



Lenten

Reflections

The Divine Intervention

March 24, 2017

Scripture

Hosea 14: 2-10

Thus says the LORD:

Return, O Israel, to the LORD, your God;
you have collapsed through your guilt.

Take with you words,
and return to the LORD;

Say to him, "Forgive all iniquity,
and receive what is good, that we may render
as offerings the bullocks from our stalls.

Assyria will not save us,
nor shall we have horses to mount;

We shall say no more, 'Our god,'
to the work of our hands;
for in you the orphan finds compassion."

I will heal their defection, says the LORD,
I will love them freely;
for my wrath is turned away from them.

I will be like the dew for Israel:

he shall blossom like the lily;

He shall strike root like the Lebanon cedar,

and put forth his shoots.
His splendor shall be like the olive tree
and his fragrance like the Lebanon cedar.
Again they shall dwell in his shade
and raise grain;
They shall blossom like the vine,
and his fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.
Ephraim! What more has he to do with idols?
I have humbled him, but I will prosper him.
"I am like a verdant cypress tree"—
Because of me you bear fruit!
Let him who is wise understand these things;
let him who is prudent know them.
Straight are the paths of the LORD,
in them the just walk,
but sinners stumble in them.

Our Scripture Reflection

Each prophet was called by God to level an accusation against His people. Hosea's accusation was "infidelity." Why? Because God's people had abandoned worship of the one true God for worship of the pagan gods of their neighbors. This sin is called "idolatry" and it is alive and well in our own day. During this Lenten season, Hosea challenges us to become aware and let go of those idols we cling to in this life. As the great commandment tells us, "There is only one God."

Food for your Journey

J. Allan Peterson writes in his book *The Myth of the Greener Grass*:

Newspaper columnist and minister George Crane tells of a wife who came into his office full of hatred toward her husband. "I do not only want to get rid of him; I want to get even. Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has me."

Dr. Crane suggested an ingenious plan. "Go home and act as if you really love your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Praise him for every

decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him. After you've convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him, then drop the bomb. Tell him that you're getting a divorce. That will really hurt him."

With revenge in her eyes, she smiled and exclaimed, "Beautiful, beautiful. Will he ever be surprised!"

And she did it with enthusiasm. Acting "as if." For two months she showed love, kindness, listening, giving, reinforcing, sharing.

When she didn't return, Crane called. "Are you ready now to go through with the divorce?"

"Divorce!" she exclaimed. "Never! I discovered I really do love him." Her actions had changed her feelings. Motion resulted in emotion. The ability to love is established not so much by fervent promise as often-repeated deeds."

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You are ever faithful and true. Help me to remain loyal to You in the midst of the temptations in this life. Amen.