

“There Can Still Be Rain”
(Hosea 10:12) NKJV

~ INTRO ~

THIS WEEK THE LORD...

- Was speaking to my heart and I sensed His goodness leading me...
 - To a place where I found grace to correct some heart issues.

TODAY...

- I want to share a few helpful lessons...
 - To encourage you too.
- We're going to take a look at (Hosea 10:12).

~ STUDY ~

HOSEA ministered to Israel during a time of *spiritual drift*.

- The people didn't stop being religious...
 - BUT something had happened internally.

(Hosea 10:2) *“Their heart [was] divided...”*

HOWEVER...

- God's response wasn't simply judgment.
 - He invited them to come back...
 - And receive refreshment from Him.

SO TOO...

- When our hearts begin to drift...
 - God graciously invites us...
 - To cultivate our relationship with Him again.

(Hosea 10:12) NKJV

“Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD, till He comes and rains righteousness on you.”

#1 – SOW FOR YOURSELVES RIGHTEOUSNESS

“There Can Still Be Rain”
(Hosea 10:12) NKJV

Israel had been planting the wrong things.

(v.13) *“You have plowed wickedness; You have reaped iniquity.”*

HOSEA IS DESCRIBING A SPIRITUAL LAW:

- The direction of my life is shaped by what I continually put into it.

THE N.T. USES SIMILAR LANGUAGE

(Gal. 6:7) NKJV *“... whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”*

EVERY DAY...

- We're planting something into our hearts.
 - Some habits cultivate our relationship with God;
 - While others slowly crowd Him out.

THINK ABOUT IT...

- What am I continually feeding my heart?

Little things planted consistently...

- Eventually produce something.

AND HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS...

- Hosea isn't saying, *“Try harder so God will accept you.”*

#2 – REAP IN MERCY

THIS IS IMPORTANT!

- We're not cultivating our hearts so that God will finally love us.
 - We respond... because He has already shown us His mercy.

The Hebrew word here is connected with *hesed*—

- God's steadfast love / faithfulness / lovingkindness.

HERE'S THE BALANCE:

- We sow righteousness...
 - But we reap mercy.

THAT'S THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

- I don't obey to earn God's love.

“There Can Still Be Rain”
(Hosea 10:12) NKJV

- I obey Him because I’ve received His love.
- **Grace** doesn’t make me passive.
 - **Grace** makes me want to draw closer to God.
 - **Grace** produces a response in me – i.e. (Rom. 12:1).

AND THAT LEADS TO THE NEXT PICTURE...

- Because sometimes **the issue** isn’t that there’s **no seed**...
 - **The issue is**... the **ground has become hard**.

#3 – BREAK UP THE FALLOW GROUND

Fallow ground is land that was once cultivated...

- But it has been left unattended.
 - Over time the ground becomes hard.
 - Rain can fall on it.
 - Seed can land on it.
 - But the soil isn't prepared to receive it.

GOD SAYS...

- Break it up.

SPIRITUALLY...

- That’s a picture of allowing God to deal with areas of our hearts...
 - That have become hard / neglected / resistant / distracted /
 - Or simply untouched for too long.

AND HERE’S WHAT WE NEED TO SEE...

- **Fallow ground** isn’t dead ground.
 - It’s neglected ground.

SOMETIMES...

- There are places in our **relationship** with God...
 - That haven’t necessarily become **rebellious**...
 - They’ve simply become **uncultivated**.
- Prayer can become routine.
- Scripture can become familiar.

“There Can Still Be Rain”
(Hosea 10:12) NKJV

- Worship can become mechanical.
- Serving can become responsibility.

IN OTHER WORDS...

- We can do the right things...
 - While slowly losing our affection for God.

SO...

- What does it mean to *“Break up the ground”*?
 - Means becoming honest with God again.
 - Letting God’s Word expose what has become neglected.
 - Responding to what He shows us.

BUT...

- How do we begin cultivating the ground again?

#4 – IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD

NOTICE WHAT HOSEA SAYS...

- *“For it is time to seek the LORD...”*
 - Not tomorrow.
 - Not when life slows down.
 - Not when you feel more spiritual.
 - BUT NOW!

AND NOTICE...

- Hosea doesn’t say:
 - Seek answers.
 - Seek blessing.
 - Seek a better life.

HE SAYS... *“seek the LORD.”*

THAT’S RELATIONSHIP.

Sometimes in the Christian life...

- Our relationship with God can become functional.

“There Can Still Be Rain”
(Hosea 10:12) NKJV

We seek God because we need

- Wisdom / help / direction.

AND THOSE ARE ALL GOOD THINGS...

- But Hosea brings us back to something simpler:
 - Seek Him because you want Him.

Jesus said to the church in Ephesus:

“You have left your first love... remember... repent... and do the first works.”
(Rev. 2:4-5) NKJV

AFTER YEARS OF WALKING WITH CHRIST...

- Sometimes the challenge isn't learning something new.
 - It's allowing familiar truths to become personal again.

THREE QUESTIONS:

- 1) What have you been planting in your heart?
- 2) What area of your relationship with God needs cultivating again?
- 3) What does seeking the Lord look like this week?

~ IN CLOSING ~

THERE'S ONE LAST PHRASE...

- That gives us the title of this message.
(v.12-D) “...till He comes and rains righteousness on you.”

CHURCH...

- We can break up the ground.
- We can plant the seed.
- We can seek the Lord.

BUT...

- We cannot make it rain – only God sends the rain.

AND THAT'S THE HOPE IN THIS VERSE.

“There Can Still Be Rain”
(Hosea 10:12) NKJV

- God wasn't standing over Israel saying...
 - *“Look how terrible your field has become.”*

HE WAS SAYING...

- Come back to Me.
- Cultivate the ground again.
- Seek Me again.

Maybe your relationship with God... has become routine.

- Maybe an area of your heart has been neglected.
- Maybe you've been spiritually dry for longer than you'd like to admit.

“It's not too late.”

- Hard ground can be broken up.
- Fallow ground can become fruitful again.

SO... Seek the Lord again.

AND TRUST GOD FOR WHAT YOU CANNOT PRODUCE...

- Because...
 - ***“There Can Still Be Rain”***