

Reflection Guide - Hosea 1.1-11

HEAT: *What is the immediate context of this text? What circumstances surround the passage? What struggle or blessing is being unpacked? What aspect of life are people responding to?*

God is holy and loving and good. He created a people for his own possession and desires his people to walk with him in faithfulness. Walking in God's ways often becomes most difficult when when there is not a felt need for him and there are so many other people and or "goods" that are competing for our affections. Hosea was called by God during a time of real prosperity in the life of Israel, during their second golden age for Israel and spanned the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Jeroboam son of Jehoash, king of Israel.

THORNS: *What sinful ways do they [we] respond to the same circumstance? Are any seen in the text?*

However, with ever increasing prosperity, came increasing spiritual infidelity. God sent Hosea expose their and our own wandering...unfaithfulness

4:1-2 Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

There was no integrity amongst the people, no affection coupled with commitment...no recognition of God's obligations to them and theirs to Him. (still religious activity) Notice, all these are relational descriptions. Hosea, more than the rest of the prophets, shows us our sin in relational terms. It's not just breaking rules...it's unfaithfulness, rebellion. So he doesn't just define sin...he calls us to feel it.

BAD ROOT: *What heart issue lies at the root of their [our] sinful response? What new HEAT is created by their [our] sinful response? What about God are we failing to believe in our THORN responses? What do they [we] desire?*

Israel had become proud, and economic progress only added to its self-confidence. The social structure encouraged power, greed, and self-indulgence, corruption of justice, luxurious living among the upper classes, and the decay of social unity. The wealthy showed no sense of responsibility toward the poor. The poor were reduced the the level of slaves as the gap between themselves and the wealthy grew while the aristocracy imitated royalty and adopted a lavish lifestyle. (VenGemerer)

Israel had presumed upon God and in their comfort they walked headfirst into a dead religion...busy doing the right things, wrong reasons...even began attributing their blessing to Baal.

God's holy response to them would continue to create more HEAT for them. In just a few years, the Assyrian army would wipe the nation of Israel off the map. All that remained were then mixed with the nations...come to be known as the Samaritans. They'll experience the judgment of God for their infidelity...breaking of the covenant commitments that they had made with God...

4 Then the LORD said to him: Name him Jezreel, for in a little while I will bring the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu and put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.

CROSS: *How is God or his grace displayed in the text? What aspect of Christ's work on the cross is most necessary here? What commands are in the text that I need to obey?*

In a more profound way, in our relationship with God, what are we telling Him about our need for His love and mercy? Do we really want Him to be our God? Why do we resist His guidance? And why is there so little evidence of social righteousness and personal holiness in our daily lives? Why do we expect so little and are satisfied with even less? But when we insist on our own way and persevere in our sin, the time comes when the daily mercies of the Lord are withdrawn from us and we are abandoned to our folly so that we might learn to turn back to him. During such periods God will not be actively showing mercy, save in the judgment itself, and we will be conscious of great spiritual darkness. (Ogilvie)

The weird names...They Were Acts of God's Grace...they were wake up calls to a nation before it would be too late. God didn't have to warn them. Here is where we see the faithfulness of God toward sinners like us. God doesn't give up on His plans and promises. He actually confirms the promise made to Abraham. Hosea's generation may be conquered, but a remnant will remain and from that remnant God will fulfill His promise.

Hosea 1:10-11 Yet the number of the Israelites will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted. And in the place where they were told, You are not My people, they will be called: Sons of the living God. And the Judeans and the Israelites will be gathered together. They will appoint for themselves a single ruler

God's people had been 2 kingdoms since Solomon's Son and God promises to reconcile the divisions...they will by grace be One new people. It would take almost 750 years for this to play out...the promise and the longing would be passed down from generation to generation...

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

This baby born in a manger would later hang on a tree outside of Jerusalem. On that tree Jesus bore the full rejection of God's people and the judgment of God for our unfaithfulness...sin. But he didn't remain in the tomb. 3 days later he rose from the grave...so that all who by faith believe upon Him as King and Savior are God's people...Though Israel were "once not a people"...dead in sin... by Grace they can be "God's Son / Daughter"

God's holiness and love collided on the cross...God judged Jesus for our infidelity in our place so that we can be His People.

Hosea 6:1 "Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. [2] After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.

GOOD ROOT: *What can they [I] believe about God because of the cross? What do they [I] desire now? How does Christ enable me to obey his commands? How is Jesus the solution / motivation for transformation and action in this text?*

Maybe you believe that God is your creator...maybe even your Savior. But you don't feel like His child. Maybe He feels like a distant father to you. I want you to hear the Lord say to you through His Word: "You will be called children of the Living God"

Hosea 2:1 - Say to your brothers, "You are my people," and to your sisters, "You have received mercy."

YOU ARE GOD'S PEOPLE...GOD'S LOVED ONES. If we do not live out of the approval that we have in God...we will look to build that approval somewhere else: through religion or through work, success, possessions, etc

Galatians 4: 6-7 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Sent His Spirit that we would "know" our adopted status...He doesn't just want us to know the information...he wants us to feel it... If you are a Christian, you have the Spirit of God alive in you, the Spirit that cries out Father!. Ask Him to help you feel like His child, feel His protection, feel His love

Prayer of Confession and Faith:

We're here this morning, like Israel, as forgetful people...you've been so much better than we deserve, faithfully fulfilling your promise to give us all good things in Christ. How quick we are to forget. Instead of remembering your love and your deliverance and running to you as our shield...we prefer to remain tethered in bondage to our idols b/c we love our sin and it seems to hard to fight against them. Each day we have doubted your goodness and power and have resented the race of obedience that you have called us to run. Father, forgive us.

Jesus, thank you for remembering the truth faithfully on our behalf. You cherished your fathers unchangeable character, you submitted to His perfect wisdom, and trusted Him completely in all the circumstances of your life, even when it was most painful. Now your obedience becomes our strong hope in the midst of ongoing weakness and longing...We have no other hope...nor do we need one.

Holy Spirit, we need your power to work in us to stir up our hope. To stir u our affection...our passion. Help us to know God as He is, the unchangeable King who has sworn by Himself to save us in spite of our foolishness.

Cause us to know and to feel God's great love for us, that we would be transformed into people who love Him deeply and run our race of obedience with strong confidence and joyful hope in Christ. Open our lips to join the heavenly praise and help us look forward to the triumphant coming of our King. Amen.

FRUIT: *What would the expected fruit of the gospel be in this situation? What does obedience look like? Does it speak of this in the text? Where else in the Scriptures is this?*