King David said, **“I have sinned!”** It admits sin without making excuses – like I grew up with parents who argued about getting divorced. My psychologist says, “My dad doesn’t have relationships – he takes hostages and my mom taught me if it feels good I should do it!” Today the Prophet Hosea writes by inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

Repent Sincerely!

- I. Fakes don’t fool the Lord**
- II. Only the LORD works true repentance.**

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating on today is from the scroll of the prophet Hosea. The People’s Bible Commentary on Hosea, Joel and Amos was written by Prof. Eickmann – who taught Hebrew at Northwestern College. In our Bibles – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah – all the way to Malachi – the last 12 books of the Old Testament are called the Minor

Prophets. They are not less important than Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel – just considerably shorter. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were usually copied into a scroll individually. The last 12 all fit into one scroll! Hosea – memory hooks – when you think of Hosea – think of his wife Gomer. Gomer was not a lady. She sold “hugs and kisses”. She had three children while married to Hosea – although it seems pretty sure Hosea wasn’t the father. **²When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD.” ³So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.⁴Then the LORD said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. ⁵In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.” ⁶Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, “Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means “not loved”), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. ⁷Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them – not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the LORD their God, will save them.”⁸ After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. ⁹Then the LORD said, “Call him Lo-Ammi (which means “not my people”), for you are not my people, and I am not your God. ¹⁰“Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God.’ ¹¹The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.**

This is just part of the context. There is the historical context, too. The Promised Land has been torn in two – Israel to the north and Judah to the south. Wicked Jeroboam to the north – leading his people astray with worship in Dan and in Bethel – in Hebrew literally house of God – now turned into a house of wickedness and rebellion. There were calves for Baal worship and Asherah poles – fertility cult worship of the most obscene and perverted sort. In the south Solomon’s son Rehoboam rules over the dry rot and decay of sin delayed only a little by the remnant of true believers and the Temple.

Finally the LORD’s great mercy and compassion had worn thin. God’s Word says, **¹⁵Then I will return to my lair until they have borne their guilt and seek my face – in their misery they will earnestly seek me.**” Jesus does not force his forgiveness and love on anyone! He does not cram religion down our throats. If people do not want his mercy, forgiveness, compassion and love – then so be it! We do the Gospel a dis-service if we *argue* about religion – if we are pushy or rude or self-righteous or *holier than thou*. We need to watch for opportunities and create opportunities to share Jesus’ love with humility and great patience – trusting in the Holy Spirit to make the seeds we scatter take root and grow and bear fruit. We need to hear and read and study God’s Word – so we are prepared to give an answer whenever and wherever anyone asks us the reason for the hope we have!

6.1 “Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. ²After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. At first blush this doesn’t sound too bad. Come, let us return to the LORD – the Great I AM – the Holy One of Israel – return – repent – turn our lives and our nation around. He has torn us to pieces...he has injured us. Stop and think about it. This is not King David – once confronted by Nathan about his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah and denying his sin for the better part of a year. Once confronted David said, **“I have sinned!”** This is not, **“I have sinned!”** This is – that spanking hurt! The discipline from the armies of Assyria and Babylon is painful! This is, “It hurts to be

grounded...hurts to have my X-Box – my I-Pod and I-Pad taken away.” This is not, “I have sinned against my Heavenly Father. I am without excuse!” This is please don’t punish me. **Two days and he will revive us – on the third day he will restore us.** Imagine a husband who has been caught in unfaithfulness – actual adultery and says, “Hey, love bug – here’s a dozen roses – a huge box of your favorite chocolates. I will take you out for dinner and a movie – you pick the restaurant and you pick the movie. Hey – a three day weekend and we’re good! Ok?” I don’t think so. Sorry for our sin – or sorry we got caught? There is a huge difference!

How do I know the LORD was not pleased with their so called repentance? Read the next few verses! ⁴“**What can I do with you, Ephraim? (Israel to the north) What can I do with you, Judah? (God’s people to the south) Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears.** ⁵**Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets, I killed you with the words of my mouth – then my judgments go forth like the sun.** ⁶**For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.** Hosea 6:4-6 There was something seriously wrong in the ♥s and therefore the lives of God’s people. God’s Word – sharper than a two edged sword cut through all the bologna – cut through all the excuses. Hosea chapter 4 says, “**There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgement of God in the land. There is only curing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery...and bloodshed follows bloodshed.**” I pulled into the hospital parking lot – and there was a bumper sticker on a truck – that said, “Sorry I wasn’t in Church Sunday – I was busy studying witchcraft and learning how to be...” And I won’t repeat the rest! It was gross and it was anti-Bible and anti-Jesus and it was supposed to be funny! I watched and I waited for a little while – all the time wondering if this would be what Jesus was talking about when he said, “Don’t throw pearls into the pig pen!” There is disrespect for Jesus and his Word when we despise preaching and God’s Word!

⁶ **For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.** Sometimes people say all the *Church* wants is my offerings. All the Church cares about is money! That is simply not true. Right here God says **I desire mercy not sacrifice – acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.** The LORD was not worried about lamb chops – not worried about sides of beef or grain or wine or olive oil. Every sheep on every hill always and already belongs to the LORD. All the gold and silver and platinum – all the diamonds and rubies and sapphires all belong to the LORD. What Jesus is concerned about – is how we treat our neighbor. Your closest neighbor is your spouse! If you wanted to look up fruits of faith in your family would you know where to look? Where in God’s Word does it talk about husbands and wife and children? Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians 5 – instructions for Christian Households – not drywall and plumbing and electrical – but places where Jesus’ love warms *homes*. ²¹ **Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ....** The husband is supposed to be the spiritual head of his family. Our Heavenly Father has set the bar exceedingly high for Christian husbands. God’s Word says, ²⁵ **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her** ²⁶ **to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,** ²⁷ **and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.** ²⁸ **In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.** ²⁹ **After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church –** ³⁰ **for we are members of his body.** ³¹ **“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”** ³² **This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.** ³³ **However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.**

It was around Thanksgiving – 1978 – that Daniel shot George and Harvey. No one disputed the fact that Daniel – police officer, fire fighter – city supervisor – was a fitness nut and health food nut. Daniel became depressed – started eating lots and lots of junk food – shunned his wife and became very sloppy in his personal appearance. Daniel shot two people. The question before the court was – was Daniel guilty of murder – or would as one reporter called it – the “Twinkie defense” – prove that Daniel was only guilty of voluntary manslaughter – depressed on a sugar high? The “Twinkie defense” worked – diminished capacity. Again – this is not, **“I have sinned!”** This is to say I’m not completely to blame. It’s not entirely my fault. Depression made me do it! Supreme Court Justice Anton Scalia said, “I don’t want a competent lawyer – I want a lawyer who’s going to win for me!” God’s Word today wants to teach us to be truly repentant – sincerely sorry for our sins – without excuses! In faith we cry out, **“God be merciful to me a sinner!”** A heart of faith that cries out, **“What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”** Amen

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz