

Hearts Exposed Hosea 6v4-7v16

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Date: 26 February 2017

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- [0 : 00] The question smoulders all night. In the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. All of them are hot as an oven. They devour their rulers. All their kings fall, and none of them calls on me.
- Ephraim mixes with the nations. Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over. Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice.
- Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this, he does not return to the Lord his God or search for him. Ephraim is like a dove, easily deceived and senseless, now calling to Egypt, now turning to Assyria.
- When they go, I will throw my net over them. I will pull them down like birds of the air. When I hear them flocking together, I will catch them. Woe to them, because they have strayed from me.
- Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me. I long to redeem them, but they speak lies against me. They do not cry out to me from their hearts, but wail upon their beds.
- [1 : 10] They gather together for grain and new wine, but turn away from me. I trained them and strengthened them, but they plot evil against me. They do not turn to the Most High.
- They are like a faulty bow. Their leaders will fall by the sword because of their insolent words. For this, they will be ridiculed in the land of Egypt. Thank you.
- Well, let's pray. And just as a reminder, something that Mary mentioned in her story, the importance of God's word.
- Well, we, all of us, speaker, listener, together, we come under the authority of God's word. We want to hear what God has to say to us today.
- So let's commit ourselves to him and pray for his work in our lives. Father, thank you for your word, for its truth, trusting that it is your voice speaking to us today by your spirit.
- [2 : 26] And Father, we not only want to hear it, but we want it to change us. We want your word to show us what we are like and who you are and how we should come to you.
- So help us now, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, I had a frightening experience the other day.
- I looked in the mirror. I look in the mirror every day, but this time I stopped and had a good hard look.
- It wasn't just the lack of hair on my head. It was the fact that I seemed to have more hair in my ears and up my nose. It wasn't a pretty sight.
- And I have a lot more sympathy for what my wife has to wake up to every morning. You see, looking in a mirror is a scary ordeal because it shows us up for what we are really like.
- [3 : 38] There's no hiding. It tells the truth. It reveals what we normally can't see. Well, in chapters 6 to 7, it's like God is holding up a huge mirror to our lives.

Yes, God wants Israel to see what they are like, but he also wants us to see what we are like. And what we see is a little bit unnerving.

Look at chapter 6, verse 7. Do you see it there? Like Adam. We look in the mirror.

What do we see? Like Adam. They have broken the covenant. They were unfaithful to me there. You see, as we look into the mirror, we see a reflection of the first man, Adam.

You remember the story of Adam in Genesis, created by God, loved by God, treasured by God. But Adam turned against God.

[4 : 54] He broke the covenant. He broke those marriage vows. He was unfaithful. So as God holds up the mirror to us, we see what we are really like.

We are just like Adam. Because God's word is a mirror of the human heart.

As we look into God's word and as we come to these verses here in this section of Hosea, God's word reveals, it shows us up for what we are really like.

There is no hiding. It tells the truth. It reveals what we can't normally see. So what does the mirror of God's word show us?

Well, first, we see the condition of our sinful hearts. There's three things about our hearts that we see.

[5 : 57] First, our love is like a morning mist. Look at verse 4, chapter 6, verse 4. What can I do with you, Ephraim?

What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist. Like the early dew that disappears.

I want you to imagine the scene. It's dawn. There's this low-lying mist. The grass is covered in dew and everything is soaking wet.

But within a few minutes, the sun rises, the mist fades, the dew evaporates, and everything. The ground is completely dry.

But God is saying that's what our love is like. It does not last. It fades. It evaporates. It evaporates. We say we love God.

[6 : 57] We promise to be faithful and loyal. But it quickly disappears like the morning mist and the dew. Verse 6.

God says, I desire mercy. Or I desire steadfast love or faithful love. Not sacrifice.

And acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings. As Ralph read just a moment ago in Isaiah, Israel performed all their religious duties.

They make all their sacrifices, but it's an outward show. It's like us turning up to church once a week. We sing our hymns.

We say our prayers. And then we forget God for the rest of the week. And it's all so fickle. It's like the morning mist that disappears and evaporates.

[7 : 59] Our love for God just zaps into thin air. Amen. Isaiah also says in chapter 29 verse 13.

He says this. These people, they come near to me with their mouth. They honour me with their lips. But their hearts are far from me.

Their worship is made up of rules taught by men. You see, God is not duped by religious outward performance.

Trying to get God's attention by the things we do. He sees past the outward show. And he looks at the heart. He looks for that steadfast, loyal, faithful love.

But what he sees is a love that is like the morning mist. It just evaporates into thin air. Second, he says our hearts are like a burning oven.

- [9 : 07] Look at chapter 7 verse 7. All of them are hot as an oven. They devour their rulers.
All their kings fall. And none of them calls on me. Now it might be part of our language to describe someone as a burning oven.
But we can describe people as being, we might say, hot with anger. And that seems to be the picture here. The people are fuelled by anger.
Intent on getting rid of the leaders and the kings that they don't like. Have a look at chapter 6 verse 8. Gilead is a city of wicked men.
Stained with footprints of blood. As marauders lie in ambush for a man. Well, so do the priests. They're involved in it too. They murder on the road to Shechem as people make their way to the religious shrines.
- [10 : 14] Committing shameful crimes. History tells us that during the ministry of Hosea, there was a succession of different kings.
And four of Israel's kings were ruthlessly assassinated over a 13 year period. Keep your finger in Hosea and go back in your Bibles to two kings.
Chapter 15. I haven't got a page number. I'm sorry. If somebody gets it, they can shout it out. 2 Kings chapter 15. 3.8.5 So this gives a history.
If you want to know about the kings who were ruling at the time of Hosea, well, 2 Kings chapter 15 tells you who those kings are and what happened to them. So this is a history and tells us what it was like.
2 Kings chapter 15 and verse 10. So we read there, Shalom, son of Jabesh, conspired against Zechariah.
- [11 : 33] He attacked him in front of the people. He attacked him and succeeded him as king. Now look at verse 14.
Then Menahem, son of Gadai, went up from Tirzah up to Samaria. He attacked Shalom, son of Jabesh in Samaria and assassinated him and succeeded him as king.
Not safe to be a king, is it? Verse 25. One of the chief officers, Pekah, son of Remaliah, conspired against him, taking 50 men of Gilead.
Do you remember we just read about Gilead being a place of wicked men? Taking 50 men of Gilead with him, he assassinated Pekahiah along with Argob and Ariah in the citadel of the royal palace of Samaria.
So Pekah killed Pekahiah and succeeded him as king. And it wasn't safe for him either. Look at verse 30.
- [12 : 45] Then Hoshea, son of Elah, conspired against Pekah, son of Remaliah. He attacked and assassinated him and then succeeded him as king.
Go back to Hosea. You see, when Hosea describes what it was like, murder on the roads, bloodshed, leaving footprints of blood where they went, they were all involved, even the priests, in plotting and scheming.
They were all consumed with anger and hate and it drove them to get what they wanted. So look at chapter 7, verse 6. Their hearts are like an oven.
They are burning with anger. They approach him. That is, they come to a king with intrigue. It's like they're sucking up to him. Their passion smoulders all night.
And in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. And all of them are as hot as an oven. They devour their rulers. All their kings fall.
- [13 : 53] Assassinated. And none of them calls on me. It's an awful picture of what was going on.
And we just need to turn on the news ourselves. And every day we hear of another murder fuelled by anger and hate. A lover becomes jealous and has her partner killed.

A gang takes revenge and an innocent victim is killed. Getting rid of people they don't like. Fuelled by anger and hate. But let's not be so quick to go pointing the fingers. Do you remember the words of Jesus?

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, do not murder. But I tell you, anyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment.

[15 : 00] Anyone who says, you fool, or I hate you, will be in danger of the fire of hell. You see, we may not pull the trigger and assassinate someone, but we know what it is to nurse anger inside our hearts towards those who have hurt us, those who have offended us.

Well, we might not kill them. We might not speak out verbally against them, but inside, we are hot with anger. God says it is just as vile.

Third, he says, our thinking is like a senseless dove. Chapter 7, verse 11.

Ephraim, which was another name for Israel, is like a dove. Easily deceived and senseless. Now, you might not have seen a dove, but I am sure we have seen pigeons, same family.

You know what they are like when they take off from the ground. You are never quite sure which direction they are going to fly in. They flitter and flutter one way and then another. But God is saying, this is just what Israel are like.

[16 : 23] Easily deceived, verse 11. And senseless. Now they are off calling to Egypt. Now they are turning off to Assyria. Making an allegiance with one nation.

Come and help us. And then looking to another nation, thinking we can get a better offer over here. In reality, their chasing after these other nations for support was turning away from God.

Look at verse 13. Woe to them, because they have strayed from me. Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me.

You see, the point is, it's an accurate description of what we are like. We are so easily deceived.

We're senseless at times. We're so flighty. If only I could change my job, then I'd be happy. Or if I had a partner in my life, then I would be fulfilled.

[17 : 30] If I just had more time to do, then I would be content. We're always chasing after another dream, another plan, another philosophy, another thing to do.

We're never satisfied. Like a senseless dove, flying from one thing to another, all the while, it's actually a turning away from God.

And it can be like that with church. We can move from one church to another. Oh, I like that church over there. It has better music.

I'll go over here. They've got more young people. Or have you seen the place over there? They've got a really nice building. And their program, it's fabulous.

We are so restless, flying from one thing to another, all the while, it's an expression of our turning away from God.

[18 : 34] Augustine was a young man who lived around 400 AD. MB students should remember him.

For most of his life, he had searched for happiness. Denying himself nothing, he did whatever he pleased. In his confession, he wrote this.

He said, all persons want to be happy. And no persons are happy who do not have what they want.

So he did whatever he pleased to try and gain that happiness. But it left him restless and unfulfilled. And all that changed when he turned to Christ.

He was reading a section of Romans and he came to Christ and trusted in him. And he wrote this in his confession. He said this about God. You have made us for yourself.

[19 : 35] And our hearts are restless until they can find rest in you. The people of Israel were restless, a chasing after this, a chasing after that.

We can be restless as we chase after different things. But our hearts only find rest when we find our true joy and happiness in God himself.

You see, it's not easy to look into the mirror. And it's certainly not easy to look into the mirror of God's word. It's not a pretty sight.

Our love is like the morning mist. Our hearts are like a burning oven. Our thinking is like a senseless dove. We are just like Adam.

There is no hiding. It tells the truth. It reveals what we can't normally see. But the second thing we see as we look into this mirror is the heartache expressed by God.

[20 : 54] It reveals something of God's own heart. Look at chapter 6, verse 4. What can I do with you, Ephraim?

What can I do with you, Judah? As a young teen, I remember lying in my bed what I could only describe as a period, a time of teenage rebellion.

I'm sure you can understand what I'm saying. My mum came in, as she always did, to say goodnight. And I pretended to be asleep. And thinking I was asleep, she leant over me, started to rub my hair, my long blonde hair that I used to have, by the way.

She began to whisper, Oh, I do love you, son. But what am I going to do with you? It was the heartache of a parent over her wayward son.

And that's what we have here in verse 4. God, the loving father, leaning over his rebellious child. Or in the context of Hosea, the loving, faithful husband, calling out to his wayward wife, Oh, I do love you, but what am I going to do with you?

[22 : 17] How will your heart change? Sometimes it seems we're sincere and we do want to change.

Look at chapter 7, verse 1, or just the end of verse 11 of chapter 6. He says there, Whenever I would restore the fortunes of my people, whenever I would heal Israel, well, the sins of Ephraim are exposed and the crimes of Samaria are revealed.

God is saying, I'm willing to restore you. Can't you see I'm offering to heal you? I want you to come back to me. But when he comes to them and calls out to them, all he finds is wandering hearts.

The idea of forgiveness sounds great, but when it comes to dealing with the sin, well, it's just easier to push it and sweep it under the carpet. Verse 2, verse of chapter 7, But they do not realize that I remember all their evil deeds.

You can't just sweep it away and pretend it's not there. Their sins engulf them. They are always before me. You see, we can so easily ignore our sin.

[23 : 36] We're like Adam. Back in the garden. We begin to make excuses and point the finger. I know I shouldn't have spoken like that, but you've got to understand, I was just tired.

I know I shouldn't have clicked on that site, but it's been a stressful week and I was just lonely. I know I should have been serving, but I just wanted some me time.

I should have told the truth, but it's not like they would have found out. And as God looks, God's heart is broken because sin that is not dealt with breaks our relationship with God.

chapter 7, verse 13, the end of verse 13, God cries out, I long to redeem them. I long to redeem them.

But they speak lies against me. The picture isn't unlike what Jesus sees as he looks over Jerusalem. Jesus is heartbroken.

[24 : 50] He longs to restore and redeem. We read these words in Luke chapter 13. He says, O Jerusalem, we have the picture of Jesus looking out over the city.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

But you are not willing. And this is the cry of God's heart today. He longs to gather us under the care and protection of his wings.

He longs to redeem. He longs to restore us. What will I do with you? What will change your heart?

So we not only see our own sinful hearts, but we get a picture of God's heart-breaking concern and love for his people.

[25 : 53] But third, we see the way of true repentance. As we look into this mirror, we get a reflection of what true repentance looks like.

Let's look at it in two ways. First, how not to repent. It seems the people of Israel had no desire to change.

Look at verse 10. Chapter 7, verse 10. Israel's arrogance testifies against him. But despite all this, he does not turn to the Lord his God or search for him.

God has held up the mirror, revealed the sin, but still there's no desire to change. And even when we think they might be ready to repent, it's not even genuine.

Look down at verse 14. They do not cry out to me from their hearts, but they wail upon their beds. They gather together for grain and new wine, but turn away from me.

[27 : 01] It's more like, their prayers are more like a 999 call. They cry out to God for help only because they want something from God, a better harvest, new wine, better rains, better sunshine, so life will go well for them.

Have you ever prayed those prayers? Lord, I promise I'll change if you get me out of this mess. Lord, I'll stop so long as you give me.

God, if you can get me that job or that partner, a better salary, then I'll be able to serve more or give more. But it's not sincere.

It's not from the heart. It's not about genuine change. It's about crying out to God to get things that we want. They simply did not want God for who he was.

They just wanted his gifts. It wasn't a cry from the heart. And that's not repentance. So how do we repent?

[28 : 10] Well, look at verse 16. It starts with a negative, but we'll get to the positive. They do not turn to the Most High.

They are like a faulty bow. I was helped with this illustration as I was reading through the week.

A faulty bow is your bow and arrow. And when that arrow is fired at the target, it's as if it starts off in the right direction, but then veers off and misses its target completely.

It's a faulty bow. And God is saying to his people, well, this is what your repentance is like. You're like that arrow that's being fired from the bow.

You start off heading towards your target. You start heading towards God. But when you see what repentance really means, it just veers away.

[29 : 14] You turn away from God. Verse 16. They do not turn to the Most High. They are like a faulty bow. In other words, positively, true repentance is the complete opposite.

You see, repentance isn't just simply a quick, oh Lord, please forgive me, and then veering off again. It's a heading towards the direction of God and asking God, pleading with God, not just will you forgive me, but will you change me?

Will you change my heart? Let me give you four steps to true repentance.

Repentance from the heart. Repentance that will bring about change of our lives. And I think they all flow from the text we've been looking at this morning.

Here's the first one. First, ask God to reveal your sin to you. You see, as we read God's Word, yes, we read it to help us express our praise to Him, to learn about God, but we also read it asking God, Lord, search my heart.

[30 : 42] Show me the attitudes and the behaviours in my life that are not Christ-like. Remember, we're saying God's Word is like a mirror that reflects what our hearts are like.

So, as we read God's Word, ask God, reveal, show me. Show me the things in my life that need to change. Second, take responsibility of your sin.

As God shows us our heart, face up to it. Look in that mirror. Don't look away. Look into it. Accept it.

Own it. Israel would not own it or accept it. They wouldn't look into the mirror. But we are to own it and accept it.

Don't ignore or hide, but take responsibility and say, yes, this is me. I am like Adam. So, take responsibility.

[31 : 48] Third, replace your sinful desires with a desire for Christ. Rather than running to other things and other people, we instead run to Christ.

Remember the restlessness that Israel had as they went from one nation to another? Well, we can be the same. We can just swap one thing for another thing. But we are to replace those sinful desires with a desire for Christ.

Just like Augustine as he talked about our restlessness. That is not fulfilled until we find our rest in Him. or as Tim Keller put it, Christ is the only one who will satisfy you completely and if you fail Him, will forgive you eternally.

Replace your sinful desires with a desire for Christ. Christ. And then fourth, learn to rejoice in the forgiveness of your sin.

You see, when we truly repent, God will not disappoint you. He will and He does forgive you. All our sin is dealt with no matter what it is.

[33 : 12] No longer held against us. He welcomes us. He treasures us. We are fully and completely restored. Rejoice and live in your forgiveness.

This is what true repentance is all about. Repentance from the heart. That arrow from the bow that is directed towards God.

A calling out. Change me. Change my heart. for a heart that is for you. We're going to be very practical this morning and we're going to move straight to our communion as we remember the Lord's death for us.

And as we do so, I'm going to leave the slide there, particularly the four points at the bottom. But I want us to turn to where we started this morning which is in 1 John.

1 John chapter 1. It's on page 1225. 1225.

[34 : 30] 1225. 1 John chapter 1 verses 8 to 10. 1225.

So let me read these words and then we're just going to have a quiet time of repentance. I'll talk about that now in just a minute. But here we go. 1 John chapter 1 verses 8 and 9.

1 John chapter 1. 2 John chapter 1. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins. And, not only forgive us, but purify us.

that is that ongoing change in our hearts and our lives from all unrighteousness. Repentance leads to restoration and a change of our hearts.

[35 : 40] And it starts with these four things that we leave with this morning. ask God to reveal your sin. Take responsibility. Replace your sinful desires with Christ.

Rejoice in the forgiveness of your sin. I'm going to pass the bread around which is a picture, a helpful, tangible way for us to remember the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for us who became sin for us.

The one who invites us now to confess, to repent. So as the bread is being passed around, take a piece. We'll eat together in a minute.

But I'm going to encourage all of us together, just privately where we are, to go through that one to four and ask God to work in your hearts.

Whatever it is that God is saying to you right now, this needs to change. Let's do business with God as the bread is being passed around.

[37 : 02] do as the bread as you as the bread is being committed.

All right. Let's do the bread as the bread is being rock, as the bread is being a Years Mahoglage as the bread is being Thank you.