

God's disciple and mercy - Hosea 11:1-12

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[0:00] Let's hear God's word to us today. When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

But the more they were called, the more they went away from me. They sacrificed to the bales, and they burned incense to images. It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms.

But they did not realize it was I who healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them.

Will they not return to Egypt? And will not Assyria rule over them because they refuse to repent? A sword will flash in their cities.

It will devour their false prophets and put an end to their plans. My people are determined to turn from me, even though they call me God Most High.

[1:18] I will by no means exalt them. How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Adma?

How can I make you like Zeboim? My heart is changed within me. All my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again.

For I am God and not a man, the Holy One among you. I will not come against their cities. They will follow the Lord.

He will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west. They will come from Egypt trembling like sparrows, from Assyria fluttering like doves.

I will settle them in their homes, declares the Lord. So, Connor, do you want to come up and I'll pray for you and for us?

[2:34] You need to flicker. Okay. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word that we have been able to read.

And now we ask that you would give to us your Holy Spirit, enabling us to listen well and enabling Connor to communicate effectively and clearly.

We pray that the words he speaks would be words from you, words of God that speak into our hearts, teaching us and reminding us of who you are and how we should respond to you.

So, Father, help us. And may not one of us leave this building without an encounter with you afresh and being changed by you.

Father, help us all, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Thanks, Johnny.

[3:45] My dad was asking me how long it was going to be, so I told him I'll keep it under the hour just to make sure that he doesn't leave. We all know it's going to go more than that.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Once upon a time, there was a carpenter. He used to make toys. He had no wife, but more than anything in the world, he wanted a child. He knew that he would love this child as best he could. One night after he had finished building a wooden puppet, He found himself wishing upon a star That the puppet would become a real boy So that he could have a child. You've probably never heard this story before. Sure enough, that very night a blue fairy came And gave the puppet the gift of life. He was able to walk and talk. Though he was still made of wood. The fairy also gave him a cricket as a conscience To guide his path in a tough, troubled world. Well, the next morning when the carpenter awoke from his slumber He was ecstatic. He finally had a child And just like he knew he would He loved that child more than his own life. He got everything the child needed.

A bed, clothes, education And plenty of hugs and kisses. Of course, this is the beginning of Pinocchio. A beloved children's movie. But the story we're looking at in chapter 11 of Hosea Begins in a very similar way. The only difference is This is a real life love story. Of a father to his children. If you were listening carefully to Johnny As he was reading through it You would have noticed there's almost like a sandwich effect. In this chapter It starts off talking about God's love. It then moves into maybe something a bit more difficult. Ralph introduced it to us earlier. God's discipline. And then goes back to God's love And God's mercy. So the sermon this morning Will hopefully have that same sandwich effect. Verse 1 we read

When Israel was a child I loved him. The story in Hosea is even more wondrous Than the story of Pinocchio. Because while the blue fairy gave Pinocchio life And Geppetto was his father that loved him. In Hosea God gave life to the Israelites And was their father that loved them. It wasn't just words either. In verse 3 we learn that it was God Who taught Ephraim or Israel to walk. He took them by the arms And healed them. Up to this point in the redemption story We've seen that God pulled Abraham Out of idol worship And promised to make him and his children Into a chosen nation That would experience God's love and blessings. The Israelites are these children. They're the chosen nation And boy have they experienced God's blessings. He gave them land and a place to live. When they had none.

[7:20] He gave them victory over enemies. When they had no right to win the battles. He rescued them from slavery. When they turned back to him And helped them to plunder their captors. He gave them kings That allowed them to prosper as a nation And become the envy of all other nations. Verse 4 I led them with cords of human kindness With ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek And I bent down to feed them. What an image of our God. As such a loving father to those Israelites Who were constantly rebelling against him. And the Lord did indeed bend down And they were constantly in the midst of them. And they were constantly in the midst of them. And they were constantly in the midst of them. With bread from heaven. When they had no food. What blessed children they were. What blessed children we are.

Nobody here is like Pinocchio. When he was just a puppet That couldn't walk, talk or think. Everybody has the gift of life. Not enough of a blessing. How many of us have spent the night homeless?

How many of us have been so hungry We had to resort to eating out of bins Or thievery to survive? How many of us have had to endure The horrors of war? How many of us have had to experience A mass shooting?

How many of us have been educated? How many of us have friends or family That love us and that we love? We are blessed children. We are the envy of many nations around the world That don't experience these blessings. But we, like the Israelites. Like Pinocchio. Ignore our blessings And take advantage of the Father's love. The first day Geppetto trusted Pinocchio To go to school To give him a bit of freedom And an education. He bumped into the wily, honest John And decided it would be best To turn away from his father To disobey his conscience. The Israelites, we see in verse 2 That the more they were called The more they went away From me.

They sacrificed to the bales And they burned incense To images After all God had done for them They turned away from him The more he pursued them The more they wanted to do their own thing The more blessings he gave them The more they replaced him With other gods The more God has mercy On us The more we feel like We don't need him The more blessings we receive In our lives The more we think We accomplished it ourselves The more grace he bestows Such as relenting from his wrath The more we turn away from him The more he delays his judgment On this wicked world To give people a chance To turn to him The more we turn To other gods Made of wood Worthless The gods of sex Like the Israelites Went whoring after In our passage

[10:56] The gods of money And security The gods of family And friends The gods of freedom of choice The gods of self The gods of conscience A person's own moral sense Of what's right and wrong Name your own God That you have turned to In replace of the one True God Every single one of these Gods I've mentioned Are good When they're not put in place Of the Lord God Sex is a glorious gift From God When performed between One man And one woman In the confines Of marriage Money and security Are needed To survive Family and friends Are an amazing blessing From our father God Freedom of choice Is another blessing When we align Our choices With what the Lord Teaches The self Is of great worth When we view ourselves

As God does Fall in children Whose value Comes through What Jesus Has done On the cross The conscience Is a great thing To guide our path In a tough Troubled world When we make it Adhere to what's Stated as morally Right and wrong In God's word However good These things are Or can be None of these gods Deserve to be In place Of our father Who created us And loves us More than anything else Verse 7 says My people Are determined To turn from me We find good things From God And manipulate them So that we don't Have to feel like We're under authority So we can feel like Adults in control As opposed to The children That we really are We are determined To be rebellious We'll take a look

At the consequence Of this determined Rebellion The end of verse 7 Even though They call me God most high I will by no means Exalt them This is heartbreaking This is the same God speaking That has just told us About how he led Israel by the arm And taught her To walk The same God Who lifted Israel To his cheek And kissed him Lovingly Now he is not able To take pride In his children His children Have disobeyed Turned away So badly By running after Other gods Gods that allow All kinds Of sexual rituals And self-harming We read from Other parts of the Bible The more the Lord Called them The more They turned away So Now it's time For his children To be disciplined Verses 5 and 6

Will they not Return to Egypt And will not Assyria Rule over them Because they refuse To repent A sword Will flash In their cities It will devour Their false prophets And put an end To their plans God has tried Being merciful And gentle He has sent prophets To tell them To return To their God Including the writer Of this book Hosea He has blessed Them in the land That he graciously Gave to them When they were Wanderers In the wilderness The only way They will turn Back to God Is through Hardship And discipline By his hand Flick back To chapter 5 With me Just a couple Of pages It's God Speaking Again Same as in Chapter 11 It's just after He has performed A judgment Against Israel So chapter 5

Back about Two pages Maybe And down to Verse 15 The last verse In the chapter Then I will return To my lair Until they have Born their guilt And seek My face In their misery They will Earnestly Seek me Everything God has done It's so His children Will earnestly Seek him Well after Pinocchio Went with Honest John He got caught up In a traveling show Where he was The star He had no strings To hold him down And so Mr. Stromboli Recognized a cash cow When he saw one All the while Pinocchio's conscience Jiminy Cricket Was trying to Dissuade him From the actor's life And continue His education But what does An actor need With a conscience Anyway Pinocchio ignored The voice speaking

[16:02] What was Marley Wright And got caught up In the money And fame It wasn't long Before he realized He should have Listened to his conscience And that's when Things got ugly Mr. Stromboli Showed his true colors And locked Pinocchio In a birdcage Telling him He would perform Every night And make him Lots of money But thankfully In his hour of need Jiminy rocks up With the blue fairy In tow The blue fairy Asks Pinocchio A couple of simple questions As to how he landed himself In this predicament And why he wasn't At school Like he told his father Pinocchio's conscience Advises him To tell the truth But again Pinocchio ignores it He lies to make himself Look better And all of a sudden The consequence Of turning away From his father The consequence Of disobeying His conscience Becomes as clear As the nose On his face God's word

And God's instructions To us Are good When we turn away Or disobey There will Be consequences That we won't Be happy about When I started college I went out With my friends During freshers week I got drunk I started a fight With some random guy My friends quickly Had to bring me To the hospital Where I discovered My jaw was broken In two places Turned out This random guy Was a boxer I was on a liquid diet For two weeks Because they had to Have my jaw Wired shut I'd like to say I learned my lesson And never got drunk again But just like The Israelites It takes a few goes For God To get through to me God tried being merciful Where I had close calls With cars Lightly going over My ankles But it wasn't Getting through to me Discipline Was needed And it was the only way I would listen

Discipline Is a loving action From a loving God I could have done Even more serious Damage to myself If it wasn't For God's discipline Dragging me back To him When we're going Through tough times The first thing We should ask ourselves Is there sin In my life There won't Always be This life has fallen And it's very very hard But the first thing We should be doing Is checking If our hearts Are right With God Just like The Israelites Being taken captive Just like Pinocchio's nose And just like My many drunken injuries Disobeying the conscience Of God's word Has consequences However Like Ralph Informes earlier The primary consequence Of our guilt And disobedience Has been paid for

By God himself Only Friday night I was at a gig It was three tribute bands I'd never seen tribute bands Before But basically These bands Have decided To Give up Any chance Of a career For themselves And they Only perform Songs By one band As I was listening to it I was like These guys must Really love This band If they're willing To give up that And every Single Rehearsal Every single gig They're going to be playing The one band songs Over And over As I was walking away It struck me that Do I take God's love For granted He has proven His love Just like the guys In the tribute band By giving up Way more than A career

He gave up The heavenly realms He gave up Perfection To be like Us These guys Wanted to be like Their favourite band God gave up Everything To be like Us Even after All We've done After all the Disobeying Turning away And putting other Things Before our God Who loved us From the beginning And has done Everything For us Even to the point Of giving up The glory of heaven To come down As a human And die the death That we deserve Even after all this He still shows Mercy And compassion For the rebels For you and me Verse 8 How Can I give you up Ephraim How Can I hand you Over Israel

[21:04] How Can I treat you Like Adma How Can I make you Like Zeboiim My heart Is changed Within me All my Compassion Is aroused In the midst Of Israel's Betrayal The Lord Has compassion The Lord Loves his Children And the Discipline Must come For their Own good The discipline Must come So that his Children will Repent And turn back To him The discipline Had to come In order for me To accept my Responsibility As a child Of God The discipline Has to come To all of us To ensure That we will Finish the race Strong And receive our Crown of glory In the end This discipline Does not come Easy To God All his Compassion Is aroused And he only Does it

For our Benefit Verse 9 I will not Carry out My fierce Anger Nor will I Devastate Ephraim Again For I am God And not a Man The Holy One Among you I will not Come against Their cities Israel Deserves Destruction They deserve To be destroyed And never Thought about Again But the Lord In his Holiness Cannot Allow this He has Made a Promise To Abraham That they Would be A great Nation And that The world Would be Saved Through them He is The holy One Among them He is There In their Midst And in a Few hundred Years After the Writing of Hosea He will Physically Come down And experience All the Pain And suffering And anguish That they Experienced And so Much more Jesus did

Not receive Discipline From God None of These struggles Were because Of his own Rebellion He is the Only person To ever Walk this Earth That did Not need God's Discipline He is also The person Who experienced The most Suffering In his Life More than Any other Person He could Have changed It He had The power To stop It Why didn't He I'm sure If you were Given the Choice You would Get rid Of all Your Suffering As we're Going to Be Learning About From next Week Onwards Jesus Could have And didn't Why Because Every time He looked Upon the Face Of those He loved Other people His compassion Was aroused He remembered His father's Promise To Abraham He remembered How he led His people By the hand And taught Them to walk And heal Them

This is The God We worship God the Father God the Son And God The Holy Spirit That still Resides With his People Today Have you Accepted God's Compassion Have you Understood What it Cost God To give Up his Only son And what It cost Jesus To go Through All those Trials And the Ultimate Trial at The end To be Separated From his Father Who he Had a Perfect Relationship With Have you Asked the Holy Spirit To help you Live a Life that Honours The sacrifice That Jesus Made for You Have you Repented And turned Back to Your father In heaven Who has Loved You Disciplined You And is Waiting to Throw his Life Saving Mercy At you Like Pinocchio When he was Freed from His cage All he Had to Do to Receive His Mercy Was Accept

That he Was Wrong Accept That there Was Nothing He Could Do To remove Himself From his Predicament That he Himself Had landed Himself In And accept The free Gift of Help From the Blue Fairy Like I Had to Come to The realisation That I Was damaging Myself Physically Mentally But most Importantly Spiritually I had to Understand that I Was breaking My relationship With my Loving Father Who had Done Everything For my Good I had to Accept the Free gift Of forgiveness That has Led and Will lead To eternal Life With my Loving Father My Father who Will always Be there To work Things out For my Good Everyone In this Room Needs to Make a Choice Are you Going to Continue In your Destructive Rebellious Patterns Or will

[26 : 06] You accept The free Gift of Life And forgiveness That Jesus Has provided Will you Change your Life So that you Can experience All of God's Blessings As he Intendeth It begins With accepting The free Gift of Forgiveness Being offered To you From your Loving Father Verses 10 And 11 What a Brilliant way To finish What we've Been looking At this Morning They will Follow The Lord He will Roar like A lion When he Roars His children Will come Trembling From the West They will Come from Egypt Trembling Like sparrows From Assyria Fluttering Like doves I will Settle them In their Homes Declares The Lord It has Worked God's Plan of Salvation And rescue Has worked His people Are repenting And coming

Back to him They're Recognizing Their folly And that he's The only Source Of true Life True Life That's Everlasting In God They no Longer Have to Be Captives He will Settle Them In their Homes Pinocchio Accepted The free Gift Of Rescue From the Blue Fairy And out Of Gratitude Promised To be Good From now On If you're Familiar With the Story You know It didn't Quite go Swimmngly For him After that He met With many Temptations And perils But through It all The blue Fairy Was looking Out for Him And brought Him back From the Dead In the End If we Accept the Free Gift Of rescue From God Through Jesus Out of Gratitude We need To recognize The importance Of giving Love in Return Of Recognize The importance Of living A good Life A life Pleasing To our God And Savior This is

Done by Staying Close to God And his Commands Always Every day Talking to Our father Through prayer And listening To him Through the Bible As we Come into This new Year There's no Better time To make Our Resolutions The first Thing we Need to Do Like the Israelites Needed to Do Is turn Back To God Without Him All our Resolutions Will come To naught And while Life will not Go swimmngly All of the Time We can be Confident That in The end We'll be Brought back From the Dead And raised To life With our Loving Father And he Will spend Eternity We will Spend Eternity Being loved By God And showing Our love In return To God To summarize God loves Us and And always Has We take Him for Granted And turn

Away Constantly To The Lord Then out Of love Disciplines Us He doesn't Give us What we Deserve But has Mercy on Us All so That we Will turn Back To him Don't Wait another Minute To turn To God For the First time Or turn Back to Him Don't let Him down After all He has Done for You Through his Son Jesus Give your Life Your whole Life And wait And see What wonders He'll make From it If you Remember Nothing else From this Morning Remember how Pinocchio Made so Many mistakes Yet his Father and The Blue Fairy Consistently Loved him The Blue Fairy Allowed the Consequences Of Pinocchio's Rebellion To happen So that he Would turn Back to His Father Our Father God In Heaven Sometimes Needs To Discipline Us But it's Always Done So that We will

Turn Back To him And enjoy The blessings Of his Love As he Always Meant Us To From the Beginning Let me Just close In In prayer And then Ralph Will Come up To sing Our Final Song Father God Thank you So much So much For your Love Love You Love You Love You Love You Love You Love You Love You Love Us I pray That not One person In this Room Would take That for Granted In the Week Ahead I pray I pray That we Would all Come to You And beg Forgiveness For the Times We Haven't Appreciated You As we Should Thank you That Jesus Took the Ultimate Consequence For our Sin We may Need to

[31 : 08] Be disciplined But we Will never Lose Our Salvation We Can be Confident That if We have Accepted Jesus Sacrifice For us On the Cross That we Will be With you One day In heaven We Will Receive Our Crown Of Glory No matter What We have To go Through In this Life In Jesus Name Amen Thanks Ralph