

TIMELESS TRUTHS FOR A CRUCIAL TIME

The Messages of Twelve Old Testament Prophets

Discussion Guide
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Sermon Title

The God of Everlasting Love

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Hosea 1-14

Introduction: As we have progressed through the messages of each of the prophets so far we have discovered that each one does have a principle theme: something that reveals the character of God and highlights one of His attributes. Without question Hosea shows us the God of everlasting love; a covenant keeping God who truly loves Israel and is grieved over her unfaithfulness.

Sermon Outline

I. The Last Prophet of Israel (~750-725 BC)

- A. Hosea: The man and his times
 1. Name—Hoshea, Jeshua means salvation
 2. Married to a woman with a serious character flaw (an adulteress) and with three children.
 3. Both his message and his life are testimonies to the enduring love of God
- B. Israel is in her final days. Hosea's prophecy ended just three years before she was overrun by the Assyrians.
- C. Israel's apostasy has declined even further so that she is not just pursuing personal pleasure, materialism, and the oppression of the poor and weak, but she is now turning to other nations for help as if her salvation lay in the hands of unbelievers. (12:1)

II. Key Features of the Prophecy of Hosea

- A. A difficult assignment and a living illustration—loving an unfaithful spouse.
- B. The nation has degraded to all sorts of carnal and materialistic pursuits: Hosea 4:1-4
- C. The nation has pursued idols and false religion
- D. The nation has turned to Egypt, Assyria, and Syria for aid and security. Israel is attracted to the wealth of Assyria and covets the bounty a truce may bring.
- E. Israel has forgotten how God brought her up from the land of Egypt, how He has redeemed her time and again and given her the land of Canaan. She has forgotten how He has been so faithful and has loved her with an everlasting love. Despite her gross unfaithfulness, God has been faithful and persistently loving.

III. Applications for Our Time

- A. The first major issue God had against Israel was her significant materialism. We learned from Amos that even her pretense of religion was inconvenient relative to her pursuit of comfort, wealth, and material possessions. It reminds us of the Church of Laodicea.
- B. Secondly was her pursuit of other gods. Closely aligned with greed and materialism is idolatry, regardless of the shape or ritual of the idol. Anything we hold more dear to us than God is an idol in our life.
- C. Perhaps the final straw however, was that when God was not working for her, instead of asking what she might be doing wrong, Israel turned to neighboring countries for help and security. Ultimately they devoured her. God allows adversity in the lives of His people to turn their hearts back toward Him when His kindness has failed to do so. When, rather than repent and seek the Lord alone, we turn to the arm of the flesh for support we truly relinquish the blessing and help God would provide for He will not share His glory with another.

Conclusion: Never mind the state of the nation, the church in the United States today is looking very uncomfortably like the spiritual climate of the nation of Israel in Hosea's day. We are looking like an unfaithful Bride. We need to turn back to the Lord with our whole heart!

The word of the LORD which came to Hosea the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. ² When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD." ³ So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. ⁴ And the LORD said to him, "Name him Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will 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." Hosea 1: 1-5 (NASB)

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Bring her into the wilderness And speak kindly to her. ¹⁵ "Then I will give her her vineyards from there, And the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ "It will come about in that day," declares the LORD, "That you will call Me Ishi And will no longer call Me Baali."

(Cont'd on Page 2)

Discussion Questions

1. Name some of the ways that you see Christians in the West pursuing other gods. What does that look like? What proof can you offer to support your claim?
2. Jeremiah prophesies, "My people have committed two evils, they have turned from Me the living God and they have hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." (paraphrase) What are some of the *broken cisterns* the church is relying upon today?
3. Discuss with your group some of the differences between a Christ-centered passion for evangelism and healthy church growth vs. *marketing the church*. What is and is not appropriate in terms of presence and advertising in the community?
4. Discuss with your group what it looks like to trust God with all of your heart to meet your needs and the needs of His Church vs. human methods of budgeting and finance. Is there overlap? Is a budget or a savings account wrong? Defend or qualify your answer.
5. What is the difference between physical illness and psychological/emotional difficulties? What kind of help is absolutely guaranteed in this life by Jesus Christ? What is the cost of relying on Jesus Christ alone to meet us in emotional and psychological difficulties? What is the cost of not relying on Jesus Christ alone? Explain your answers.

(Cont'd from Page 1)

*17 "For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth,
So that they will be mentioned by their names no more.*

*18 "In that day I will also make a covenant for them
With the beasts of the field,
The birds of the sky
And the creeping things of the ground.*

*And I will abolish the bow,
the sword and war from the land,*

And will make them lie down in safety.

*19 "I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice,
In lovingkindness and in compassion,*

20 And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD.

21 "It will come about in that day that I will respond," declares the LORD.

"I will respond to the heavens, and they will respond to the earth,

*22 And the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine and to the oil,
And they will respond to Jezreel.*

23 "I will sow her for Myself in the land.

*I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion,
And I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!'*

And they will say, 'You are my God!'"

Hosea 2: 14-23 (NASB)

*For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice,
And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.*

Hosea 6: 6 (NASB)

4.) xx

*Sow with a view to
righteousness,
Reap in accordance with
kindness;
Break up your fallow
ground,
For it is time to seek the
LORD
Until He comes to rain
righteousness on you.
13 You have plowed
wickedness, you have
reaped injustice,
You have eaten the fruit of
lies.
Because you have trusted in
your way, in your numerous
warriors,
Hosea 10: 12-13 (NASB)*

5.) xx

*Therefore, return to your
God,
Observe kindness and
justice,
And wait for your God
continually.
Hosea 12: 6 (NASB)*

6.) xx

*Return, O Israel, to the
LORD your God,
For you have stumbled
because of your iniquity. 2
Take words with you and
return to the LORD.
Say to Him, "Take away all
iniquity
And receive us graciously,
That we may present the
fruit of our lips.
Whoever is wise, let him
understand these things;
Whoever is discerning, let
him know them.
For the ways of the LORD
are right,
And the righteous will walk
in them,
But transgressors will
stumble in them.
Hosea 14: 1-2, 9 (NASB)*

