

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

God's Charges
Hosea 4:1-12; 8:1-10, 14

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader: An outline of today's study is given at the end of the worship time materials. Use the outline on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper or provide individual copies of the outline to serve participants as a guide. They may want to make notes as you study.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

Change My Heart, O God, *The Worship Hymnal* #529; CCLI # 1565

Grace Alone, *The Worship Hymnal* #112; CCLI # 2335524

How Deep the Father's Love for Us, *The Worship Hymnal* # 101; CCLI # 1558110

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

God's Charges

Focal Text

Hosea 4:1-12; 8:1-10, 14

Background Text

Hosea 4—8

Main Idea

Religious beliefs and practices can transform a society for the good or lead it into evil.

Question to Explore

How should faithfulness to God be demonstrated in our day?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to describe parallels between our practices and God's charges against Israel and to identify implications for action.

Gathering together:

Sing **Change My Heart, O God**, *The Worship Hymnal* #529; CCLI # 1565

First thoughts:

In Hosea 4 God is stating the charges against the people of Israel. Religious leaders came under judgement first and primarily. We are told in Hosea 8:3 **But Israel has rejected what is good.** The King James Version of the Bible says **Israel hath cast off the thing that is good.**

This included giving the kingship without consulting the will of God; wrong religion, faithless foreign policy, and greediness for material things. The main idea for our study today is that religious beliefs and practices can transform a society for the good or lead it into evil. It is a dangerous thing when a particular religious expression becomes entangled with government. However, it is a good thing when government leaders are influenced by the ideas and beliefs of their faith. It is a good thing when the people of

any country are living by the moral code of the Bible and the loving expression of those moral beliefs as taught by Jesus. Today's study should help us to examine our own contribution to the strength of our nation by the beliefs which govern our daily life.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

God's Charges

Focal Text

Hosea 4:1-12; 8:1-10, 14

Background Text

Hosea 4—8

Main Idea

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Question to Explore

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Teaching Aim

To lead the church to describe parallels between our practices and God's charges against Israel and to identify implications for action.

Introduction to your personal study:

To be charged with a crime would for most people an unbelievably difficult thing to contemplate. To be charged with a crime when not guilty would be horrific, but it does happen even in countries where the judicial system is basically sound. Today's story deals with God's charges against the Israelites as brought through the messenger and prophet, Hosea. The painful reality is that these people were guilty as charged. However, they were so hardened by their sin and had wandered so far from God that they were not impacted by these charges. They paid no attention to Hosea's preaching about impending punishment.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

The background and focal passages have been chosen to identify God's various complaints against Israel (Hosea 4:1a). Israel had broken its covenant with God, and as a result its society was characterized by all sorts of evil with widespread effect (4:1b-4; see Exodus 20:7, 13-16; Deuteronomy 5:11, 17-21). Israel was following religious leaders who led the nation astray (4:5-9) and was practicing false religion (4:10-12; 8:4b-6, 13). Israel's political and governmental system was in shambles (8:4a; see also 5:1-2, 10; 7:3-7). In the midst of these difficulties, Israel was seeking help through foreign alliances, not from God (8:9; see also 5:13; 7:8-11).

We will examine these charges one by one.

1). Israel had broken its covenant with God, and as a result its society was characterized by all sorts of evil with widespread effect (4:1b-4; see Exodus 20:7, 13-16; Deuteronomy 5:11, 17-21).

The source of all the difficulty was Israel's failure to follow God.

***Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites,
because the Lord has a charge to bring against you who live in the land.
There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery;
they break all bounds and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away;
the beast of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.***
Hosea 4:1-3

Exodus 20:7 tells us **You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.** Misuse of God's name is more than profanity. Misuse includes the profane life-style of a child of God.

We who bear God's name must not give other people reason to lose respect for his name.

Exodus 20: 13-16 are also part of the Ten Commandments – the Decalogue.

***You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.***

These verses give attention to the breaking of some of the Ten Commandments – numbers 3, 9, 6, 8, and 7. The result of this gross neglect of basic morality as well as

Covenant responsibility is the mourning of the land seen in the death of beast of the field, birds of the air and fish of the sea.

We cannot help but think of today's environmental disasters in which birds of the air and fish of the sea were killed in large numbers because of mistakes made or neglect of responsibilities or the seeking of a larger profit. Man's sin has always affected the natural world in which we live.

These verses give attention to the breaking of some of the Ten Commandments – numbers 3, 9, 6, 8, and 7. The result of this gross neglect of basic morality as well as Covenant responsibility is the mourning of the land seen in the death of beast of the field, birds of the air and fish of the sea.

2). Israel was following religious leaders who led the nation astray (4:5-9) and was practicing false religion (4:10-12; 8:4b-6, 13).

Verse 4 is problematic.

***But let no man bring a charge,
let no man accuse another,
for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest.***

These words seem to be a sarcastic comment that no one dares to criticize the religious leaders. The ordinary people would, of course, be reluctant to criticize. But neither did religious leaders hold one another responsible. God, however, is bringing charges and it is his right to do so.

Accountability for those who are responsible for the spiritual welfare of others is extremely important. Yet many pastors minister in places where there seems to be no one with whom to share struggles and temptations. Others could easily connect with another pastor or mentor, but fail to do so because of busy schedules or because to do so would be painful. Anytime we think of the responsibility of spiritual leadership and teaching it is wise to remember Jesus' own words in Luke 17:1-3 ***Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves."***

The failure of religious leaders has caused pain and suffering throughout history. Professor Robert Greenburg is a teacher of music appreciation. However, in his course on music he noted "The Roman Catholic Church was all that stood against barbarity during the Dark Ages, serving as a patron of art and education, civility, and literacy." Greenburg, Robert. *How to Listen to and Understand Great Music*, 3rd Edition. Chantilly, Virginia: The Great Courses, 2006 p. 13).

Later, however, he wrote “The 14th century was a time of tremendous change and diversity. The absolute authority of the Roman Catholic Church and, with it, the age of Theocracy came to an end. The papal court abandoned Rome and was resident in Avignon between 1305 and 1378 – a period known as the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. With the Great Schism (1378-1417), there were at first two, followed by three simultaneous claimants to the papacy. The Great Schism, along with rising concern about corrupt clergy, as well as the ravages of the Black Death (1347-1350) and the Hundred Years’ War (1338-1453) together generated a crisis of faith. Powerful secular rulers increasingly challenged the Roman Catholic Church’s political prerogatives.” (pages 15-16).

Although the Church had a positive influence during the Dark Ages, the power of the Church in government and the increasing corruption within the clergy led to its inability to address the spiritual needs of the people in times of disease and war. When the Papal Court moved to southern France and stayed in Avignon for 73 years perhaps enjoying a more luxurious lifestyle, other people sought to become pope. The influence for good became diluted.

Israel had broken its covenant with God, and as a result its society was characterized by all sorts of evil with widespread effect. Although the Catholic Church has continued to influence governments in many countries, that influence becomes toxic when too closely aligned with government.

Of course, religious leaders from every expression of Christianity can be cited for failing to do those things God through Hosea charges Israelite priests with doing. Failure to teach God’s Word; ignoring or breaking the moral laws of God; enjoying the sinfulness of the people all were sins of the priests. ***Like people, like priests*** reads verse 9. The verse could also read Like priests, like people. The people followed the ways of the priests and the priests were no more righteous than the people although they spent their lives in pretend service. Both priests and people were lacking in religious vitality, devotion and fundamental religious consciousness. Both priest and people will be punished.

“The priests were responsible for instructing the people in God’s Law and leading them to maintain their personal relationship with the Lord. The priests often spurned this task, and the people were ‘destroyed from lack of knowledge’. The sin of the priests was not just that they neglected to teach the knowledge of God. They rejected knowing God as well. ‘Knowledge’ is not just a bookish collection of information. It is experiential knowledge of the living God. Knowledge of His written Word cannot be separated from personal knowledge of God. To know God is to live in harmony with His will, and to live in harmony with His will we must know His will. Loss of the knowledge of God leaves a destructive vacuum in personal and national life.” (*New International Version Disciple’s Study Bible*, Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, page 1068).

Hosea writes this description

***You stumble day and night,
and the prophets stumble with you.
So I will destroy your mother –
my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.
Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also reject you as my priests;
because you have ignored the law of your God
I also will ignore your children.
The more the priests increased,
the more they sinned against me;
they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful.
They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness.
And it will be: Like people, like priests.
I will punish both of them for their ways,
and repay them for their deeds.*** Hosea 4: 5-9

Religious leaders and the religious institution in Israelite culture were so bound into the fabric of society that when religion went astray the whole society did too. ***I will destroy your Mother*** must refer to the institutional religious system.

In the time of Israel's prosperity there may have been more and more priests attending to religious observances. Yet this abundance of priests did not bring great spiritual good, but led into further worship of false idols.

3). Israel's political and governmental system was in shambles (8:4a; see also 5:1-2, 10; 7:3-7).

“Being in covenant relation with God means letting Him be King and direct our decisions. Excluding Him from our decision-making processes is rebellion, a breach of the conditions of His covenant law” (*Disciples' Study Bible*, page 1071).

Since the days of the first kings, God was involved in the choice of leadership. The very fact of having kings indicated that the people had failed to allow God to be their supreme ruler (See 1 Samuel 8: 4-7). However, Saul, David and Solomon ruled by divine favour although Solomon's rule was related to the blessings of God for David's sake. The first king of Israel after the division of the nation was Jeroboam who led the people from the true worship of God into a false worship of God under the figure of the fertility calf that involved ritual prostitution (1Kings12: 28-333). From that time on, Israel never had a king who did right in the sight of the Lord and Israel never experienced a revival of true religion. People came to rule through their own power and political aspirations. Religious beliefs and practices can transform a society for the good or lead it into evil.

The eleven kings from the reign of Jeroboam I until Jeroboam 11 did evil in the sight of the Lord. Ahab ruled for 22 years and did more evil than the others. The six that

followed Jeroboam II until the fall of Samaria continued to do evil. Zachariah ruled six months before being killed by Shallum who ruled only one month before being killed by Manahem. Menahem ruled 10 years by killing people who did not want him to be king. He was followed by Pekahiah for two years before being killed by Pekah. Pekah ruled 20 years but eventually was killed by Hoshea who ruled nine years before Assyria took Israel captive.

In the history of the kings from Jeroboam I until Hoshea there is no indication of the seeking of God's will and blessing on the choosing of the king.

4). Israel was seeking help through foreign alliances, not from God (8:9; see also 5:13; 7:8-11.

Hosea 8:9 is a descriptive indicator of the foreign alliances formed by the leaders of Israel ***For they have gone up to Assyria like a wild donkey wandering alone. Ephraim has sold herself to lovers.***

The rulers tried to make alliances with Assyria to keep Assyria from invading. Hosea's picture of the wild donkey wandering alone describes the futility of this move. Ephraim is another word for Israel. Israel has sold herself to other rulers like a prostitute sells her body to whomever will pay.

The Israelites had forgotten that it was God who delivered them from Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. God as Protector was forgotten.

In Hosea 8:2-3 there is an indication that Israel cries out to God "***O God, we acknowledge you. But Israel has rejected that what is good.***" The human tendency to seek God's help without being willing to serve God in humility and faithfulness is seen here. Israel wanted to be able to continue their worship of golden calves and maintain a casual relationship to God.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Study:

Lead your group to make application of these truths to their own personal lives as well as the political system of which they are a part. We may feel limited in how much change we can make in the political sphere, but we are certainly responsible for teaching those within our circle of influence about the truth of the gospel.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

God's Charges

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the *Focal Text* in their Bibles. Also, share with them the *Main Idea* to be learned from the Scriptures, and the *Questions to be Explored* by the group.

Focal Text

Hosea 4:1-12; 8:1-10, 14

Background Text

Hosea 4—8

Main Idea

Religious beliefs and practices can transform a society for the good or lead it into evil.

Question to Explore

How should faithfulness to God be demonstrated in our day?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to describe parallels between our practices and God's charges against Israel and to identify implications for action.

Connect with Life:

Open the session with this challenge: Think of an incident in today's news which shows how far individuals or groups of people have gone from following God's laws. Pray for those involved and pray that you may adequately share God's truth in the lesson with those in your care.

Guide the Study:

Have someone read Amos 4:1-12.

State: These passages identify God's various complaints against Israel.

Use a whiteboard or large piece of paper to list the four complaints to be considered.

You may also copy the outline given at the end of the lesson and have participants make notes as they study. As the leader of the study, you may want to make a copy of the outline for use in your teaching.

1). Israel had broken its covenant with God, and as a result its society was characterized by all sorts of evil with widespread effect (4:1b-4; see Exodus 20:7, 13-16; Deuteronomy 5:11, 17-21).

Inquire: What was the source of all the difficulty? (Israel's failure to follow God. Verse 2 states there is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgement of God in the land).

Guide the group to discuss the kind of world it would be if no one was faithful to commitments, love was lacking, and no one acknowledged God.

Ask: What are the specific sins mentioned in Hosea 4:2? (cursing, lying murder, stealing, adultery).

Have someone find and read Exodus 20:7 and another person read Deuteronomy 5:11.

Explain: Misuse of God's name is more than profanity. Misuse includes the profane life-style of a child of God. We who bear God's name must not give other people reason to lose respect for his name. Profanity is the outward expression of the profane life-style.

Urge the participants to consider ways in which Christians can teach their children to not follow their friends for whom profanity is a normal expression.

Now ask: What are ways adults can deal with profanity in the workplace?

Add: When so many TV programs and movies used profanity, how does our understanding about profanity affect our choices?

Encourage opinions: Do we really believe that profanity is the serious issue which is expressed in Exodus and Deuteronomy?

Have someone read Exodus 20:13-16 and another person read Deuteronomy 5:17-21.

Ask: What do we commonly call these teachings? (The Ten Commandments)

Seek opinions about the importance of these commandments in our lives today. (Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-20 that he came to fulfill the Law, not to abolish it).

Indicate to the group: These verses give attention to the breaking of some of the Ten Commandments – numbers 3, 9, 6, 8, and 7. The result of this gross neglect of basic morality as well as Covenant responsibility is the mourning of the land seen in the death of beast of the field, birds of the air and fish of the sea.

Ask: Has man's sin resulted in nature's suffering in today's world? (There will be varying opinions on this issue. Watch your time carefully.)

2). Israel was following religious leaders who led the nation astray (4:5-9) and was practicing false religion (4:10-12; 8:4b-6, 13).

Comment that Verse 4 is problematic. Reread the verse:

***But let no man bring a charge,
let no man accuse another,
for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest.***

Share: These words seem to be a sarcastic comment that no one dares to criticize the religious leaders. The ordinary people would, of course, be reluctant to criticize. But neither did religious leaders hold one another responsible. God, however, is bringing charges and it is his right to do so.

Have someone read Hosea 4:5-9.

Invite answers: Can you determine what was the great failure of the priests mentioned here? (They failed to teach the law of God. They failed to keep the law of God).

Then ask: What are words which describe both people and priests? (You stumble day and night).

Have someone read Luke 17:1-3.

Ask: How seriously did Jesus take the role of leadership?

Discuss how much responsibility the people themselves had?

Explain if needed: In Jewish tradition much of the transmission of the faith occurred in the home. In Sabbath worship the stories of the journey from Egypt and the time in the wilderness and the going in to the Promised Land were remembered again and again. Girls learned these truths from their mothers; boys attended synagogue school. Deuteronomy 31:12-13 are among many verses which indicate that the people were responsible for teaching and training.

Comment: Our home church leads each of us to take responsibility for our own learning and for the teaching of others.

3). Israel's political and governmental system was in shambles (8:4a; see also 5:1-2, 10; 7:3-7).

Have someone read Hosea 8:3-4.

Comment: From the time of the rule of Jeroboam until the fall of Israel, no king did right in the sight of the Lord. Eighteen different rules had the opportunity to lead the nation back to God, but none did so. What a sad commentary for God's chosen people.

4). Israel was seeking help through foreign alliances, not from God (Hosea 8:9; see also 5:13; 7:8-11.)

Have someone read Hosea 8:9, 5:13 and 7:8-11.

Indicate that Ephraim is often used as the name for Israel.

Lead the group to understand: God's protection had been promised to His people since the days of the covenant with Abraham. Through the rule of 18 different kings no attention had been given to seeking God's protection. From a human stand point, alliances with strong nations seem reasonable. But God describes their action as being like a wild donkey wandering alone or a prostitute selling herself to any man who was willing to pay her.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Close with this challenge to the church: As we consider the issues facing the government in the nation in which we live as well as very large problems around the world, we must ask God for his intervention. Pray today for wisdom for those who lead your nation. Be fervent in that prayer throughout this week. Encourage one another to make it a part of your daily prayer.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

God's Charges Hosea 4:1-12; 8:1-10, 14

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Make copies of the outline given at the end of the worship time. Comment on how those sins of so many years ago are reflected in today's society.

What can you as a young person do to make the society in which you live a just and God-honouring society?

3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

God's Charges

Hosea 4:1-12; 8:1-10, 14

Beginning the Service:

How Deep the Father's Love for Us, *The Worship Hymnal* # 101; CCLI # 1558110

Offering:

Praying for the World:

The whole world has been affected by the devastation caused by the March, 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Pray today for those who still suffer from the pain caused by those events. Pray for those who share the Good News of Jesus in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

A Discerning Heart

In 1 Kings 3:9 we read: ***So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.***

1 Kings 3: 7-13 tells of a dream which Solomon had as he assumed kingship after the death of his father, King David. In the dream God said to Solomon, ***Ask for whatever you want me to give you.***

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Solomon answered: You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father, David. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?

David had ruled Israel for forty years and although he had sinned in those years, he always sought forgiveness and continued to rule his people with justice.

Before David's death he chose his son, Solomon, to be king. The three oldest sons of David were dead. Adonijah, the fourth son, naturally wished to be king. He hoped to usurp the throne from Solomon and although his life was spared by Solomon at one time, he later was slain by Solomon.

Solomon was a young man and he wisely asked God for a discerning heart to govern. He wished to be able to distinguish between right and wrong. Solomon was to rule for many years and exhibited the wisdom which God gave him on many occasions.

He built the beautiful temple of God. The prayer of dedication of the temple found in 1 Kings 8 expresses his desire ***“that all may know that Jehovah is God and there is none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes and to keep his commandments as at this day.”***

Unfortunately, he became so wealthy and powerful that he lost sight of the humble spirit of his early reign. He became incredibly wealthy. He had wives and concubines from many places and those women wanted to be able to worship as they had worshipped in their countries of origin. The result was the introduction of idol worship into Solomon's court and even into the great Temple itself.

After Solomon's death and the division of the Kingdom, it was not surprising that Jeroboam introduced idol worship. That led to many, many years of the people chosen by God to be instruments of good in the world being further and further away from that calling until we see in today's study that God charges them with having failed to worship him at all. They have failed to teach their children. They have become totally alienated from Jehovah.

How can we understand the young man Solomon's request for a discerning heart and wisdom to distinguish right from wrong when he later became a typical oriental despot?

It is well to remember that the request for discernment is a daily prayer. God relates to us on a daily basis. Jesus taught in his prayer in Matthew 6:10-13

***Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come
your will be done
on earth as it is heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from the evil one.***

Daily bread, giving and receiving forgiveness, deliverance from temptation and protection from the evil one are requests we make again and again. ***Your will be done*** becomes the whispered prayer for all the many decisions of each day.

Solomon's prayer as a young man was a noble one. It is one we should pray:

So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.

And at the end of the day we should pray it again.

Neither Solomon or the people of Hosea's day realized how far they had gone from God until the very fabric of their personal lives and of their nation was damaged beyond repair.

Our relationship with God requires the daily renewal of request for God's providential care and guidance

Call to Commitment:

Let us pray today. ***So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.***

Concluding the Service:

Close by praying together the Lord's prayer. Sing **Grace Alone**, *The Worship Hymnal* #112; CCLI # 2335524

Hosea 4:1-12; 8:1-10, 14

1). Israel had broken its covenant with God, and as a result its society was characterized by all sorts of evil with widespread effect (4:1b-4; see Exodus 20:7, 13-16; Deuteronomy 5:11, 17-21).

2). Israel was following religious leaders who led the nation astray (4:5-9) and was practicing false religion (4:10-12; 8:4b-6, 13).

3). Israel's political and governmental system was in shambles (8:4a; see also 5:1-2, 10; 7:3-7).

4). Israel was seeking help through foreign alliances, not from God (8:9; see also 5:13; 7:8-11).