

Fruitful Marriage: Hosea 9v1-10v15

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[0 : 0 0] altars he built as his country improved he improved his pillars their heart is false now they must bear their guilt the lord will break down their altars and destroy their pillars and we go to verse 9 from the day of gibier you have sinned or israel there they have continued shall not the war against the unjust overtake them in gideon gibier when i please i will discipline them a nation shall be guarded against them when they are bound up for their double iniquity ephraim was a trained calf that loved to trash i spared her i spared her fair neck but i will i will but but i will put ephraim to the yoke judah must plow jacob must arrow for himself sow for yourself righteousness reap steadfast love break up your your fellow ground for it is for it is the time to seek the lord that he may come and rain righteousness upon you you have clouded iniquity you have reaped injustice you have eaten the fruit of lies because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your warriors therefore the tumult of word of war shall arise and among your people among your people and all your for your fortresses shall be destroyed and shulman shulman shulman's destroyed bet arbel on the day of battle mothers were dashed in pieces with their children thus it shall be done to you or battle because because of your great evil adorn the king of israel shall be utterly cut off amen thanks very much kevin well let's pray father as we come to your word as we hear your voice it is our desire that we would grow grow in our relationship with you that we would all flourish that we would all become more fruitful enjoying you knowing you and becoming like you father may not one of us leave without you doing an effective work in our hearts today grow us make us more like yourself in jesus we pray amen well i wonder if you can remember your first date

the first time that you met your prospective husband or wife what did he or she say to you please don't say you're the most beautiful person i've ever met you're my dreams come true or maybe you're still waiting for your first date and you're wondering what will i say well let me give you a knockout guaranteed chat up line here it is finding you was like finding a bunch of grapes or what about this one you're like a big ripe fig not very romantic is it and you might get a slap in your face for your troubles but this is the love language that god uses when he married his wife israel have a look at chapter 9 verse 10 chapter 9 verse 10 when i found israel it was like finding grapes in the desert you could imagine walking through a dry hot desert you're tired thirsty and weak and then you stumble upon this small oasis and growing all around is this vine full of delicious grapes how satisfying pleasing and refreshing to find those grapes that's how it was when god came to israel or look at the rest of verse 10 he says when i saw your fathers it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree a farmer watches and waits for his crop longing for the harvest but knowing it's going to be another few months till there's any fruit but to his surprise he finds there's already ripe figs on the tree it's not the kind of language we use but this is the love language god uses as he remembers as he looks back to that day when he married his people his thirst to show love was quenched when he found them and rescued them his longing for that relationship was fulfilled when he chose them to be his very own people and it only seemed to get better look at chapter 10 verse 1

Israel was a spreading vine he brought forth fruit for himself god nurtured the marriage provided for it cared for it and it flourished and his bride responded in faithfulness and obedience these were the best of days these were good days and it all pictures how god longs and thirsts for us to be in relationship with him to know him to enjoy him to experience his love that is god's desire for us but israel's marriage to god it did not last look at the rest of chapter 10 verse 1 as his fruit increased he built more altars as his land prospered he adorned his sacred stones that was the place of worship to foreign gods so rather than give thanks to god their faithful husband for all his provision and care they began to turn away and serve other gods chase after other lovers building altars and places of sacrifices rather than a heart of love and loyalty look at verse 2 their heart is deceitful and now they must bear their guilt the lord will demolish their altars and destroy their sacred stones it was a marriage that had started so well but now lies in tatters broken and ruined and i think the heart of this message from chapters 9 and 10 is this that if we do not cultivate our marriage with god if we don't nurture that marriage relationship it's in danger it's in danger of going the same way so two big ideas we're going to look at this morning the first is this reaping an unfaithful marriage this is the fruit of an unfaithful marriage chapter 9 verse 1 israel thought themselves quite good and grown up they didn't need god they would live a life without him so god says to them chapter 9 verse 1 do not rejoice o israel do not be jubilant like the other nations for you have been unfaithful to your god there's nothing to be gained by pushing god out of the marriage in fact it will lead to a return to slavery look at verse 3 of chapter 9 god says they will not remain in the lord's land ephraim that is god's people israel will return to egypt and eat unclean food in assyria egypt of course is a symbol for slavery remember that's what israel were before god had rescued them and married them they were slaves in a foreign land exodus records what it was like this comes from exodus chapter 1 verse 11 so they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor they made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields in all their hard labor the egyptians used them ruthlessly during that long period which was 400 years of slavery the king

of egypt died the israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to god now says god if you walk out on the marriage it would be like walking straight back into slavery all over again verse 3 ephraim will return to egypt and eat the unclean food of assyria they might not go back to physical egypt in fact assyria the great nation is going to come in and take them away to be slaves somewhere else verse 6 even if they escape from destruction egypt will gather them and memphis will bury them memphis of course was the huge graveyard in egypt that was reserved for all the slaves who had died so either you would be a slave or he's saying you are going to die a slave walking out on god will be like walking straight back into a life of slavery under a cruel harsh master leaving your faithful loyal husband and turning back to something that will be a burden to you you see it's really no different for us because in a greater way we have been rescued by jesus from our slavery to sin and brought into a wonderful vibrant relationship with the lord jesus the apostle paul explains it like this when you were slaves to sin you were free from the control of righteousness in other words you were not free to choose to do what was right and good you would only live a life that was wrong a life that was away from god but now because of jesus you've been set free from sin and have become slaves to god you're under a new master and the benefit of living under this master is you will reap lives that lead to holiness and the result the fruit will be eternal life you see to walk out on our marriage to walk away from the lord is to walk straight back into a life of slavery to sin it's to live under a cruel harsh master who will condemn you and never forgive you but not only will it be a life of slavery it will be a life of sorrow

Hosea chapter 9 verse 10 when I found Israel it was like finding grapes in the desert it's a reminder of God's first love for his bride Israel but look what they did follow down the rest of verse 10 but when they came to Baal Peor they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved you know one of the first places that God's people came to when he rescued them out of Egypt was to a place called Peor but instead of remaining faithful to God at this place the men began to marry the local women who would seduce them into worshipping other gods Baal that's why it became called Baal Peor and the book of

[14 : 40] Numbers goes into great detail to explain what happened God sent a plague upon them and 24,000 people died death was everywhere now God is saying to the people all these years later if you forsake me to walk out on the marriage will be like walking back into a life of sorrow it will be like a return to Baal Peor look at verse 11 Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird no birth no pregnancy no conception even if they bring up children I will bereave them of everyone woe to them when I turn away from them God is saying these Assyrians will come in they will take you away to be slaves but more than that it will be so harsh and so brutal that they will even wipe out the women and the children death will be everywhere the sorrow will be unbearable you see to walk out on

God to walk out on the marriage is to walk out from life into death not just physical death death but eternal death a separation from the beauty and goodness of life itself sorrow for all eternity not just slavery not just sorrow but it will be a reversal of blessing when Assyria the great nation comes in chapter 10 verse 7 Samaria and its king will float away like a twig in the surface of the waters the high places of wickedness will be destroyed it's the sin of Israel thorns and thistles will grow up and cover their altars now whenever we come across thorns and thistles in the bible it's always speaking of curse rather than blessing remember what

God said to Adam at the very beginning when Adam exchanged the love of God for the lies of Satan God said cursed is the ground because of you through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life it will produce thorns and thistles for you so instead of blessing there will be a curse and that's what Israel are going to experience when they walk out from God the great nation that enjoyed that love with God and enjoyed his abundance blessings is going to be overrun by thorns and thistles it will be so awful look at the rest of verse eight they will say to the mountains cover us and to the hills fall on us it will be so unbearable you see God is trying to make it so clear to his people to walk out on the marriage is to walk away from blessing into curse in fact all that will happen a return to slavery a life of sorrow a reversal of blessing is a picture of greater judgment to come look at the end of verse 8 again of chapter 10 they will say to the mountains cover us and to the hills fall on us rather than endure slavery and sorrow and curse rather than have to face the

Assyrians coming in they would rather die quickly in an earthquake so it would be all over it's a graphic picture of what it will be like when the risen Lord Jesus comes in his final judgment please keep your finger in Hosea and have a look at Revelation chapter 6 Revelation chapter 6 verse 15 it's on page 1 2 3 8 the very end of your Bible Revelation chapter 6 and verse 15 and here we have a picture of the risen Lord Jesus who comes the final judgment that is to be faced and John the author picks up on some of the language from

Hosea Revelation 6 verse 15 and to face the judgment of God will be terrifying it's like people would rather die in an earthquake quickly than endure an eternity of slavery and sorrow and curse.

[20 : 41] Verse 17, For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand? And who of us can stand?

Because like Israel, we've all pushed God out of the marriage. We've all said, No, I can do things my way. We've all exchanged God for other things and other people and chased after other lovers looking for joy and happiness.

So how will any of us stand? Well, have a look at Revelation 7, verse 9. Revelation 7, verse 9.

Here we get another picture. Again, the risen Lord Jesus has come. Verse 9, After this, I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language.

And look what they're doing. They are standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. How can they do that?

[21 : 58] How can they be standing? How can they face this risen Lord Jesus? Well, we're told they were wearing white robes.

And what were their white robes? Well, look down at verse 13. One of the elders asked me, These in the white robes, who are they and where did they come from? I answered, Sir, you know.

And he said, These are they who have come out of the great tribulation. They have gone through the judgment. They've passed through it. Why?

Because they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and they serve Him day and night in His temple.

And He who sits on the throne will spread His tent over them. Never again will they hunger. Never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them nor any scorching heat.

[22 : 59] No more slavery. No more sorrow. No more curse. They have gone through.

They have escaped because they have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can stand even though we have failed because of what Christ has done for us.

So, He says, Watch out if we are living in an unfaithful marriage with the Lord. So second, we need to cultivate therefore a fruitful marriage.

Go back to Hosea. You see, if we are to avoid a broken marriage with God, we must learn to cultivate the marriage. So let me show you three ways we can do this.

What it is to cultivate a fruitful marriage. Here's the first one. Break open our hard hearts. Look at chapter 10, verse 11.

[24 : 10] Ephraim, again, that's description of Israel. Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh, loves to bounce about on the corn and thresh the corn out.

So God says, I will put a yoke on her fair neck. I will drive Ephraim. Judah must plough and Jacob must break up the ground.

Ephraim, Judah, Jacob, well these were all names for God's people and he's calling them to plough the ground of their hard hearts. Just as a farmer would put the yoke on his cow and head it off into the field, so the people must set about the hard work of breaking up their hard hearts.

We see the same imagery in the middle of verse 12. Break up your unploughed ground for it is time to seek the Lord.

You see, the sin, that unfaithfulness, if it is not dealt with, all sin will do is harden our hearts and we will become desensitised to God's Spirit.

[25 : 26] We no longer become aware of sin and how it's damaging us. We continue to drift and we're not even aware we're drifting. We become immune to its effects. So we are to break up the hard hearts by seeking the Lord, calling out to Him and asking Him, Lord, soften my heart, break my heart so I can be receptive to You.

So that's step one, we are to break open our hard hearts. Two, we are to sow the seed of the gospel. Look at verse 12.

having broken up the land, he says, sow for yourselves righteousness. Sow for yourselves righteousness.

As we break up the hard ground, now we begin to scatter and sow. And in this context, I think righteousness are those things that look back to how we first started our relationship with God.

It's to re-sow those things that brought about our relationship with Him. Things like grace, reminding ourselves of God's loving kindness, how He redeemed us and rescued us and called us to be His.

[26 : 46] Feeding into our lives His grace day after day. Sowing to ourselves, if you like, repentance, turning back again to God and trusting in Him again in faith that God is enough, that He is sufficient, He is my joy, He is my happiness.

We are to plant the gospel seed into our lives and water it and let it flourish. And as we sow, we must be careful not to do what Israel did.

Look at verse 13. Israel, what did they do? He says, but you have planted wickedness and you have reaped evil.

You have eaten the fruit of deception. You see, if we sow the wrong kind of seed, if we continue to feed our sinful nature, well then we'll reap destruction, we'll reap evil, we'll wreak havoc in our lives.

But instead, if we begin to sow the seed of righteousness, our hearts will become softened and we will reap something beautiful, something good.

[28 : 08] Which is what the third step is. Having broken open our hard hearts, sowing the seed of the gospel, third, we can now harvest the fruit of unfailing love.

look at verse 12 again. Sow for yourselves righteousness and reap the fruit of unfailing love. You see, the farmer who goes out and breaks up the hard ground and sows the ripe seed will harvest and reap grain and fruit in abundance.

And in the same way, if we're breaking up our hard hearts, if we're sowing the seed of righteousness, we will in turn harvest or reap unfailing love.

Now that doesn't mean if we do certain things God is going to love me more. No, God is always steadfast in his love towards us. But we only begin to experience that love and enjoy that love as we cultivate a healthy marriage.

But more than that, not just will we reap unfailing love, look at the rest of verse 12. He says, break up the unplowed ground for it's time to seek the Lord until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

[29 : 32] What a beautiful picture, that image. The raining down, if you like, of God's righteousness upon us. Just like the rain falls from the sky onto the hard ground and breaks it up and causes those seeds to grow and flourish, so the showers of righteousness will fall down and pour down upon our lives and we will harvest a life of forgiveness, of joy and peace and enjoyment with God.

Cultivate a fruitful marriage. Paul takes this a little bit further for us. Have a look at Galatians chapter 6.

It's on page 1172. Galatians chapter 6 verse 7. On page 1172.

Galatians chapter 6 and verse 7. So as we come to this, think about what am I reaping?

Am I reaping an unfaithful marriage? Or am I cultivating a fruitful marriage? Well, chapter 6 verse 7.

[31 : 01] Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. He knows what our hearts are like. He knows what's going on. A man reaps what he sows.

The one who sows to please his sinful nature from that nature will reap destruction. The one who sows to please the Spirit from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

you are what you sow. In other words, what you sow in your life you will reap.

The seeds that you sow will bear its own fruit. If you sow an apple seed, you're going to get apples. If you throw orange seeds in the ground, you're going to get oranges. In the same way, the life we live now, the choices that we make, the decisions that we're making, what we're feeding into our life will have consequences and effects either good or bad.

And the results will be seen if not now, then later. The fruit of our actions will be unavoidable. So, verse 8, the one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction.

[32 : 27] to push God out, to ignore him, is only letting sin fester and grow.

If you like, thorns and thistles surrounding us, dragging us and pulling us down. It's a life into slavery, sorrow, and curse, and eventual judgment.

fulfillment. But, the one who sows, verse 8, to please the Spirit, from the Spirit, will reap eternal life.

To cultivate that marriage, to break up our hard hearts, to sow the seed of his word, to sow the gospel deep into our lives continually, we will reap a rich harvest, where we will know God, enjoy God, and experience his unfailing love for all eternity.

What are we sowing? And what are we reaping in our lives? What is our marriage relationship with God like today?

[33 : 43] What a wonderful invitation. to reap a wonderful harvest, as we sow to the Spirit, and enrich our lives.

Let's pray that God will do that work in our lives, right now. Father, we know that you cannot be deceived.

You know our hearts better than ourselves. You know exactly how our relationship is with you. other are you are your