

“There’s Something to Think About” Ep. 4 Hosea

If you had asked me forty years ago what I wanted to do when I grew up, I probably would have given you one of two answers. Mostly likely I would have said I wanted to be a doctor of tropical medicine serving in a small hospital in southern Kenya, Africa. Or, I might have said I wanted to be an Old Testament professor specializing in the Minor Prophets.

I have long been fascinated with spiritual and cultural parallels between the people of the ancient near east and modern America, between the people of God then and the church in America now. The message of God to those ancient people, including the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, has specific relevance to our current situation. Take for example God’s message through the prophet Hosea.

In Hosea 6:6 God summarizes his desire for His people, a desire they are actively NOT fulfilling: “I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” The NIV renders these words like this, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.”

God’s desire for His people to know Him is a prominent theme in Hosea. God says that His people are perishing because of lack of knowledge, and he addresses their spiritual ignorance and its consequences at least six times in the book. But the knowledge God desires His people to have, which they apparently do not have like they need to have, is more than mere intellectual knowledge.

The knowledge that God desires of His people, then and now, is exemplified by a right relationship with Him: showing true faith, loyalty, and obedience to Him.

Acknowledging God is not just knowing God exists. It means living like you care about what you know.; that what you know matters enough to be such a priority in your life that you actively let others know what you know through your values, words, and actions.

Acknowledging God means emulating His behavior, which is characterized by love, holiness, righteousness, and justice. We can say it like this: If people know we are a Christian, but through us they do not know Christ, then He is not being rightly acknowledged in our lives.

The knowledge of God that He desires we acknowledge before the world is experiential, practical. It is that knowledge of God that includes voluntary, devoted obedience. It is the knowledge that moves us to ever increasing faithfulness.

Until next time, there’s something to think about.