

Trusting the Map

John 10:1 – 15 and Hosea 14

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One of the most moving songs in the musical ‘The Greatest Showman’ is entitled ‘From Now On’. It is sung by the main character who is the ring master and the song comes from a painful self-realization about the ways he has wounded his family and friends. The song celebrates the joy of coming back home and finding that what we already have is more than enough.

The book of Hosea concludes with a similar tone of breathless joy and gratitude at the restoration God makes possible for those who return to him. Much of the Book of Hosea compares the relationship between God and his people to a relationship with an unfaithful spouse. Israel’s failures are not loving God, not trusting God, and not living for him.

But in chapter 14, Hosea lifts up the promise of God’s boundless love, grace, and restoration which is freely available to those who return to him heartbroken over the ways they have abandoned God. God promises – *I will heal their waywardness and love them freely*. And what had seemed broken beyond repair will once more find wholeness and abundance as God’s grace, like dew, causes his people to blossom like a lily and flourish like the grain.

When we have hurt others or taken for granted God’s goodness in our life, it is easy to assume we have forever marred the good gifts we have been given. But when we humbly turn to God, we find God’s love is always reaching to embrace and restore us.

A story - On a trip, the driving said to his friend - 'Just tell me where to go. I will drive - you direct!'

In our lives, we are the driver and God is the director. The problem we have - we do not listen to God's directions. We get so hung up on driving that we do not listen to God's directions. When God directs us to turn right, we decide to go straight. When God directs us to turn left, we just keep going straight. And when God directs us to go straight, we want to turn right or left. We just do not listen to God's directions!

We enjoy driving so much that no matter what directions we get from God, we do what pleases us. We drive by the world's directions, not God's! Often the world's directions look so much more pleasing to our eyes and senses than God's directions. We are a people of senses and a thing that will bring us pleasure is the way we want to go. Drugs & alcohol are the directions we take. God offers us peace and eternal life, and we give in to basic pleasures. Oh, we are terrible at following God's directions!

The problem comes when we, the driver, found we had our own sets of directions. We need to decide which map to trust. Trust the world's map or God's map

(Display maps – share story of taking map out in front of my children)

Following God's directions & map – the Bible - and we will reach our destination safely. (Take Bible out)

It is easy in our world today to become confused and lose our sense of direction. There are so many maps to consider and so many people who want to lead us, who want us to follow their way, who want us to believe as they do. How can we find the right way?

Jesus offers us a map for our daily walk. When we become lost or confused, we need only turn to him for Jesus said - 'I know my sheep and my sheep know me ... my sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me.' Jesus is the Good Shepherd and he will bring us along the right way!

Let us remember to cry out to him when we have lost our way and he will show the way and assure us of his care.

(Get out GPS - God's Positioning System)

God has brought you here. Maybe this was not in your plan, but God has directed you here. Your trip maybe almost at the end. Your life long journey maybe almost over and then your eternal journey will begin. How are you positioned for your eternal journey?

Boy, do I got a road map for you. Boy, do I have a GPS for you.

Let us pray:

Loving God and Creator of Life, teach us to trust in your goodness. Let us not just do this when things are going good, but let us do this at all times – good and bad.

Great & Loving God, remind us that we can never become so lost or confused that Jesus will not show us the way to travel the pathway of life. AMEN.