

Sermon: She is not as Pretty as She Looks

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[0 : 00] Hey, faith family.

If you've got your Bible, turn to Hosea chapter 6. We're continuing in our Boundless series through the book of Hosea. This is week 4, and we're going to be looking here in chapter 6 for our passage today.

The approach to the book has kind of been looking at some of the different sections in the book of Hosea. The first week we looked at chapter 1. The second week we looked at chapter 2 and 3 together.

And then last week we looked at chapter 4 through the beginning of chapter 6. What I want us to do is slow down just a little bit this week, because there's a couple of verses in chapter 6 that I think is very important for us to understand.

And it's a very serious issue in the book of Hosea, in the life of Israel, and in our life as well. And so I want us to look at Hosea 6, verse 4, 5, and 6.

[1 : 21] And so if you've got your Bibles, let's look here. Hosea chapter 6 and verse 4. It says, This is God's Word. Would you pray with me?

Father, thank you for this opportunity to be in your Word today. Thank you for what you're going to teach us. Lord, I pray that I would be faithful to your text, to what you've spoken.

Lord, help me speak these words in a way that would convict us and allow us to really experience and understand the boundless love you have for us.

Holy Spirit, guide us, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. His name was Brian Koob. He was the top Republican in the New York State Assembly, where he had served since about the year 2000.

And not long ago, he made headlines. Koob made headlines not because he was proposing a policy, not because he was advocating for a call to action.

[2 : 56] Rather, he made headlines because he was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. You see, on a New Year's Eve night, Koob was driving home when he crashed his 2018 GMC Acadia into a ditch.

When the Ontario County Sheriff's Department arrived, they performed a sobriety test and found him to be above the limit for his blood alcohol level.

Koob said this, he said, quote, this was a terrible lapse in judgment and one I take full responsibility for.

Now, as upsetting as driving under the influence or driving drunk is, that's not the only reason why Koob faced public backlash.

It was because of something he said, literally, just a couple of days before that happened.

[4 : 06] Just a few days before that New Year's Eve event, he said this in a public statement, quote, Many of our holiday traditions, especially our New Year's Eve celebrations, involve indulging in spirits.

Done safely and in moderation, these can be wonderful holiday experiences. However, tragedy can be only one bad decision away, close quote.

In other words, what caused people to be outraged at him, what caused a lot of the backlash that he faced, was not just his personal iniquity, it was his public hypocrisy.

Faith family, do you know a hypocrite? It would be preferable that you not point to someone, but you know what hypocrisy is. You've experienced someone that you would consider a hypocrite.

It might be the realtor that told you, oh, this house has everything on your list, when in reality, it didn't even have a bathroom. Or maybe you've got that kid that said, oh, my room is spotless, but in reality, it was a disaster.

[5 : 31] Or the college student that says, yeah, I'm making all A's, when in reality, he's failing all his courses. Or maybe, even worse, a Christian who acts like they have it all together, when in reality, they're a mess.

Hypocrisy. Hypocrisy. It bothers us to our core, doesn't it? Like the old band the Beastie Boys used to sing as I was growing up in high school.

Your dad caught you smoking and he says, no way. But that hypocrite smokes two packs a day.

Hypocrisy.

It's something that bothers us. And it's exactly what bothers God in Hosea chapter 6.

That's the issue that God is addressing within the people of Israel. Look here at chapter 6 and verse 4. It says, Now just stop right there for just a moment.

[6 : 49] Have you ever looked at a spouse? Have you ever looked at one of your children? Have you ever looked at somebody else and just kind of said, What am I going to do with you?

You've said that. You've thought that. That kind of head shaking response, which means I've tried everything I know to do, but you won't respond.

You won't do what I want you to do. What am I going to do with you? That's how God feels about Israel at this point in the book of Hosea.

That's how God feels, I'm sure, many times with me and with you. What am I going to do with you? I have threatened discipline, O Israel, and I have promised restoration, but you're still not responding. You're still doubling down on your idols. And now in chapter 6, God is shaking His head. What am I going to do with these num-nums?

[7 : 54] And be honest, wouldn't you have given up on them by now? Wouldn't you have given up on you by now? But fortunately, God's love is not like our love.

Amen? I mean, His love, as we've seen throughout the book, is boundless. Here's the wonderful truth, and I am so excited to be able to teach this. Like, listen to this.

What's so incredible about God's love is that once you are His, once you belong to Him, once you're in relationship with Him, He will never cut you off.

He will never let you go. And the reason that's the case is because God knew who you were when He chose to love you.

God knew everything about who you are and who you'd be when He said, I do. Your waywardness has never, ever, for a second ever, caught Him by surprise.

[9 : 04] Let me prove this to you. If you look back in Hosea chapter 3, look at verse 1. Hosea 3 and verse 1 says this, And the Lord told me, Hosea, go again and love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord, watch, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.

So, zone in right here for just a second, okay? Here's what that's saying. Hosea is told to go love a woman and he already knows the type of woman she is when he marries her.

It's not like he gets into the relationship and buys her back and is like, Oh, well, I didn't know you were prostituting yourself. No! Hosea knows that about Gomer from the very get-go.

And of course, Hosea and Gomer illustrates the relationship between God and His people, meaning he already knew the kind of wife you would be when he married you. That's why his love will never cut you off.

That's why his love will never go away. He knew exactly everything there is to know about you the moment you entered into relationship with Him.

[10 : 30] He does not get ten years down the road with you and say, Well, I sure didn't see that coming. His love is boundless because from the get-go, he knew exactly the kind of woman, the kind of bride you would be.

And now here in chapter 6, we discover a different aspect of Israel's sin, of Israel's unfaithfulness, namely, her hypocrisy. Notice as you keep reading in chapter 6, down in verse 6, it says, For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice the knowledge of God, that is the recognition of God's authority, rather than burnt offerings.

Now, I mentioned this just briefly last week in last week's message that one of the things that Israel is continuing to do here is go through the external motions.

She's continuing to offer Old Testament sacrifices and burnt offerings to God. And so this kind of external, you know, following the commands of sacrifices while in her heart, she's running after other saviors.

Let me put it this way, because again, there's a clear metaphor throughout the book that we've been talking about. And so maybe this would be helpful to understand the hypocrisy that's being addressed here.

[11:54] You'll notice the summary here. I'll go through it quickly. Number one, Israel married God at Mount Sinai. We talked about in Exodus 19, the we do language.

Number two, Israel then breaks her vows. Chapter 4, verse 2 is an example where she's literally breaking the Ten Commandments that she promised to uphold.

Number three, Israel has other lovers. That's the imagery of whoredom throughout the book of Hosea. Not only does she break her vows, she goes after other gods.

Number four, Israel has no affection for God, for her husband. You see that in chapter 4, verse 1, as well as here in chapter 6, verse 6.

There's no love. It's a loveless marriage. Number five, Israel does not recognize God's authority. You see that in chapter 4, verse 1, and verse 6 of chapter 6 as well.

[12:50] The no knowledge, the no recognition of God's role and authority. Number six, Israel calls God by the name of Baal.

She calls God Baal. You see that in chapter 2, verse 16. Number seven, Israel runs to Baal, not God, in times of suffering.

You see that in chapter 5, verse 13. So, in other words, those seven points summarize all of Israel's unfaithfulness. And now look at number eight.

All the while, Israel pretends like she's the perfect spouse. Do you feel that? Does that land on you? Here you have all the clear examples of Israel's unfaithfulness to God, and yet, by her continuing to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, verse 6, what she's doing is to try to convince God that she's not as bad as she really is.

[14:00] Hypocrite, hypocrite, hypocrite. This really teaches us what hypocrisy is and what hypocrisy is not because I don't think we often really understand what hypocrisy is.

For instance, hypocrisy is not, it's not that you sin during the week and go to church on the weekend. Anybody that goes to church sinned during the week.

That's not hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is not, listen, it's not that there is a gap between your personal life and your public life. That's true of just about everybody as well.

Here's hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is when you try to convince God, yourself, and or others that there really isn't a gap.

That you're actually not as bad as you know you are. Hypocrisy is when you see that you are a mess. You see your sin, but instead of embracing your sin and resting in the boundless love of God, you try to cover up that mess with a praise song.

[15:17] You try to cover up that mess with giving some money in the offering or your church attendance, and you do those outward sacrifices, those outward actions as a way to try to convince yourself and convince those around you, and maybe even just convince God that you're not that big of a mess after all.

I think that's so important for us to learn. It's not that you sin during the week and go to church on the weekend. It's not that there is a disconnect or gap between your personal life and your public life.

It's acting as if there isn't one. It's acting like you aren't the mess that you are. That's religious hypocrisy, and that is why, faith family, Jesus, 10,000 times more would rather have lunch with a prostitute than He would a Pharisee.

You give Jesus 10,000 options to have lunch, He's picking the prostitute every time. Why? Because she's willing to admit she's sick.

She's willing to admit she's a mess, not try to hide it and cover it up. That's what Israel is doing. That is the religious hypocrisy that we see here in the book of Hosea.

[16:47] So what I want to do, and I don't think I'm going to take a lot of time to do this, but just give you three aspects of religious hypocrisy that we see here in the life of Israel.

And that's going to help us, one, understand what religious hypocrisy is, number two, why God hates it, and number three, why it's anti-gospel. What it is, why God hates it, and why it goes against the gospel.

So here's the first thing, just quickly notice this first point. Israel's religious hypocrisy is this. Israel sacrifices to God while finding security in the world.

Israel sacrifices to God while finding security in the world. Based on chapter 6, verse 6, which we've already read, Israel is offering sacrifices and burnt offerings, but she's doing this while something else has gone on in her life.

Look back at chapter 5 and verse 13. Chapter 5 and verse 13. Now, when Ephraim saw his sickness, that is, he saw his mess, he saw his junk, he saw his problem, and Judah his wound, then Ephraim went to, not God, but Assyria, and sent to the great king, but he is not able to cure you or heal your wound.

[18 : 13] In other words, Israel realizes their waywardness. Israel comes to understand they're a mess. They're violating God's law.

They've gone against all the things they said they wouldn't when it comes to God. They realize this. They look in the mirror and they see themselves as how they really are, but what do they do? How do they respond? Answer, they run to Assyria for security. All the while, they keep offering sacrifices to God.

Do you see that? Suffering comes, they see their mess, they see their waywardness, but what they do is they go to Assyria hoping that maybe they'll be nice to them and they'll be secure.

All the while, sacrifices and burnt offerings are given to God. In other words, you're married to God, you're unfaithful to God, you realize your sin against God, so you start offering up religious activity to God, giving, serving, singing, preaching, reading your Bible, whatever, but your love is still focused on false gods.

[19 : 31] That's what's happening here. Israel here is offering up all these external activities when her heart doesn't love God.

You can change your external behavior, but your love still isn't for God. That's the problem. You're acting like you love God when you don't.

And we do the same thing. We do the same thing. I do the same thing. Suffering comes into our life. We realize our sin. And so what do we do? We ramp up the church attendance.

Suffering comes into our life. We realize our sin. And what do we do? We give a little bit more money or whatever it is. But we make some external tweaking. But when in reality, our heart hasn't left the security of money or the security of family or the security of health, that, look right here, is religious hypocrisy.

That's religious hypocrisy. It is offering sacrifices to God while the security of your heart is in other gods. It's like this.

[20 : 42] Think of it within the metaphor of Hosea. It's like renewing your vows to God, external. I'll be better, I promise. Renewing your vows to God when you know your heart isn't in it.

That's what Israel is doing. She's renewing her vows. Look at this burnt offering. But her heart is still far from her.

I desire steadfast love, not sacrifice. That is what God is addressing here with Israel's hypocrisy.

But it's not just that Israel sacrifices to God while finding security in the world. Here's the second piece of Israel's hypocrisy is this. Israel tries to look clean even though she's unclean.

Israel tries to look clean even though she is unclean. I take this from chapter 6 and verse 10. Look at chapter 6 and verse 10.

[21 : 43] In the house of Israel, I have seen a horrible thing. Here's the horrible thing. Ephraim's whoredom is there. Israel is defiled.

Now, again, that's the language that's used throughout the book. Prostitution, defilement. Here's basically what it's saying, faith family. Listen. Israel is unclean. She is defiled.

She is filthy. So she has two options. She can either come to God for cleansing or she can just put lipstick on the pig and try to look clean even though inwardly she's still unclean.

And Israel here chooses the latter. Through her religious activity of offering up sacrifices, she's trying to make the outside look as though it's something other than what is true on the inside.

But God says, in the house of Israel, I've seen a horrible thing. That is, when I look inside, do you know what I see? Whoredom. Uncleanliness.

[22 : 55] Filth. Even though you're trying to make the outside look good. Let me give you this kind of illustration that might help you understand this. Is that imagine that you own a car that's falling apart underneath the hood.

It's a total disaster underneath the hood. But rather than taking it to the mechanic to have it restored, what you do instead is you clean the outside until it's spotless in hopes that when other

people look at the car, they'll be impressed.

But here's the problem. Okay? That's exactly what Israel is doing. Everybody look right here. Right here. 10,000 religious car washes will not fix your engine.

10,000 religious car washes will not fix your engine. It does nothing under the hood. And so all these sacrifices that Israel is offering to try to look clean isn't dealing with the uncleanness of her heart.

The problem, notice here, is not the dirt on our hands. It's the depravity of our hearts. The problem is not the dirt of our hands. It's the depravity of our hearts.

[24 : 13] It's inward. And that's why this imagery of whoredom is used throughout the book. This helps us understand the difference between, I believe, religion and repentance.

Religion and repentance. Because repentance is a change of heart. Repentance is an inward thing. That's why people can't say to you, you haven't repented.

It's an inward thing. It's a personal thing. But religion, on the other hand, is a change of activity or behavior. Do you see? Repentance is a change of heart, whereas religion is a change of behavior or I'm just going to do better or I'm going to try harder.

But it doesn't address the internal issue that is the problem. It's kind of like one of my favorite movies. Don't email me about this. It's Godfather. I mean, I do believe when you're walking into heaven, they will ask you if you've seen The Godfather.

If you've seen the trilogy, you'll get a better place in heaven than if you've only seen one. That's just my theology. But if you've seen the movie Godfather, do you remember when Michael Corleone is, he's being the Godfather in the baptism there in that scene and the Catholic priest is asking Michael Corleone, do you renounce Satan and all of his works?

[25 : 38] And Michael Corleone is like, yes, I renounce him. And he just continues, do you renounce Satan? He's going through this religious activity, but all the while, they keep cutting away to all these other scenes where Michael Corleone has given the order to kill all these other people.

In other words, externally, he's in the right place. He's in church. Externally, he's saying all the right words. Yes, I renounce the works of Satan. But internally, he still has a heart of murder.

That's a great image as to what Israel is doing here. Let me give you just two examples in Jesus' ministry that I think illustrate this that are very, very helpful.

The first here is found in Matthew 23. Verse 25, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, here's our word, hypocrites, for you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they're full of greed and self-indulgence.

You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, you who are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

[27 : 04] So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you're full of hypocrisy. That's what Jesus said about the Pharisees.

It's exactly what Israel was doing in Hosea. They're trying to look clean through their sacrifices when really inwardly they are unclean. Now compare that to a different example in the New Testament in Jesus' ministry.

Look at Luke 5 and verse 12. Luke 5 and verse 12 says this, While He, that is Jesus, was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy, so an unclean man.

And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged Him, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean. And Jesus stretched out His hand and touched Him, saying, I will be clean.

And immediately, the leprosy left Him. That is a very different response than what we saw in the first example.

[28 : 12] In the first example, the Pharisee is trying to appear clean when in reality, they're not. Whereas in the example here of the leper, the leper acknowledges, I am unclean.

And the only one that can make me clean is you. And of course, I don't have time today to explain how leprosy, the physical condition, is an exact parallel to our spiritual condition.

The point is this, the reason God hates religious hypocrisy is because it assumes that you can clean what only God can.

That you can clean, by your activity, what only God can. Notice this on the screen. Religion is when you use soap to clean the skin. Regeneration is when the spirit cleans within.

made were given out of contrition it was all about trying to control God in other words he didn't really want God he just wanted to get to dry land it was the prayer was a way of controlling God to give him the safety that he wanted that's exactly what Israel is doing she is not offering these sacrifices because she's genuine in her contrition before God she's offering these sacrifices so that God will do what Israel wants and the truth is faith family we do the same thing you may not think that but we do and here's why ask yourself this when suffering comes into your life when something is taken away do you get mad at God because he owes you something do you get mad at God because you don't deserve I mean look at all the years you've been a Christian look at all the things you've done for him look at all the money you've given to to kingdom building programs why would you do that to you in other words all that activity was done in hopes to control God and the moment you get something you don't want you're mad at him that is religious hypocrisy Israel is offering sacrifices to God but her security is in the world Israel is trying to look clean when she's actually unclean and Israel is giving the appearance of contrition but she's really wanting control for God to do what she wants so here's the question as we close is there hope for hypocrites is there hope for hypocrites there is but look at Matthew chapter 9 Matthew chapter 9 and verse 9 and Jesus passed on from there he saw a man called Matthew sitting at a tax booth and he said to him follow me and he rose and followed him and as

Jesus reclined at table in the house behold many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples and when the Pharisees saw this they said to his disciples why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners let's stop right there here's the context Jesus is eating with tax collectors those were individuals that cheated their own people and gave to Rome they were traitors people hated tax collectors people hated tax collectors Jesus is eating with a tax collector and all these other host of sinners and the religious leaders get upset how can he do this why would he eat with people like that now watch watch how Jesus answers their frustration their problem verse 12 but when Jesus heard it he said those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick in other words the answer Jesus gives is the sick are the ones that need a doctor my mission Jesus says was for sinners and then this is so important zone in here then Jesus gives them the reason that is the Pharisees why they don't understand it why they missed it why they can't see what Jesus is doing look at what he says in verse 13

Jesus then said go and learn what this means I desire mercy not sacrifice for I came to call the righteous not I came not to call the righteous but sinners faith family look right here look right here that is a direct quote from Hosea 6 Jesus says the Pharisees the reason you don't get this the reason you don't understand why I'm eating with tax collectors and prostitutes and sinners the reason you don't get it is because you haven't learned the lesson of Hosea you haven't learned the issue that Israel struggled with back in the days of Hosea in other words if you had learned that lesson Hosea 6 you wouldn't question what I'm doing namely the mission of Jesus is not for those who are trying not to be a gomer but those who are willing to admit they are the mission of Jesus Christ is not for those people trying not to be a gomer it's for the very people who admit they are and you may send me an email about this don't care here's the truth notice it on the screen Jesus would rather marry a whore than a hypocrite Jesus would rather marry a whore than a hypocrite why because the great physician came for the sick not for those who came to pretend to be healthy which means faith family until we admit we are a mess we will never be a part of Jesus's mission until we admit we are a mess we will never be a part of Jesus's mission because he came for the sick not for the people who pretend like they're healthy faith family don't be faith family don't be don't be like Israel in Hosea don't be like the Pharisees in the gospel of Matthew don't be a hypocrite for you will never fully experience the boundless love of God until you stop offering your sacrifices after all Jesus was not humiliated publicly for you to spend your life trying to maintain a public image

[42 : 14] Jesus was not broken before God for you to spend your life trying to convince God you've got your life all together admit it you're a whore and the good news of the gospel is that's exactly the kind of woman Jesus wants to marry let's pray father thank you for this passage for us to look at today it is like the rest of the book of Hosea quite intense the issue God had with his people then and the issue God has with his people now is religious hypocrisy it's not that there's a disconnect between our personal and private life it's not that we send during the week and go to church on Sunday it's that we're a mess but we try to act like we got it all together that's the spirit of Phariseeism that's alive and well and that's why the Pharisees wouldn't sit at the table but a prostitute would

God help us today be honest before you to not cover up our mess and sacrifices of religion let us be like that leper that's willing to say I am unclean Jesus make me clean in Jesus name we pray Amen Faith family I hope you're encouraged by today's message and if you're listening today and you would like to talk to somebody about a decision that you need to make in following Jesus maybe today you've realized that you're not a Christian and all the religious activity all the religious car washes will never clean the engine it will never make you right with God and maybe you'd like to talk with somebody about how you can be cleansed by the power of Jesus Christ reach out to us here at Faith Family we would love to pray for you to minister to you in any way that you need us to so just drop us an email for the gospel gatherings at gmail.com and we'll follow up with you or pray for you whatever your need may be so thanks so much for being a part of this boundless series I hope that you are learning about the outrageous love that God has for you we'll see you again next time