**BCM Bible Study: April 17/18, 2019**

**Hosea 8-10**: Our Ways and His Ways

Forgetting Your Maker:

* One theme in chapter 8 is Israel’s desire to find security outside of God. As we read, note where you notice this theme: **Read Hosea 8:1-14.**
* Where did you see the theme of finding security outside of God in these verses?
	+ Verse 4 – setting up kings who God had not chosen
		- Note: The issue here seems to be that people were usurping the throne - God’s divine appointment was not sought. In a moment, you will read about the placement of Israel’s first king and the sinful motives involved in that decision. God’s concession to their desire was to appoint a king over the people, but now, they do not even seek his appointment. Israel wants to take power into their own hands.
	+ Verse 9-10 – going to Assyria/the nations as allies
	+ Verse14 – palaces/fortified cities/strongholds
* Read these two stories related to these issues:
	+ **Read 1 Samuel 8:1-9, 19-22**
		- In what way are the people rejecting the Lord in this story?
		- What heart issue led them to reject the Lord? (notice vv. 5, 19-20)
	+ The army of Assyria, led by Sennacherib, has destroyed the northern kingdom and was on the verge of attacking Hezekiah in the south. **Read 2 Kings 19:9-19, 32-36**.
		- In what way do Hezekiah’s actions differ from the actions Hosea is describing?
* In Hosea 8:14, what is the reason that the Israelites have made this mistake?
	+ Why would losing sight of God’s role as Maker/Creator led to this problem?
* What are your strongholds? Where do you look for security and stability?
	+ In what way can these sources of security prevent you from living a life of faith and trust in God?
	+ Most sources of security are not inherently evil. Parents, a job, and even money are sources of security that can be gifts from God. What does it look like to have these things and ultimately trust God?
	+ How would resting in God’s role as Maker/Creator impact your daily life?

Righteous and Wicked Fruit

In chapters 9 and 10, God uses agricultural imagery to describe Israel’s downfall.

**Read Hosea 10:1-2**

* + What is the fruit described in these verses? (Prosperity)
	+ What effect does this prosperity have on the people? Why does prosperitytend to have this effect?
	+ When have you experienced this reality in your life?
	+ What steps can you take to combat this tendency during times of prosperity?

**Read Hosea 9:10, 15-17; 10:9-15**

* + What imagery is God using here to describe Israel when he found them? (9:10)
	+ Describe the apparent emotion behind this imagery – how did God feel about his people?
		- Is it difficult for you to believe that God delights in you? Why or why not?
	+ How does God use the same imagery to describe their downfall? (9:16)
		- Note: the imagery still involves fruit, but he is using it a bit differently here.
	+ What is the reason for this downfall? (9:17, 10:13)
	+ This theme of fruitlessness also appears throughout the New Testament.
		- **Read Galatians 5:16-26.**
			* What is the fruit that comes from righteousness?
			* How do we live such that this fruit becomes evident in our lives?
			* What does it look like to “trust in your own way”? (Hos. 10:13)
		- **Read John 15:1-8**.
			* What is the reason for not bearing fruit in this passage?
			* What does it look like to abide/remain in God and have his word abide/remain in you? How do you do this?
	+ Look again at Hosea 10:11. Israel was going her own way and began to “sow iniquity” – she began to live in sin! When we do not walk by the Spirit, abide in Christ and let his Word abide in us, we will find ourselves in a similar place. In response to Israel’s sin, the Lord puts a “yoke” on her to guide and lead her back into righteous living.
		- Many times in the OT, a yoke represents coming exile for God’s people. Jeremiah wears a yoke as a sign that exile is coming, and that is likely part of the connotation here. However, the purpose of this yoke was obedience – God wanted to restrain his bride so that she might love and obey him. Exiles was the means of accomplishing that end.
		- **Read Matthew 11:28-30**.
			* How does Jesus use the image of the yoke here?
			* How does he compare it to the yoke of the Pharisees?
			* In what way is the yoke of Jesus both constraining and easy?
	+ Fruit is the evidence of God’s saving work in our lives, but it is not the means of salvation. Rather, God desires our steadfast love, which will be expressed through obedience, which will be manifested in fruit of the Spirit. We can willingly take on this yoke of obedience knowing that it is not a burden, but the very thing that leads to life. Jesus is gentle and meek; he wants us to simply follow and obey him, trusting that his ways are good and life-giving.
		- In what ways is it difficult for you to submit to the yoke of Jesus?
		- In what way have you experienced the life-giving, easy nature of the yoke of Jesus?