

RECAP

Last week, we considered the significance of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit's role in our lives.

- **Were there any times in the past week where you felt the Holy Spirit enable you to be more like Jesus with his presence?**
- **Were there any opportunities that the Holy Spirit gave you to move in authority through his power?**

IDEA 1

Brian shared with us the story of Hosea, whose life God used as an object lesson to speak to a nation that was chasing after things other than God. Brian shared that this is what the Bible calls "idolatry": looking to things other than God to satisfy our deepest needs.

- **What good things do you want out of life? Or, to put it another way, what do you think you need for life to be good? Remember, wanting good things in life is not idolatry.**
- **How have you seen yourself start to chase the good things you want out of life? Do you think that those good things have become idols? How can you tell?**
- **Has there been a time in your life where someone you trusted helped you identify something you were chasing other than God? If you have, what was that experience like? If not, is there someone in your life now who you would trust to help you identify your idols?**
- **Why do you think it's so harmful to us to look for the things we want and need anywhere but with God?**

IDEA 2

Brian made sure that we understood that Hosea's story is not just about a nation not trusting God. Hosea's story also shows us that God relentlessly pursues us with His redeeming love. Even a story as hard as Hosea's has a hopeful ending when God is involved.

- **Does knowing that God always pursues us with His redeeming love change your attitude towards him? Is that a depiction of God that you are accustomed to?**
- **Would you be willing to share a story about a time when you experienced God's relentless pursuit? It could be your testimony or something else.**
- **Why do you think God pursues us so relentlessly? Why do you think He would pay such a high price to redeem us?**

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

At the end of his message, Brian invited us into a time of gratitude towards God. Gratitude is a way to remind ourselves that our lives depend on God, not on our own efforts.

Take time together as a group to thank God for anything and everything in prayer.

Before you begin, take a moment or two to think about things that you can thank God for. No subject is too small. Take some time to pray these prayers of thankfulness out loud together.

At the end of the time, pray this prayer together:

Father, we thank you with all our hearts. You provide for our daily needs. You protect us in times of trouble. You hear our cries and you rescue us. Father, we do not want to forget for a moment that you are the source of every good thing. Instead, we will praise you with all our lives. Most of all Father, we thank you for your love. Your love is relentless. Your love redeems us. We know how to love because you first loved us. You showed us your love by sending your son to take our place, and through Jesus' resurrection you showed us that your love is stronger than death. Father, for your love, we will never stop thanking you. Help our hearts to be full of gratitude today and forever. Amen.

APPLICATION

When we come to accept and believe that God relentlessly pursues us with his redeeming love, that fundamentally changes what we think about who and what we are, which in turn changes how we live.

- **In the coming week, find ways to remind yourself about God's love for you.** Change your phone's wallpaper to a verse about God's love (Hosea 2:23, Isaiah 43:1, 1st John 4:19). Put a sticky note with one of those verses next to your mirror and read it while you brush your teeth. Find a way to remind yourself daily that God loves you with a relentless, redeeming love.
- **Have a conversation with a trusted friend about the idols that you have in your life.** Ask them to help you think about what it would look like to trust God's relentless love instead of those idols. It might be choosing to not watch a certain show, or not spend money on certain objects, or place boundaries on a certain relationship, or surrender certain things to God and practice trusting in him. Then replace those activities, decisions, or thoughts with new ones that redirect your focus to God, his love for you, and how every need ultimately finds satisfaction in Him.