



Lesson 14 May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Return to Love and Justice

### LESSON FOR JUNIORS

Study Scripture – Hosea 11:1-2, 7-10; 12:1-2, 6-14

Background Scripture – Hosea 11 - 12

#### Key Verse:

*“Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on they God continually.”*

**Hosea 12:6**

#### INTRODUCTION

Have you ever seen a mother or father with a toddler or a very young child together in the Mall with the child attached to the parent by a kiddy-leash, a harness or a leash so that the mommy or daddy can control this toddler that enjoys moving quickly, squealing with delight before being caught.

Then there is a lot of twisting and struggling to be let go to again enjoy the chase.

Parents meet this challenge by attaching a long lease to toddlers which snaps and stops the toddler when they try to get out of range.

This is the “long arm of the Law exercised with love and giving limited freedom that fits the age of the toddler and growing child. Sometimes the parent has a kiddy- leash that keeps the child within close range, but as they grow the child is taught to obey instructions so that they do not even need a obvious leash. We are like that in relationship to God. God keeps us close to Him.

How young people and children behave has been designed by God to reflect His relationship with adults and children. We are therefore looking at the nature of God and the relationship of people to God. We can learn lessons God wants to teach us.

God says over and over again that it is not possible to walk away from Him and survive the rough troubles of life. Sometimes young people think that by walking away, running away, rejecting what they have been taught that life will be better than if they are kept on any kind of leash.

Parents soon learn however that children don't come with a guarantee to even listen or obey and so many parents spend many nights crying. It is not good to have your parents cry over you. God says that if you do that there would be unpleasant consequences for you. It might even turn out that when young people grow up and have children their children will do the same thing good, bad, or in between that they had done to their parents.

In our Lesson today the Lord God is in a difficult situation. He had to deal with the constant running away from Him and His guidance constantly repeated by the nation of Israel. This was adolescent behaviour. Many times children when they get to a certain age feel an overwhelming and uncontrollable urge which makes them want to do what they want to do instead of listening to good advice. This always leads to them getting into trouble which they cannot solve.

But the God of Israel had done a tremendous amount for the people and when they were in slavery in Egypt, God sent Moses to take them out of that bad situation and take them to the Promised Land of Canaan. They had to spend 40 years in the wilderness because they were so disobedient. But even then God looked after them, fed them, made sure that their clothing was good, and kept them healthy all through that time. But sadly, instead of worshiping God and showing their appreciation for what He had done they turned to worship another god, an Assyrian God called Baal who told them that if they followed him they would get large grain harvests, lots of wealth and money and other things that was attractive to the people of Israel.

Though God protected them and provided for them all through the years and given them a beautiful land to call their own they did not treat what God had given them well. They abused the land and their own relatives in it and turned away from their relationship with God.

God therefore was angry and told them through the prophet Hosea that if they wanted to go back to Egypt that had almost destroyed them and make agreements for protection with the Assyrian nation who were known for their practice of torturing people that they had captured. Instead of depending on God they could go ahead and do that but they would be on their own.

One writer said that he remembered his father saying to him many times, “**You buttered your bread. You made your bed, now lie in it**”. I am sure there are many such phrases that parents have used.

But God did not feel happy. He knew that if Israel continued behaving they would have to be totally destroyed. God felt anguish and pain and He argued with Himself. Should He destroy the rebellious nation of Israel just as He had destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them because of their wickedness?

We would have expected that God would bash these rebellious children. God told them that He regarded the nation of Israel as His sons and daughters. He was their parent and so He had looked after them with great love, a much greater kind of love than human beings ever had for each other. We called that “**agape love**”. This is a special kind of divine love.

So the painful actions of His children really affected the heart of God and it stirred up God's compassion and mercy.

Instead of thinking only about the terrible things that Israel had done God kept before Him pictures that nobody else remembered. God kept in front of Him and He remembered the time



when they were born in Egypt, the moments of their first steps when they were a young, young child, or a young nation. God remembered their first words, their first smiles and their first cries, and the times when they really depended on Him to save them. God remembered all of the things that happened on their journey as they grew up in the wilderness heading for the Promised Land of Canaan.

When God remembered all these scenes His love swelled up so much in Him that His words form some of the most beautiful words in Scripture. His words mean that even if we do not do everything that is right God will stick with us if we belong to Him, and He will remember the good times that He had with us when we really loved Him and tried to do right when we were converted and came to Him to please Him.

Every mother and father will tell you that they will remember and never forget the first steps that a child takes and the first words that they speak. God was like that because His love for Israel and for us was much deeper than we can ever imagine. So despite the fact that Israel were misbehaving over and over again God promised that He would not destroy them and instead of punishing them, His children, God took the punishment into Himself and made His beloved Son Jesus die on the Cross and bear their sins so that they would be forgiven and saved. So God spoke some of the most beautiful words in Scripture. One name for Israel was Ephraim because they were the largest tribe. Admah and Zeboim are the names of some of the wicked cities that were located just beside Sodom and Gomorrah. So God gave these beautiful assurances to His rebellious children.

***“How can I give you up Ephraim?***

***How can I hand you over Israel?***

***How can I make you like Admah?***

***How can I set you like Zeboim?***

***My heart churns within Me;***

***My sympathy is stirred.***

***I will not execute the fierceness of my anger;***

***I will not again destroy Ephraim.***

***For I am God, and not man.***

***The Holy One in your midst”.***

God got very emotional and He could not destroy Israel. The prophet Hosea told them that God would come back up from His feelings of anguish roaring like a lion, chasing away all their frightened enemies and save His children. Then later He would have someone from the Cross showing that though He had been rejected He would still have painful love for all humanity. He would save all those people that came to Jesus.

So we should remember that God has tied us to Him with bands of love. He has us on long leashes. We cannot escape from that kind of love once He has decided to love us. He expects us then to be fair to everybody and not to abuse them. He expects them to show people the love of God.



But remember God is very emotional and passionate about His children. He has tender and compassionate love for His children and He will forgive them when their hearts become open to Him and they return to love Him. He would protect them like a fierce Lion and will keep them safe at home.

