**Read Hosea 11:1-7**

 Once again, we see God reminding Israel of his faithfulness, resulting in their unique identity. God claimed them as his son, giving laws so they’d stay in his will and be considered a holy nation, but they ignored the laws, participated in idol worship and stopped relying on God their father as their provider.

 What are the implications on being a son (child) of God?

 Responsibility (following His way, recognizing consequences) Relationship – (Holy Spirit, prayer) Inheritance (Eternal life)

According to Verse 3-4, when God called them out of slavery in Egypt, he became their provider and healer.

 He made life much easier for them, how?

 Manna & quail (Exd. 16:11-16), gave land (Deut. 26:9), water (Exd.17:6) What did he heal them of?

 oppression, poverty, purposelessness, hopelessness of unrighteousness

Assyria was further away from their home than Egypt, making a possible return from exile difficult. The Assyrian king was harsher and there was no familiarity of the land.

How is God’s tenderness and compassion displayed in these verses? What imagery is used to display these characteristics?

What connotation does God as Father have for you? Positive, negative, or mixed?

Read Prov. 3:11-12. How does the imagery of a father help make sense of both God’s tenderness and the coming punishment that was to come to Israel?

**Read Hosea 11:8-12**

Admah and Zeboiim were cities that were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah **Read Deut. 29:23-28**,

 Why were Admah and Zeboiim destroyed? Sound Familiar?

When God poses the questions (v.8), it is not that he is unsure of what to do, but it’s to show the severity of their sin and amount of mercy necessary. God is reminding them that other cities have been destroyed for the same actions against him, but he chooses to show mercy instead for his elected people. In the heat of the moment, God does not make decisions based on emotions like man does. What are some past decisions you have made mainly on emotion?

 How did these decisions impact you? (spiritually, emotionally, etc.)

 How can we practice responding the way God does?

In his great love and mercy, God chose not to destroy Israel; however, that does not mean they went unpunished. They were going into exile to be in oppression and poverty like they were in Egypt. He goes on to talk about the future and give hope that their story does not end there.

Verse 10 is the hope we have been waiting for:they will return to God. He uses the analogy that the Lord will “roar like a lion” **read Joel 3:16-17 and Amos 3:8**. What kind of imagery comes from comparing his roar like a lion?

One easily hears a lion’s roar, it can be heard from 5 miles away. One responds quickly, just like the dove’s constant, speedy flight. One is fearful and humbled in his presence

They will not just be called out of exile, but called back into their home which God has graciously prepared. There is a familiar verse in the NT. **Read John 14:2-7**.

 Similarly to the Israelites, what is required of us to receive this home?

**Read Hosea 12:1-6**

 Israel would have been subject to damaging high winds from the east. Feeding on the wind is an illustration of Israel’s desire to make a treaty with Assyria. Like “playing with fire,” it was senseless, dangerous, and ultimately damaging to make this treaty. They didn’t follow God’s law or acknowledge him and made arrangements with others nations out of greed and the illusion of protection. When they faced external pressure, they sought to resolve it as conveniently as possible.

 Look at 12:6. When is it hard for you to “wait” on the Lord? What do you turn to do resolve life’s tensions and pressures?

God now corrects Judah along with Israel. According to 11:12, they must have been doing some right, but God doesn’t excuse their other follies. Think about the letters to the churches in the NT. Despite all the good things they were doing, they were still corrected on the sinful behaviors. When you are doing good things, what sins are easy to overlook or justify?

 Motivation, attitude, thoughts, gossip

Jacob, their patriarch, is mentioned to hopefully help them recognize the redemption God is capable of. He mentions how Jacob struggled and contended with God, but God still radically transformed him because of God’s mercy, love and guidance. Do you know anyone with a story like Jacob’s? What is so powerful about his/her testimony?

In his faithfulness, God reminds them of his redemptive power. Keeping in mind Jacob’s story and other stories of people who struggled against God before surrendering to him, how should we interact with non-believers?

**Read Hosea 12:7-14**

 What is Israel now being accused of? How do they justify it?

 -cheating others for personal gain –oppressing others through exploiting –loving the sin

 -they have gained wealth; therefore,they do not see a problem with their sin (Matthew Henry)

We often seek to justify sin by consulting those who are either also in sin or who do not know us well enough to call us out. Which of these things are you more prone to do?

They were comfortable in their wealth. They believed their stuff could last and provide for them, but v.9 says they would return to a state of poverty and oppression like in Egypt.

 Gilead was a locale on the outskirts of Israel that was easily influenced by other nations, to which they blame their location.

Jacob fleeing and taking a wife represents God’s provision even when Jacob was on the outskirts in rural areas. God gave him a wife that was not a Canaanite (the surrounding area) in order to preserve Jacob’s lineage, which was to be done by God’s command. Even when convenience would assume he would marry a Canaanite, God is still the one who provides.

 How have you seen God provide for a friend or relative who was not a believer? How is this encouraging?

 God’s sovereignty had a hand in rescuing Israel, (plagues, Pharos, red sea, starvation, bigger nations) displaying God’s faithfulness despite knowing how Israel would fail him time and time again. Imagine what blessing Israel missed out on by not following God continuously and think of what we may be missing by ignoring God’s word and will.

 In what way have you felt prompted tonight to return to God’s will?