**Hosea 6:1-7:3**

**Let us Return to the Lord**

**Lesson 21**

1. **When did you feel closest to God this week? Was there a particular verse or lesson from this week’s study of Hosea that inspired you in some way?**
2. This chapter begins with the response of Judah and Ephraim to God’s wrath, punishment and withdrawal.

**What expectations do the people have?**

**What response do they expect from God if they return to worship YHWH? See verses 6:1-3.**

**Hoses 6:1-3 (NVSV)**

Come, let us return to the Lord;
    for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;
    he has struck down, and he will bind us up.
**2**After two days he will revive us;
    on the third day he will raise us up,
    that we may live before him.
**3**Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord;
    his appearing is as sure as the dawn;
he will come to us like the showers,
    like the spring rains that water the earth.”

1. **Reflection**: C.S. Lewis describes what he calls the “**sin of presumption**.” He believes that this happens when people are so confident in their salvation that they believe that it really does not matter what they do or how they act now, because Jesus has died for our sins.

**Do the Israelites seem to have a belief in the presumption of salvation through God? What is right or wrong with this way of thinking?**

1. **Bring your bible to class. Compare the translations of 6:6 with people in your group. How are they similar? How are they different?**
2. **What precisely is it that God requires of his people? See verse 6. What specifically does this mean?**

**Hosea 6:6 (NRSV)**

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

1. **Reflecting on verses 4- 6 again, are there times or situations when our prayers or offerings are not done out of love for God but from duty, fear, expectations, or habit? Consider those who go to church to be seen by others and not for spiritual reasons.**

**Hosea 6:4-6 (NVSV)**

Your love is like a morning cloud,
    like the dew that goes away early.
**5**Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;
    I have killed them by the words of my mouth,
    and my judgment goes forth as the light.
**6**For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
    the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

1. God recalls the evil deeds of his people in verses 7-10. **What happened on the road to the sanctuary at Shechem that was particularly offensive? What others sins does God note here in this prophecy?** (Note, Adam is the name of a city, and Shechem is the site of an ancient sanctuary of YHWH)

**Hosea 6:7-10**

But they, at Adam, violated the covenant; there they betrayed me.

**8**Gilead is a city of evildoers, tracked with blood.
**9**Like brigands lying in wait is the band of priests.
They murder on the road to Shechem, indeed they commit a monstrous crime.
**10**In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing: there is found Ephraim’s prostitution,
    Israel is defiled.

**11**For you also, Judah, a harvest has been appointed!

1. **What is meant by “harvest” in verse 11 above?**
2. **Reflect.** Most of the crimes and sins that are mentioned here are the result of the actions of priests, kings, princes and the elite of the communities**. What affect do the actions of our leaders have on the general population?**
3. **Read from the Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1868 and 1869 below. How can these illustrate the guilt of many of the persons in the community who are not leaders or priests in Hosea 6 – 7:3?**

**1868** Sin is a personal act. Moreover, we have a responsibility for the sins committed by others when *we cooperate in them*: - ***by participating directly and voluntarily in them*;**- by ordering, advising, praising, ***or approving them***; - ***by not disclosing or not hindering them*** when we have an obligation to do so;- ***by protecting evil-doers***.

**1869** Thus sin makes ***men accomplices of one another*** and causes concupiscence, violence, and injustice to reign among them. ***Sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness.*** "Structures of sin" are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute a **"social sin."**144