

We are called to grow in knowing God

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Date: 18 January 2026

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[0:00] This week we're going to be talking out of Hosea, and I just want you to know that I did change it because it does say Hosea instead of my death.

I'm not going to say that I was lambasted over that, but I didn't walk straight for a week, but it does say Hosea, and I think I left it in my mouth.

And I told you that we were going to be covering, what was it, 3 through 11 in Hosea, so hopefully we took the opportunity to read that.

Daniel Hosea, sounds fun. Next week we're going to be hitting the phone button.

Is that you? You can't hear me? It's on. Can you guys hear me?

[1:10] Is this normal? Can you hear me now? Chuck, would you like to go back there and eat on the machine with a stick for a while for me?

Right? I got tied up. All right. So this week we're going to be talking about the knowledge of God. Next week we'll be taking a look, and we're going to be wrapping up the book of Hosea with chapters 12 through 14.

As we get started today, I just want to let you know how much fun and joy it is at times to be a pastor.

Do you know how much fun and joy it is to look into somebody's eyes and tell them that thing is guilty?

Do you know how much joy it is to confront people and make them? Thank you.

[2:36] As much fun as it is to confront people, at times what you get is people that refused or refuse to confront.

And as we take a look in Hosea, we're going to see that today. And as we take a look in America, we see it all around us.

But today, we're going to be focusing on the fact that we are called to grow in knowing God.

That's going to be the heart of what we're talking about. That you and I should be growing in our knowledge of God.

And I'll clarify exactly what I mean by knowledge of God as we go through this day today. But if you've got your Bible open to Hosea, I want to start in chapter 4.

[3:48] In Hosea chapter 4, verse 1, the problem is stated. Now you remember last week we talked about chapters 1 through 3, where Hosea and his marriage was used to illustrate God's relationship with the nation of Israel.

And how God is going to remain faithful and true. Doesn't matter. God is going to see it through to the end. And you know, Hosea was called to marry a woman. And then she ran off and he bought her back and was faithful to her.

And so this week, we're going to pick it up in chapter 4, verse 1, where we see it's a slight change of gears. Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel.

For the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love and no knowledge of God in the land.

The problem is, there is no faithfulness, there is no steadfast love, and there is no knowledge of God.

[5:06] And when we think about chapters 1 through 3, and we want to talk about faithfulness, Hosea was faithful to Gomer, even though she ran off, right?

And he steadfastly loved her, even though she had absolutely blown up and gone astray. And in chapter 2, God talks about the nation of Israel, how the nation of Israel has absolutely taken off and done all sorts of evil, but God is faithful and God is steadfast, and God's love is going to pursue Israel.

But what is this knowledge of God? I can make an easy parallel between faithfulness and steadfastness, and steadfastness. But what is this knowledge of God? And as I'm looking around here, I know everybody in this room. We don't have any visitors that I haven't met before.

We don't have anybody in this room that I can't tell a little bit about you if somebody's asked me, who was that? I know all of you, right? Don't shake your head no dick.

[6 : 18] I know you, troublemaker. But that's not the knowledge it's talking about. It's not the casual awareness.

It's the difference between the knowledge that I have with my wife and children and I have with you. For over 30 years, Kelly and I have lived.

We have worked. We have built. We have struggled. We have strained. We have rejoiced. And never in 30-some years have we ever raised our voices at each other, especially not in the last 12 hours.

Ever. You know? But you know what? We work through it, don't we? I know exactly. I responded, she responded, and we work through it because we know one another.

We have endured extremes of poverty. We've endured extremes of sleep deprivation.

[7 : 32] We can tell stories of what it was like to raise all three of our children from diapers to donuts in the parking lot. Bryce?

Bryce? We have this knowledge based upon years of working together, of seeing how one another responds in certain situations.

When we were just newly married, we were going down to visit my in-laws. And it's Thanksgiving.

There's a little bit of snow on the highway. And my wife asked if we could hit the next rest area because she wanted to go and use the facilities. Not a problem. Straight, flat road.

There's a little turn off and turn back on. So we hit that turn off at about 55 miles an hour. I hit the emergency brake, spun the wheels, and did a 360 in my lane.

[8 : 33] Never left it. It was glorious. Released the e-brake, kept on going, and she said, don't stop. Don't stop.

I'm so embarrassed. From the footwell. Meanwhile, guys, what was I doing? I was looking for a high five somewhere because that was awesome, right? It was a 360 at 55 in my lane intentional.

That is not how she responded. 30 years later, we're driving down the interstate. There's a little bit of snow on the road. Could you pull over to the rest area? Nice little turn off.

Nice little turn back on. I pulled over and gently slowed to a stop because I know my wife. And I didn't want to die that day. But see, this is the sort of thing that comes with, I mean, that's a great story.

And we have these stories because of the time that we have spent living together. I know that woman and she knows this man. It's not like I know President Trump.

[9 : 41] I could tell you things about him. I know, you know, that he's been broke a couple of times. He's done this. He's done that. I know him. God is saying there is no knowledge like this between God and his people in Israel.

There's no faithfulness. There's no steadfast love. And there is no truly intimate knowledge of God. That is the problem.

Though they had that head knowledge, it did not guide their lives.

Chapter 4, verse 2 says, There is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery. They break all bonds. And bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Chapter 8, Set the trumpet to your lips. One like a vulture is over the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.

[10 : 52] To me they cry, My God, we Israel know you. Israel has spurned the good. The enemy shall pursue him. They made kings, but not through me.

They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and their gold, they made idols for their own destruction. Verses 9 and 10 says, They've gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone.

Ephraim has hired lovers. And though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up, And the kings and the princes shall soon writhe because of the tribute.

So here's the thing. They claim to know God. They claim to know God. But that knowledge of God doesn't change how they live.

Remember what a great story about driving into the rest area? Did my behavior change in 30 some years of marriage?

[11:55] Absolutely. Do I still want to do donuts when my wife isn't in the car? Absolutely. But because of my knowledge of her and our relationship, Do I do donuts when she's in the car?

Much less often. I'm not going to say no, but much less often. Because my knowledge of her and our relationship impacts how I walk my life.

How I live my daily, day-to-day existence. And that was the problem with the nation of Israel. They claimed to know God. But what does it say?

It says that there's murder, there's strife, Bloodshed follows bloodshed. In chapter 8, it talks about them going out And hiring the Assyrians or the Egyptians.

They're getting all these allies, But they're not going to God. They're putting up kings and princes, But they're not going to God To see if that's what God wants. There is no connection between their knowledge And their behavior.

[13:01] They're not linked. Therefore, God says, There's no real knowledge of me. This is their problem. And to be honest, This is the part That lands right here.

That falls right here. You see, the heart of the problem For the nation of Israel Was their religious leaders.

Look at verse 4 of chapter 4. Yet let no one contend And let no one accuse For with you is my contention, O priest.

God lays it right out. It is the religious leaders That have failed. Chapter 5, verse 1.

Hear this, O priests. Pay attention, O house of Israel. Give ear, O house of the king. For the judgment is for you.

[14:35] Now, it wasn't just the priests. There were other peoples. But you will find consistently As you read through this That it is the religious leaders That bear the guilt.

Chapter 6, verse 9. As robbers lie in wait for a man So the priests band together.

They murder on the way to Shechem. They commit villainy. Huh. That sounds like a Real good religious leader there.

How can I get as much money Out of this job as I can? You know what? I'm a priest.

I could probably kill somebody And get away with it. Because nobody would ever expect me To do that. Hey, let's get together And see what we can accomplish. That's the attitude.

[15:29] That's what they were doing. Chapter 10, verse 5. Chapter 10, verse 5. The inhabitants of Samaria Tremble for the calf of Beth-Avon.

Okay, you've got to understand Northern ten tribes They had these golden calves That they had made And so They'd been taken away.

They'd been Looted By their enemies. And so that's what's going on here. But here we are, verse 5. The inhabitants of Samaria Tremble for the calf of Beth-Avon.

Its people mourn for it. And so Do its idolatrous priests. Those who rejoice over it Over its glory. For it has departed from them. The problem In Israel at that time Was that people were failing To devoutly Serve the Lord.

[16:44] They were Not faithful To what God had called them to be. They were not steadfast In the face of hardship.

When times got hard They didn't turn to God. Their knowledge of God Did not dictate How they led their daily lives.

And a lot of that Responsibility Is because of the religious leaders. The religious leaders The priests Were supposed to Walk in front of the people And say Serve the Lord only.

They were supposed to define it. They were supposed to educate the people. And when people did wrong What were they supposed to do? Confront and challenge.

But I'm going to tell you That's a crappy job. Not a lot of fun involved in that. I was talking to somebody last week About the difference between A fireman and a policeman.

[17:56] Right? When the fireman rolls up You're like Yeah! They're going to put out fire! Alright! Firemen can stand In intersections With a boot And people will put money in it.

Why don't we ever see The police doing that? Because every time The police rolls up It's like Dang it! I knew I didn't have My seatbelt on. Dang it! I wasn't going that fast.

Or Much worse things. If they were to stand out In the street with the boot They'd need the boot To protect themselves From projectiles. And it wouldn't be money That was being thrown.

Right? It's great to come Alongside somebody To encourage And help them And to lift them up And to rescue them.

It's not a lot of fun To stand in front of somebody And say Hey Stop sinning. Hey You're wrong. Turn around. Hey Honor the Lord.

[18 : 59] It's not a lot of fun. Part of the job description But it's not a lot of fun. Keep that in mind As we take a look At what the solution is.

Because Because there is a solution. There is a solution. Yes sir? I ask What do you mean now? Book of Hosea?

Okay. Absolutely. I'm about ready To turn to chapter 6. I'm We're doing Chapter 4 through 11. I'm kind of summing All that up today.

So You betcha. Before we get to chapter 6 Let me Let me just read A couple of things Out of chapter 11 Real quick.

In chapter 11 Verses 3 and 4 We read And this is This is God And it's It's revealing His heart For Israel And he says this Yet it was I Who taught Ephraim To walk I took them up By their arms But they did not know That it was I Who healed them I led them With cords of kindness With the bands of love And I became to them As one who eases The yoke on their jaws I bent down to them And fed them Verse 8 How can I give you up O Ephraim How can I hand you over O Israel How can I make you like Admah How can I treat you like Zabom My heart recoils Within me My compassion Grows warm and tender So you gotta understand Here is Israel And there is no faithfulness There's no steadfast love There's no knowledge Of God in their life And they are just

[20 : 54] Going willy nilly And God He's like My heart is for you I am the one Who brought you And made you And lifted you up And taught you I'm the one who cared for you But I'm standing I'm standing here At this moment And it's about to be Judgment day And my heart Is broken Chapter 6 Verse 1 The prophet Hosea Standing before the people Come Let us return To the Lord For he has torn us That he may heal us He has struck us down And he will bind us up The first thing That we need to do Or the first thing That Israel needed to do In dealing with the fact

That there was no faithfulness Steadfast love Or knowledge of God The fact that there is A huge disconnect Between what they said They believed And what they were doing Is they need to Return to the Lord Yeah Things are hard God has torn us God has done These things to us But let us return That he May Heal us He has struck us down He will bind us up So here's this huge problem And the first step You've never heard this before I'm sure The first Think of us