

God's Jealous Love: Hosea 2v2-23

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[0 : 00] And we're going to pray first and ask for God's help. Father, we thank you that in your love, you know us intimately more than we could ever imagine.

You know our thoughts right now. You know our deepest concerns and our greatest needs. And so would you humble us all today that we would be people who sit under your word, under your power, under your authority.

And that you would speak afresh into our lives through the book of Hosea, through its message, that we may come to understand better the kind of God you are and the kind of people you call us to be.

So set our affections for you. Take us away from other things that we may lean and trust and depend wholly on you.

[1 : 33] So Father, help us now, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Who has hurt you the most?

Who's hurt you the most? Well, it's always the people that you love the most. Those we don't have any relationship with can't hurt you.

But those who we have the most intimate of relationships with hurt us the most. like friends or family or a husband and a wife.

He sat on the couch broken, disappointed and devastated and as the tears flowed he told how his newly wedded wife who had recently vowed to love him, be loyal to him, be faithful to him, had not come home last evening because she had spent the night with another man.

But he was not about to give up on the one he loved. He was jealous for her. He did not want to share his lover. He longed for her to return.

[3 : 10] You see, those we love the most can hurt us the most. And that's how God feels about you and I.

Chapter 1 of Hosea told us that God sees his relationship with his people as a marriage. He is the faithful husband but we are the unfaithful wife who has turned away from his love.

but God is not about to give up on us. He is jealous for us. He is a broken hearted husband who will not share his loved one.

Have a look at verse 2. Here God is speaking to individuals within the nation of Israel. Verse 2 he says, rebuke your mother rebuke her speak to the people tell them for she is not my wife and I am not her husband.

This is a passionate plea for God's people to come back to him. You see Israel whom he had loved and entered into a marriage with were not living as a wife and they were not treating God as their husband.

[4 : 32] It was a marriage on paper but not in practice. They were unfaithful. Look at the rest of verse 2. God pleads let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness between her breasts.

Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born. Just as she lies naked with her lovers.

So God says I am going to take everything away from the people of Israel. God is angry that his wife Israel has walked out on the marriage.

But these are not the words of a cold-hearted judge who wants to punish us. These are the words of a broken-hearted husband who will not share his loved one.

It seems Israel would go to whoever promised the best gifts. Look down at verse five. Their mother has been unfaithful.

[5 : 48] She has conceived them in disgrace. That is the whole nation has become unfaithful. She said I will go after my lovers who give me my food and my water and my wool and my linen my oil

and my drink.

All the things that I need I can get from other people. I can go to other places and get what I want. Who needs God? But look down at verse eight.

She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain the new wine and oil who lavished on her the silver and gold which they used for Baal the worship of other gods.

It's Christmas morning. There are the gifts under the tree. But one gift stands out as extra special. It reads to my adorable wife with all my love your faithful husband.

[7 : 06] She opened it carefully to discover the most beautiful diamond necklace. But before she could offer any thanks to her husband she ran to the man next door and she threw her arms around him and said thank you thank you for this most beautiful gift.

I love you. How do you think the husband feels watching as she runs to her other lover?

He didn't give it to you. I'm the one who sacrificed to make this possible. It's me who loves you. It's the ultimate slap in the face.

And that's exactly what Israel had done to God. Instead of thanking God they gave thanks to their made up gods.

They had taken all the love gifts but ignored the giver their true lover. Verse 8 She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her all that she had.

[8 : 28] But are we any different? We receive a good salary and attribute it to working hard and finding the right job.

It's all about the right school and the right colleges that I attend. We celebrate our children's success on the sports field and their achievements all through life and we congratulate ourselves and what a fine job I've done.

Or we long for a better life for more opportunities and a better lifestyle and we think if only they weren't in power. And the other party was, well then life would be so much better.

And we forget that it is God who is the source of all that we have and enjoy. He is the generous lover who has lavished upon us everything that we have.

Like the wife who received the diamond necklace. grace. So we take all the gifts and we can ignore the giver. We chase after other lovers, our work, our family, our ideologies.

[9 : 46] We sell ourselves to other things and other people because they tell us they can deliver what we want. Look back at verse two. Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife and I am not her husband.

These are not the words of a cold-hearted judge who wants to punish us. These are the words of a broken-hearted husband who will not share his loved one.

In fact, God is our loving, disciplining husband who longs for our return. You see, God will not let his people just wander away from his love.

He's not content to say, you know what? It doesn't matter. It does matter. Look at verse six.

Therefore, God says, I will block her path with thorn bushes.

I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after other lovers but not catch them. She will look for them but not find them.

[11 : 04] God is making it so clear that he is going to intervene into the life of his people Israel. He will discipline them. In fact, the story goes on to tell us that within a few years of Hosea speaking this message, Assyria, the great nation, that big empire, closed in upon Israel and destroyed them so that they would never recover again.

Now, we might object and think that God is overreacting but this is an act of loving discipline. It's for a purpose.

God longs for our return. Look at the rest of verse 7. This is as he walls her in and hems her in. It's symbolism of Assyria that were coming and look what it says in the second part of verse 7.

Then she will say, I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.

God will bring such a terrible devastation on his people that perhaps some within Israel would turn back in repentance to God. They would go back to their husbands.

[12 : 24] You see, just as God is the one who gives us all that we have. He is also the one that can take all that we have. Look at verse 9.

Therefore, God says, I will take away my grain when it ripens and my new wine when it is ready.

I will take back my wool and my linen intended to cover her nakedness. God wants them to see that he is their true lover, that he longs for them to return to him.

He is the only one who has given all that they have. Verse 12. I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers.

I will make them a thicket and wild animals will devour them. Again, a sign of Assyria that is to come. Verse 13. I will punish, literally, I will discipline her for the day she burned incense to the baals.

[13:35] She decked herself with rings and jewellery. She went after her lovers, but she forgot, declares the Lord. You see, the only way for Israel to see that they had forgotten God, their loving husband, was to take from them all that they had.

The purpose was to waken them up to help them see how far they had drifted in the marriage. And sometimes God must do that with us.

Not to show us simply who's boss, but because he loves us and longs for us to return. Have a look at Hebrews chapter 12.

It's on page 1210 if you're using the church Bible. We read a part of it earlier. Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12.

[14:52] Let's pick it up in verse 5. Just as God had disciplined Israel, let's read these verses. verses. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons.

My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves and he punishes.

That is, he lovingly corrects everyone he accepts as a son. Verse 11. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. You see, God is jealous for us.

He is not willing to share us with other lovers. He longs that we return to him and sometimes that will mean discipline. Just as he takes, or sorry, just as he gives, he can also take.

[16:18] If Kirsty goes away, it's not long until the kids and I realise just how much we need Kirsty. There's no clean clothes, the fridge is empty, appointments get forgotten, but it's not just the practical things.

It's the person. We miss mum, we miss Kirsty. You see, it's not just the things we need, we need the person.

And we can become so dependent on other things and other people, our work, our health, our family, but God loves us too much to let us pursue our idols.

He wants us to love him for who he is and sometimes he will have to take our idols away so that we will see who our true lover is.

Now, I'm not saying everything we lose is because of some disobedient lifestyle, but when something precious is taken from us, it's an opportunity to run to God who is more precious and more valuable than anything this world can offer.

[17:36] We sang with that song, he gives and he takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Sometimes God will take to bring blessing as he drives us back to him, to his love. You see, God is not quick to give up on us.

He is our passionate and pursuing husband. Let's go back to Hosea verse 14.

Hosea chapter 2 verse 14. Therefore, therefore what?

What do we expect God to do? After years of persistent unfaithfulness, running to other lovers and giving credit to other gods, I'm never going to bring you back again.

[18:42] I'm going to destroy you. Well, maybe that's what they deserve, but it's not what happens. Look at verse 14.

Therefore, I am now going to allure her. I'm not giving up on you. I will chase after you. I will pursue you.

I will draw you in by my affections. You are my wife and I love you. And so God promises three things.

First, a rekindled love. Look at the rest of verse 14. I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. Remember, this is where God's relationship with Israel began, in the desert.

When they came up out of Egypt, out of slavery, it's like a husband taking his wife back to the very first place where they met, to somehow awaken the love that they first had, to arouse the desires that they first had.

[19 : 51] And God says to his people, I will take you back there again so that we can begin again, so that I can show you my love again. Your love for me will be rekindled.

But it will be much better than that. Look at verse 15, there I will give her back her vineyards and will make the valley of Achor a door of hope.

Now the valley of Achor was not good news for God's people. In Achor, God's judgment had fallen on the people because of their sin. That's why Achor actually means trouble.

No one wants to go back to Achor. But this time it will be different. Instead of judgment, it will become, look at verse 15, a door of hope.

God promises to bring his people up out of slavery, out of judgment. Verse 15, there she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

[20 : 57] God promises that another exodus is going to take place. A door of hope will open and love will be rekindled. where and when is that going to take place?

Well, before we get there, look at the second promise God makes. Not just rekindled love, but a renewed marriage. Verse 16, in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me my husband.

You will no longer call me my master. You will no longer be enslaved by your gods or running after other lovers. The door of hope will open and we will renew the marriage.

marriage. You see, when a marriage breaks, when a wife commits adultery or the husband has an affair, the only hope of that marriage being renewed is when the guilty party returns home.

The innocent victim may say something like this, if you show me, if you prove to me you will never do this again, then I will take you back.

[22 : 18] But with God it's different. Even though he is the innocent victim who has remained faithful, he is the one who reaches out to the unfaithful.

Verse 19, I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.

I will betroth you in faithfulness and you will acknowledge the Lord. Incredibly, God makes the first move.

He takes the initiative. He arranges for the ceremony to take place. He brings us to the marriage altar and he renews the vows for us.

I will betroth you. I will betroth you. I will betroth you. this marriage will be renewed.

[23 : 21] How will this happen? Well, before we see, look at the third promise that God makes. There will be a restored blessing.

Verse 21, in that day I will respond, declares the Lord. I will respond to the skies and they will respond to the earth. Remember, God has said that he was going to take everything away.

He would strip Israel bare of all that they had. Now, with a renewed marriage in place, he is going to bring blessing. He will send the rains on the earth and the rains will bring forth a harvest, verse 22, and the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and oil, and they will respond to Jezreel.

We'll remember from last week, Jezreel had become a symbol of judgment and violent bloodshed, but its original meaning is God plants.

So God is going to take broken Israel, and he's going to replant them so that they grow and flourish.

[24 : 32] God is going to restore everything. Instead of curse, there is going to be blessing, verse 23, I will plant her for myself in the land.

I will show my love to the one I called not my loved one. And I will say to those called not my people, you are my people.

And they will say, you are my God. When will this happen? Where will these promises take place? how can all this be done? Well, we're given a clue. Look at verse 16. In that day, declares the Lord.

Verse 18, in that day, I will make a covenant. Verse 21, in that day, I will respond.

[25 : 40] That day would come when God in his love pursued us and sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. The apostle Peter got this. Have a look at 1 Peter chapter 2. Keep your finger in Hosea and jump forward to 1 Peter.

It's on page 1218. 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 10. Applying the death and the resurrection of Jesus to us, Peter reaches this conclusion.

And in a sense, he's quoting the very end of Hosea chapter 2 and this is what he says. As the cross and the resurrection is applied to our lives, 1 Peter 2, verse 10, he says, once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.

Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Go back to Hosea.

[27 : 03] You see, this day that Hosea longed for was the day that Jesus would die on the cross and rise from the grave.

Here is an invitation for us to come and see the amazing love of God. Come and look at the cross and the resurrection and see the jealousy of God.

See the demonstration of God's love towards his people because at the cross, we watch Jesus being taken down into the valley of Achor, a place of judgment and death, a place of trouble.

But the trouble doesn't fall on people, it falls on his son, the Lord Jesus. He is the one who suffers my unfaithfulness and my shame. He is the one who has been stripped naked and bare as his birthday.

day. He is left out, shamed to all the world. He is the one who has been disciplined for us as God takes his very life away.

[28 : 15] But this place of judgment also becomes our door of hope because three days later Jesus would rise again from the grave and through the resurrection Jesus breaks that curse of sin and death and brings the blessing of life to his people.

He makes the way open so that our sin can be dealt with, our unfaithfulness taken away and placed upon us as the faithfulness of Christ so that we can be dressed clean and pure as a beautiful bride ready for God, acceptable to him.

And so with the resurrection, it makes it all happen and all possible. The door of hope is opened for us. Through Jesus, our love for God is rekindled, our marriage to God has been renewed, and the blessing is restored to his people.

In Jesus, this day becomes a reality. does your love for God need rekindled?

Well, look at the cross, watch the resurrection, see that door of hope opened, see the jealous love of God who will not share you with another lover, who longs for you to return, return, who has made it possible for you to return, run into the arms of his love.

[30 : 06] Maybe you've never ever experienced this kind of relationship with God. Well, he's made it possible for you by taking all your sin so that you can enter into a life of blessing with him.

In Jesus, this day becomes a reality. I will show my love to the one I call not my loved one, and I will say to those called not my people, you are my people, and they will say, you are my God.

let's pray. Let's pray.