

Pentecost 2A - Comments/questions on the lessons for June 7, 2026

Hosea 5:15 – 6:6

- Hosea is a prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel, sometime directly before the Assyrian Empire conquers them and takes them into exile in 722 BC. As a prophet he is best known for marrying a prostitute and having three children with her, with his marriage and his children becoming images for God's relationship to Israel.
- The location of Hosea's prophecy – the northern kingdom of Israel – is important for our passage in order to understand the reference to the southern kingdom of Judah in verse 4. God is encouraging the nation of Israel to NOT join in an alliance with Judah as their devotion is fickle and wavering.
- This passage is an island of grace amidst a sea of judgment, for we here about God's judgment in the verses that both precede and follow this passage. But when we read this passage, we understand that God desires the nation to return to God, knowing that healing and love are always found within God.
- The fickleness of Ephraim/Judah in verse 4 is contrasted with the faithfulness of God in verse 3. We are encouraged to have our love be like showers and spring rains and not like a morning cloud or dew.
- The words that end our passage challenge us as much now as then. God desires not good church attendance but lived faithful lives.

Psalm 50:7-15

- This section of Psalm 50 expands on the same theme that Hosea 6:6 declares. God does not desire right sacrifices but a life of praise and worship: "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving."
- This desire for right living is made clearer in the verses that follow this section:

But to the wicked God says:

*'What right have you to recite my statutes,
or take my covenant on your lips?*

*For you hate discipline,
and you cast my words behind you.*

*You make friends with a thief when you see one,
and you keep company with adulterers.*

*'You give your mouth free rein for evil,
and your tongue frames deceit.*

*You sit and speak against your kin;
you slander your own mother's child.*

*These things you have done and I have been silent;
you thought that I was one just like yourself.*

But now I rebuke you, and lay the charge before you. (Psalm 50:16-21)

Romans 4:13-25

- We catch Paul here in the middle of his argument that we are set right with God by faith and not by works of the law. He appeals to the example of Abraham and specifically to Genesis 15:6 where it reads, "And [Abram] believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness." Paul uses this to show justification by faith for two reasons:
 - Abraham lived several hundred years before Moses, so that his justification precedes the giving of the Law.
 - The promise given here to Abraham also precedes Abraham's circumcision so that the justification cannot be seen as resulting from some legal/covenantal requirement.
- Thus, as Abraham is justified for believing in God and trusting in God's promise – impossible as it seemed to be – so we are called to trust in God for our justification and not rely on our good works.

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

- The first part of the gospel lesson – the calling of Matthew – emphasizes again what we heard in Hosea and Psalm 50: “God desires mercy, not sacrifice.” When do we as a church get caught up in things that do not matter?
- When we hear the second part of the gospel lesson – the girl restored to life and the woman healed – we hear a shortened version (8 verses) than what is found in Mark 5 (22 verses) and Luke 8 (16 verses). Following so soon after the call of Matthew, Matthew’s version emphasizes how Jesus responds immediately to these pleas for mercy. As Jesus did, so we are called as well.