

Week 49
Matthew 9-13

Theme: Examples of how we should be more like Jesus.

Conversation Starter

What action option did you choose to do after our discussion last week? What went well? What did not go well?

What questions do you have from the reading this week?

Weekly Review/Intro

The readings this week continued in the book of Matthew. In the chapters we saw Jesus perform many healings, the calling of the disciples, the telling of many parables, Jesus telling many parables, and Jesus calling out the religious elite in many circumstances. Since we have covered many of these topics throughout our studies of the other Gospels, we are going to focus on some of the teachings of Jesus that connect the Old Testament to the New Testament.

What do you think it means to show mercy to someone?

Have you ever been in a situation where you had to show mercy to someone else?

Do you think there is a limit to how much mercy we should show someone?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “mercy” as 1: “kind or forgiving treatment of someone who could be treated harshly” or 2: “kindness or help given to people who are in a very bad or desperate situation.” Both of these definitions are relevant to the Christian walk, and Jesus spoke about this idea twice while referencing Hosea 6:6 in these chapters.

What do you know about Hosea?

What significant events in history were happening during his ministry?

To give some background knowledge, Hosea was most likely written during the time when the kingdom of Israel was being broken down by the Assyrians. This was the punishment that God

had been warning the Israelites about for generations, and now judgement was finally here. Hosea's role was to point out how Israel sinned and to point them back to God.

Read Hosea 6:1-6

What is the message of verses 1-3?

What is Hosea telling the children of Israel they should strive to do?

How are these verses both a picture of judgement and mercy?

Hosea 6:1-3 is a call for the people to go back to God. These verses are a clear picture of both God's judgement and mercy because they explain that God is the one who is punishing them but he will also heal them if they turn back to him. Hosea is telling the people that they should "strive to know the Lord."

What are Hosea 6:4-6 telling us about how God feels about the people?

Based on verse 6, what does God truly want from the children of Israel?

Verses 4-6 illustrate God's frustration with his people. The rhetorical questions in verse 4 sound like the questions of a frustrated parent unsure of what to do with a misbehaving child. In the same way, God is explaining what and why he has done things towards the children of Israel. He wants them to love him rather than focus on giving sacrifices with no meaning.

Jesus references Hosea 6:6 in both Matthew 9:13 and 12:7. Both sections of scripture involve Jesus interacting with the Pharisees about his ministry.

Read Matthew 9:9-13

Why were the Pharisees questioning Jesus in this section?

What do you think was their motivation for asking these questions?

In these verses, Jesus called Matthew, the tax collector, to be his disciple. Jesus then goes to eat with tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees questioned Jesus as to why he was eating with them. Even though it is not outright stated, it is most likely that the Pharisees were asking out of place of judgement towards Jesus and those around him.

How did Jesus respond?

Why do you think Jesus decided to quote Hosea 6:6 in verse 13?

How does this situation connect to Hosea 6:1-6?

Instead of snapping back at the Pharisees, Jesus responds by telling the Pharisees that he came for those that are sick and not well. Jesus' quote of Hosea 6:6 not only calls upon the words of the verse, but also the heart of what Hosea wrote. Jesus is pointing out how flawed the Pharisees were in their thinking. Jesus is trying to tell them that God wants us to have mercy on others and we are to desire to know him. The Pharisees appear to be focused on "sacrifices" (following the rules) above loving God. This same idea follows in Matthew 12.

Read Matthew 12:1-8

How is this situation similar to the situation in Matthew 9?

Why were the Pharisees questioning Jesus?

How is this situation another perfect place for Jesus to quote Hosea 6:6?

This situation is almost the same situation as Matthew 9. Jesus is being questioned by the Pharisees in a matter of maintaining the law rigidly. Again, Jesus responds to them by pointing out a Biblical truth that they missed and he quotes Hosea 6:6. The quote, again, is pointing out that the Pharisees are missing the mark in their relationship with God. God wants them to love him rather than rigidly following the law with no love for God.

Have you been like a Pharisee in your life? Have you ever followed the law without following through with love for God?

When was that? Why do you think you did that?

How can we counter the idea of following the law without loving God?

Application

Jesus made intentional connections to the Old Testament to help people understand his point. As we saw last week, Matthew takes a lot of time to make connections to Old Testament prophecy to prove who Jesus is to his reader. Another section of the Old Testament that he quoted was Isaiah 42.

What do you know about the book of Isaiah?

Have you ever heard of the four Servant Songs?

Isaiah is one of the major prophets of the Old Testament. He was a prophet right before the invasion of Babylon. He spent much of his time calling the people to repentance, but he also prophesied about the coming of Jesus. Isaiah has the "Servant Songs" found in Isaiah 42:1–9, Isaiah 49:1–6 with 49:7–12; Isaiah 50:4–9 with 50:10–11, and Isaiah 52:13–53:12. These four

songs give different descriptions of God's servant who we know is Jesus. Matthew references one of these songs in Matthew 12.

Read Matthew 12:15-21

What happened directly prior to these verses that caused Jesus to withdraw?

Why do you think Jesus told people not to make him known to others in verse 16?

Directly prior to the events in these verses, Jesus healed a man in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The Pharisees were not happy with him and were going to try and were plotting to kill him (v. 13). Jesus withdrew most likely because it was not his time to die on the cross yet. Similarly, he told people not to make him known because he still had work to do before dying on the cross.

Does the language/wording of verse 18 sound familiar to anything else we have covered in Matthew?

According to verse 18, what will Jesus do for the people?

Verse 18 should sound very familiar. Besides quoting Isaiah 42, verse 18 should sound like Matthew 3:17 when Jesus was baptized. According to verse 18, his role is to "proclaim justice to the nations."

How did Jesus proclaim justice in his ministry?

How does justice connect to the mercy we saw in Hosea 6:6?

The Lexham Bible Dictionary defines justice as "Divinely righteous action, whether taken by humanity or God, that promotes equality among humanity. Used in relation to uplifting the righteous and oppressed and debasing the unrighteous and oppressors."

Jesus' ministry focused on teaching justice to the masses because he taught about the uplifting of those who followed Christ and a removal of those that do not. The mercy of God from Hosea 6:6 comes into play because God's justice is not defined by what we do, but by the love that God has for those that love him (Ephesians 2:8-9).

What does verse 19 tell us about how Jesus acted during his ministry?

Do you think the modern Christian acts this way as well? Where have modern Christians fallen short of this example of Jesus?

Verse 19 is very telling of how Jesus acted in that he did "not argue or shout, and no one will hear his voice in the streets." This tells us that Jesus was not walking about and arguing with

people about the Bible, instead Jesus was acting out of love and sharing the Gospel with those he met with personal evangelism.

Have you ever seen someone using arguments or shouting to share the Gospel?

Does that typically go well?

You may have heard of “quad gods” or “confrontational evangelists.” These people go into crowded areas and yell about how people are sinners and are going to Hell. Even though they may be right in some of the things they are saying, they are missing the point of showing love to others as Jesus did.

Have you ever had a really bad bruise?

How did it feel when you touched it?

Similarly, have you ever had a very bad emotional or spiritual bruise?

How did you feel when people touched it?

Having a bruise can be painful. Depending on what you did to get the bruise, you could be in pain for a long time. Similarly, emotional bruises can last a long time and can continue to cause us pain long after the hurt has occurred.

What do verse 20-21 tell us about Jesus?

How can we be like Jesus in these verses?

Verses 20-21 focus on the mercy and love of Jesus. These verses tell us that Jesus did not come to break us but rather he came to show us love and help lead us to his victory.

Have you ever been guilty of intentionally breaking someone down in an attempt to share the Gospel?

Are you guilty of not being merciful to those around you?

Are you argumentative as you try to minister to others?

What do you need to change your life so you can show more mercy and compassion towards others?

Week 49
Reflection

During this week, you are being charged with answering these questions about yourself and your walk with God. Hopefully these will force you to pray and consider what God wants you to do in your life.

- 1) Are you more worried about giving sacrifices over loving God?
- 2) Are you like the Pharisees?
- 3) What needs to change in your life so you can better love God?
- 4) Where do you fall short of Jesus' example?
- 5) Are you argumentative as you try to minister with others?
- 6) How can you be more compassionate and merciful as you minister to others?

Week 49
Action

Choose one of the following actions to do as part of your walk this week.

- 1) Read Hosea 6 and answer the questions: What parallels do you see between the children of Israel and the modern world today? What truths can you see about God from these scriptures? How do you need to change your walk with Christ so you can focus more on loving him rather than giving sacrifices?
- 2) Read Isaiah 42 and answer the questions: What parallels do you see between the children of Israel and the modern world today? What truths can you see about God from these scriptures? What characteristics of Jesus stand out to you? What do you need to change so you can be more like Jesus?
- 3) Go to a trusted believer and discuss a time where you failed to show mercy to someone else. Pray together about how you can be a picture of Christ's love towards others.