

## Seek the Lord, Sow Righteousness, Reap Mercy

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### Hosea 10:12

"Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you."

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This short passage of Scripture comes from the book of Hosea. Hosea was a prophet of the Lord who was called by God to take for himself a harlot, a prostitute and to speak to the nation of Israel, God's people about their harlotries, their sins against God, prostituting themselves out by serving other gods. I will be referencing other passages of Scripture in this book of Hosea as it is a good overall message of how God looks on and deals with the conditions and situations of His people, and really that goes for all of God's people, not just the Israelites, and how He deals with His people who sin against Him and how He is always calling for His people to repent, to turn back to Him so that they, so that WE, can find His mercy AND His righteousness so that His people can then live in His blessings. This is a message of how God wants to rain on us His righteousness, how God wants for us to reap a harvest full of His mercies, and then in all that to know He is the Lord God Almighty, that He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that He alone is worthy of our praise, glory, and honor, and that we are called to be His people, His children, His beloved, betrothed unto Him alone.

It is interesting how God used His prophets, sometimes in very unusual ways, to try and get the attention of His people, the Israelites, in the Old Testament. But as they say on tv, don't try this at home, these are done by trained professionals. For example God had Isaiah walk around naked and barefoot for 3 years as a sign that Israel would be led into captivity naked and barefoot. In the case with Hosea, God had him marry a harlot as a sign to God's people that He sees their sins, serving other gods and that God was calling them back from their sins to follow Him. It was not always a good thing for God's people when He would say to them, "Then they will know that I am the Lord." In the book of Ezekiel, God had spoken through Ezekiel the prophet to His people, "Thus will I spend My fury upon them. Then you shall know that I am the Lord." (**Ezekiel 6:12-13**) Yet with Hosea, God uses Hosea marrying a harlot as an testimony of God's love for His people. God speaks to Israel in **Hosea 2:19-20**, "'I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and **you shall know the Lord.**" After Hosea had 3 children from Gomer the harlot, she goes back to her old ways and God has Hosea buy her back, to return to her husband. It speaks of what the Apostle Paul wrote in **Romans 2:4**, "Or

do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" It was not that God was intending to disown them but God was saying to them, 'you are mine, I want to bless you with My Righteousness, My Lovingkindness, and My Mercies.'

Yet God is also a God of Justice, and that is Who He is too, which means that He **would** act in justice. Just as God is Love, God is Justice. The same message is for us today as Paul explained in Romans 10 that God used the blindness and unbelief of Israel to open the door for us, the Gentiles and as Hosea wrote in **2:23**, "Then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' and they shall say, 'You are my God!' " Yes, that is for us, to know that He is our God! Yet as a warning Paul went on to say in **11:20-22**, "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, **if you continue in His goodness**. Otherwise you also will be cut off." The goodness of God leads to our repentance. Our faith in God comes also from the goodness and grace of God. **Ephesians 2:8-9** says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." God is calling us to repentance. Is He calling you? God is calling us towards His goodness, His grace, His lovingkindness that we may receive His Righteousness and Mercies. The Apostle Paul writes in **Romans 8:28-30**, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." God **is** calling you, **all of us** to His mercies, His Righteousness, His Goodness, and to be glorified in Him for His glory!

As mentioned, it was not always a good thing when God wanted to make known "that He is the Lord." Yet one more example that we have where God has shown His people and essentially said to them and to us, "that they may know that I am the Lord" is of what the Apostle John wrote in **1 John 1:1-4**, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." God wants us to know the HE is the Lord AND that He wants us to be in fellowship with Him, to receive

His mercies, His Righteousness, His goodness, to be glorified in Him for His glory! How? John also said in **John 3:16-17**, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." God sent His Son Jesus through the virgin birth of Mary by the Holy Spirit, to testify of the love of the Father, by overcoming all temptations of the devil, lived a perfect and sinless life, and suffered and died on a cross, shedding His blood to pay the penalty for our sins against God, as only God Himself, manifested forth in the person of His Son Jesus could pay that penalty since only God Himself is Holy, and Perfect, and Righteous. As David said in Psalm 143 (vs. 2), "For in Your sight (in God's sight) no one living is righteous. Jesus died on a cross for our sins so that we can be reconciled unto God the Father so that we can have fellowship with the Father, so that we can abide in Him, partake of His blessings, and as Jesus explained that as we abide in Him, we bear fruit as a branch bears fruit from the vine, bearing the fruit of the Spirit with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, where we love others, even our enemies, where we look to do good versus evil, where we look to please God not our flesh, where we long to be with our beloved, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The more we know of Him the more we want more of Him, the more we abide in Him the more the ways of the world become repulsive to us, the more we love God the more we love others and forsake the things of this world. And the great miracle that God showed us that He is the Lord is through Jesus, but not by just dying on the cross but raising from the grave on the third day, conquering death, defeating the devil, and paving the way for eternal life for all who will believe on Him!

So what about our passage of Scripture in Hosea you may ask.

**"Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you."**

It is important to remember and always keep in mind that the whole of the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, which is based on God's people trusting in Him through faith, trusting that He would save them, that He will save us, that He would protect them, that He will protect us, that He would keep them, that He will keep us. That was an image of what was to come and what has come to us. The New Testament **then** reveals that **Jesus** is that for whom they and we are looking for. Just as Jonah the prophet stated (Jonah 2:9), "Salvation is of the Lord." But wait there's more! As the Apostle Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:30-31**, "But of Him [being God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us **wisdom** from God—and **righteousness** and **sanctification** and **redemption**—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." How do we find wisdom and righteousness to please God? In

Christ! Jesus is our Righteousness, Jesus is our Wisdom, Jesus is our Sanctification (where God sets us apart from the world in His Holiness), and Jesus is our Redemption, eternal life in Christ Jesus. That's forever!

In Jesus we find the mercies of God who takes us from out of the darkness into His marvelous light, He lifts us up out of the miry clay and molds us into the image of Christ! He does that by when we look to Jesus for our salvation, for our righteousness, to make us right before God. The Apostle Peter stated in **Acts 5:31-32**, "Him [Jesus] God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given **to those who obey Him.**" That is where when we put our trust and hope in Jesus for our salvation and turn from our sins and look to Jesus for our righteousness, that is when we become as Jesus said "born again", that He gives us His Holy Spirit as "a deposit guaranteeing what is to come," (that is eternal life in Christ), and then His Spirit testifies with our Spirit that we are His children, His Spirit comforts us, intercedes for us with the Father, and leads us into all truth, and works in us to will and to do according to His good purpose, and brings forth the fruit of the Spirit that I mentioned earlier that bears fruit, much fruit, for the glory of God! He is also our repentance for He provides a way to Him through repentance which is a changing of our minds to follow Him, turning to Jesus instead of the deeds or sins of the flesh that leads to death (that is, spiritual death). As mentioned earlier, the Apostle Paul said in **Romans 8:29-30**, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." God is calling us to repentance to look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the faith that He has given us, He's calling us to then follow Jesus in His Righteousness, His Wisdom, His Sanctification, and His Redemption. Has God called you? Is He calling you? Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Is Jesus calling you? Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (**Matthew 11:28-30**)

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Fallow ground is simply ground or soil that had been left unplanted for a period of time. From Biblestudytools.com it explains fallow ground. "The expression, 'Break up your fallow ground' (Hosea 10:12)

means, "Do not sow your seed among thorns", in other words break off all your evil habits; clear your hearts of weeds, in order that they may be prepared for the seed of righteousness. Land was allowed to lie fallow that it might become more fruitful; but when in this condition, it soon became overgrown with thorns and weeds. The cultivator of the soil was careful to "break up" his fallow ground, to clear the field of weeds, before sowing seed in it. So says the prophet, "Break off your evil ways, repent of your sins, cease to do evil, and then the good seed of the word will have room to grow and bear fruit." You want to live in His Righteousness? Do you want for God to rain down His Righteousness upon you? As the saying goes 'out with the old, in with the new.'" Jesus said that you can't put new wine in old wineskins for if you do the new wine will burst the old wineskins. That is where Paul explained "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (**Romans 8:13**)

Paul also explained in Romans 6:1-8, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." That fallow ground then is us forsaking, giving up the sins of the flesh and waiting on God to fill up with His Righteousness. Yes, we will be tested as to whether we want His Righteousness or the desires of the flesh. As a child of God we are called to forsake sin, the things that separates us from the fellowship with God. Yet if we do sin, we are in the words of the Apostle John (1 John 1:9) to confess our sin to God and "He is faithful AND just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness." We usually think of God's justice as His punishment and wrath upon disobedience. But, His justice, through Christ Jesus, gives to us forgiveness of sins! Thank You Jesus!

**Hosea 12:6** says this, "So you, by the help of your God, return; Observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually." Have you been waiting on the Lord. Hang on and continue to seek the Lord. David wrote in **Psalms 27**, "Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!"

We are in a spiritual battle here brothers and sisters in Christ. It is real and the consequences are real. We are in a spiritual battle not only for ourselves but for our families, our friends, our

community, and even our nation, and for the saints throughout the world. There is a reason we are getting together here. We are in a spiritual battle where WE are praying for you all and hopefully YOU ALL are praying for us. We must remember that "greater is He that is in us than He that is in this world", and that "no weapon formed against us will prosper", and that nothing shall separate us from the love of God. The devil has been defeated, we can walk in victory in Christ Jesus. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Keep your ground cleared of weeds and thorns and as Hebrews 12:1 says, "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." We will be there too brothers and sisters. Let us continue to look to Jesus for His Righteousness, His Goodness, His Mercies, and His Redemption. When we see Jesus we will be like Him. **Daniel 12:3** says, "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever." Right now we are to shine as His light unto the world (**Philippians 2:15**) but one day we will shine in all of God's glory. "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." (**Revelation 19:9**)