



Links Players

“Clean-Up On Aisle 6”

The Lord says, “Then I will heal you of your faithlessness; my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever.” (Hosea 14:4, NLT)

I arrived at the 6th tee on the 512-yard par 5, one under for the day. I striped my drive down the middle and laid up with a 5-wood to 88 yards. I pulled out my gap wedge.

Then, it happened! I chunked the shot about 15 yards. I grabbed my sand wedge and proceeded to skull the next shot over the green and into the back bunker. I was so hot that you could fry an egg on my forehead. After one attempt to escape the bunker, I finally made the putting surface. Then, the fun started!

As I lined up my fourth putt, I was reminded of Seve’s famous line: “I miss, I miss, I miss, I make.” Oh, what a MESS!

Walking off the green, I muttered those familiar words often heard in your local supermarket or big box superstore: “Clean up on Aisle 6”.

Between 755 BC and 722 BC, Hosea confronted the Israelites about their sinful nature. Israel was in a huge mess. They were worshiping the gods of the pagan nations around them, most notably the Canaanite rain god, Baal.

Besides the Israelites’ idolatry, Hosea described them as having also “plowed wickedness,” “reaped injustice,” “eaten the fruit of lies,” and “trusted in their own ways.” (Hosea 10:13). On top of all those sins, they failed to show gratitude to God for his blessings.

Hosea’s words are full of rage and pain. They convey God’s anger and anguish about a nation that had repeatedly gone astray. God says that he will “fill Israel with maggots and make them rot” (Hosea 15:12 CEV). He says He is “like a lion who will tear them to pieces and carry them off” without the chance for a rescue. (Hosea 15:14, NIV).

In sharp contrast to the picture of the “angry God,” Hosea’s preaching reveals another facet of the loving and forgiving God. God offers a promise to the people if they repent and return to Him. Hosea enumerates several of God’s “I will” promises: “I will give back” (2:15). “I will betroth” (2:20). “I will respond” (2:21-22). “I will sow, and I will show my love” (2:23).

Hosea’s message concludes with an expression of God’s wondrous love, which remains paramount even considering the Israelites’ rebellious behavior. God tells them that He will heal them and love them freely if they choose to return to him---He will clean up their mess! What a glorious promise!

The promise God made to the Israelites that He will receive, restore, and revive them is a beautiful promise that is equally applicable to us. We ought to cherish and take advantage of this promise in our lives as we survey the mess we've made when we've fallen away from the intimate relationship God desires to have with us.

Hosea challenges us to examine the nature of our relationship with God. He reminds us of the call to repentance for our sins and the promise of a right relationship with our Heavenly Father. We can experience that relationship because of Christ's death and resurrection.

Whether it is on the 6th hole, aisle 6, or wherever you are, just remember: Through our true and genuine repentance, we can experience God's gifts to us of love, grace, and mercy.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the promises you have given us that you will receive us, restore us, and revive us if we come before you with true and genuine repentance.

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