

Hosea 10

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. Please turn in your Bibles to Hosea chapter 10, found on page 756 of the Bibles in the pew.

We're about three-quarters of the way through our series in Hosea. So let me read chapter 10 for us today.

Amen. Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more 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.

For now they will say, we have no king, for we do not fear the Lord. And a king, what could he do for us? They utter mere words. With empty oaths they make covenants, so judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.

[1 : 10] The inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the cough of Beth-Avon. Its people mourn for it, and so do its idolatrous priests, those who rejoice over it and over its glory, for it has departed from them.

The thing itself shall be carried to Assyria as tribute to the great king. Ephraim shall be put to shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his idol. Samaria's king shall perish like a twig on the face of the waters.

The high places of Avin, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed. Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars. And they shall say to the mountains, cover us. And to the hills, fall on us.

From the days of Gibeah you have sinned, O Israel. There they have continued. Shall not the war against the unjust overtake them in Gibeah? When I please, I will discipline them, and nations shall be gathered against them when they are bound up for their double iniquity.

Ephraim was a trained calf that loved to thresh, and I spared her fair neck. But I will put Ephraim to the yoke. Judah must plow. Jacob must harrow for himself. Sow for yourselves righteousness.

[2 : 19] Reap steadfast love. Break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord. That he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

You have plowed 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 war shall arise among your people. And all your fortresses shall be destroyed. As Shalman destroyed Beth Arbel on the day of battle, mothers were dashed in pieces with their children.

Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel, because of your great evil. At dawn, the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off. What went wrong?

In many circumstances of life, this is an essential question to ask. If your car breaks down and you take it to the service station, when your body breaks down and you go see the doctor, when your marriage falls apart and one or both of the people go to see a counselor, when your favorite team doesn't make the playoffs, even after winning the championship last year, or when bargaining talks break down and the union goes on strike, and all of these and many other situations, it's essential to ask, what went wrong?

[3 : 46] It's not a pleasant question, but it's a necessary question because you need an accurate diagnosis in order to come up with a good solution. And this is the question that the prophet Hosea has been addressing.

What went wrong in Israel's relationship with God? Of course, as we consider Israel's situation, it also can be a window or a mirror into what can go wrong, maybe what has gone wrong in our own relationship with God.

We've been looking at Hosea for ten weeks now. Let me do a little recap just to bring us up to this point. We saw in chapters 1 through 3 the story of Hosea and his unfaithful wife who left him and went off with another man, and yet how Hosea went and pursued her and with a costly love bought her back and brought her home.

Chapters 4 through 10 are the bulk of Hosea's message to his people. And in these chapters, Hosea is speaking on God's behalf to the people of Israel. He's bringing, as it were, a legal charge, an indictment against them for their disloyalty to their covenant with God.

And so in these chapters, as we've seen, he alternates between three kinds of statements. First, he brings accusations, God's specific accusations, against the people of Israel.

[5 : 09] And then he has statements about God declaring the just punishment, the consequences of their unfaithfulness that are coming to them. And then third, there are occasional and very brief glimpses of a distant past when all was well between God and Israel and a hope of potential future restoration.

Now sometimes, as we've been reading these chapters, it might seem like Hosea is just repeating the same points over and over again. And to some extent, it's true. Hosea is not constructed as a strictly linear, step-by-step argument.

It's more like a series of poignant images that together paint a picture of the reality. Hosea is saying the people of Israel have betrayed their God like a wife who has abandoned a loving husband and gone off and committed adultery with another man.

Hosea is God's message to his unfaithful people, full of raw emotion and vivid imagery. But at the same time, when you look closely, Hosea does have a structure.

And that's actually part of the beauty and power of the book. It has raw emotion and vivid imagery and also careful structure and precise thought. Now chapter 10, which we're looking at today, is divided into two halves, verse 1 through 8 and 9 through 15.

[6 : 26] Now the first half, verse 1 through 8, Hosea is reflecting on Israel's situation. He speaks of them in the third person as they, or he. But in the second half, he turns to the people and, as it were, speaks to them directly.

You have sinned, O Israel. Turn back. Both sections of the chapter describe Israel using an agricultural image.

And each section begins with a picture of a promising start, but ends with a bitter end. So chapter 10, verse 1, Israel is compared to a spreading vine, increasing in its fruit.

But then in verse 4 and verse 8, they've become a field covered with poisonous, bitter weeds, and then covered with thorns and thistles. In verse 11 through 13, Israel was once a trained calf that freely and zealously trampled the grain.

It's a picture of freedom and energy. But now she must be put under a heavy yoke of bondage. And we already saw this last week. If you look back at chapter 9, verse 10, Israel was like a bunch of fresh grapes or figs in the desert.

[7 : 38] But then they became detestable and rotten. So it makes sense for Hosea to ask this question, what went wrong from these promising beginnings to these shameful endings?

And Hosea in this chapter points to three specific things that went wrong in Israel's relationship with God. And of course, each of these things can go wrong in our own relationship with God as well.

So the first thing he points out is that they made false investments and reap empty results. The second thing is they spoke false words and reap bitter results.

And third, they sought a false glory and reaped shame. So first, they made false investments. This is verse 1 and 2. Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit.

The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built. As his country improved, he improved his pillars. Several times in the Old Testament, the people of Israel were compared to a vine, a choice vine, a pure vine that God had planted in the land of Canaan.

[8 : 45] And in the book of Deuteronomy, God promised that he would grant them overflowing prosperity and fruitfulness. If they obeyed him, the fruit of their womb, the fruit of the ground, the fruit of their cattle would be blessed.

Deuteronomy 28.4. And all of this had come to pass. Just as God has promised, Israel's fruit increased. But as their wealth and prosperity increased, they invested in altars.

Altars to foreign gods. And pillars. Could be monuments or memorials or temples. Now, altars and pillars would have seemed impressive.

And in their cultural context, it would have seemed appropriate for a prosperous nation to build altars and pillars as signs of their strength. But they weren't in line with God's priorities. The more that God did for them, the more they misused his gifts. The more he gave them, the more they turned away. So he says in verse 2 and verse 8, your altars and your pillars will be broken down and covered with thorns and thistles.

[9 : 58] Now, of course, this raises the question for us. How do we invest the fruit that God has given to us? There's a story of Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages walking through one of the great cathedrals of his day.

And he was walking with a high church official. And as they passed a collection box full of gold and silver coins, the church official pointed to the box and said, look, we can no longer say, like Peter said in Acts, silver and gold have I none.

And Thomas turned and said, but alas, we can no longer say what Peter said next. In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk. The church had invested in altars and pillars and it had lost its spiritual power.

And this can happen to any church. When I joined this church 11 years ago, we had about 70 people coming every Sunday morning. We were, the church had one full-time pastor. We were renting space. We were still in a rebuilding stage after the church had almost collapsed or had nearly closed its doors in 1999. That year, our annual budget was kept afloat by a gift from another church that was helping churches start up.

[11 : 07] Well, 11 years later, we're in a different position. We own our own building. We have 250 people every Sunday, four full-time staff members, a growing savings account because almost every year, by God's grace, we have ended with a surplus through the generosity of God's people.

Now, of course, more important than any of those things is the fruit of lives, lives impacted by the gospel of Jesus Christ. But we need to ask the question, what, how should we invest the resources that God has given us as a church?

And the elders, in our elders meetings, we've been discussing these questions. What is the vision that God has set before us as a church? What are the ministry opportunities that He's put in front of us? How should we use the resources that God has given us?

As we read earlier, Jesus said, I am the vine, I am the vine, you are the branches. If you abide in me, you will bear much fruit. And apart from me, you can do nothing at all.

Nothing of eternal significance. You know, every year, throughout New England, there are many beautiful church buildings that are sold and made into condos or historical societies, or simply left to decay because long ago, they lost their spiritual power.

[12 : 23] long ago, they lost the good news of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God for salvation for all who believe. So we're grateful for our building, but may we be a people who abide in Jesus and depend on Him for our fruitfulness.

And as we do that, as God leads us, may we use our resources to be ambitious for His glory. God's put us in this city for a reason. He's put us in a city with tens of thousands of university students, with tens of thousands of people who struggle and live in violent neighborhoods and broken homes, thousands of internationals who come from all over the world, many people who have never heard the Christian message.

And we're in a region where Bible preaching and gospel-centered churches are few. God has given us many opportunities to be ambitious for His glory. And so let's pray together and talk together about how we can use the resources God has given us and how you can use the resources God has given you.

A few weeks ago, I was talking to a Christian who's a CEO, and he doesn't go to this church, by the way. But he had recently met with a group of other Christian CEOs, and it was interesting to hear about their meeting.

He said an older man there, an older CEO, told how many years ago he had sold his business and acquired a large amount of money. And he thought, what should I invest in? He thought, maybe I can help Young Life.

[13 : 53] It's a youth ministry that he was connected with. Every summer, Young Life shares the gospel with thousands of kids who come to Young Life camps. But back then, Young Life, the closest camp to New England was in Indiana or something somewhere way out in the Midwest.

And so any kids who wanted to go to camp had to ride a bus for a whole day. Sometimes the buses broke down, sometimes they didn't get there. So he thought, you know, maybe I should buy a camp that's somewhere closer to New England so that these kids can be served and hear the gospel and it would help this ministry.

And so he found a really nice camp. I think it was Saranac, for those of you who know Young Life, in upstate New York, worth millions of dollars, could house hundreds of kids, and on a beautiful lake. And so he bought it and he donated it to Young Life.

Now, he also had some more money to spend. And so he decided to buy himself a boat. And of course, if you're a CEO, you don't just buy a rinky-dink motorboat, you buy a nice boat that you can invite your CEO friends to join you on.

Because of course, that's appropriate if you're a CEO. It's very reasonable. That's how you socialize. And so he, now of course, if you buy a boat like that, you have to manage it, you have to maintain it, and you have to spend time on it because otherwise it's a waste.

[15:11] And he said to this group of Christian CEOs, he said, looking back, that boat only bought me grief and trouble. I wish I had bought two camps and no boat.

Now, most of us can hardly imagine making financial decisions on that kind of scale, though a few of you may find yourself in that position someday. But Jesus said in Luke 16, he said, if you're faithful with a little, you'll be faithful with much.

If you're dishonest with a little, you'll be dishonest with much. Now, Jesus didn't simply mean by that, don't lie, don't cheat, don't steal, give 10%, and then the rest is yours.

He said this immediately after the parable of the shrewd manager. And the parable of the shrewd manager concludes by saying, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

In other words, the point of that parable, it's a confusing parable, but the point of the parable is invest your worldly resources, which will one day perish, in people, in God's work, in people who will last forever.

[16:23] So Jesus is saying, don't just avoid the extreme forms of greed and materialism, but invest your temporary resources ambitiously, actively, creatively, in God's eternal purposes.

Now let me be clear, there's nothing inherently wrong with buying a boat, or a car, or a dog, or getting cable TV, or using a smart phone, or enjoying delicious food, or any of these things.

Paul says in 1 Timothy 6, God richly provides us with everything to enjoy. But are we driven to buy the latest gadgets and toys, or fashionable clothes, or a certain size house, just because we can?

And everyone else who earns the same amount of money that we do would think it's totally reasonable to do that. Or we might feel that if we didn't have that thing, we would be depriving ourselves, and somehow we would be incomplete.

You know, in the same chapter where Paul says God gives us richly all things to enjoy, he also says godliness with contentment is great gain. He says if we have food and clothing, with these we'll be content.

[17:37] You see, the problem with Israel's false investments, and the problem with our false investments, is that they come from a false heart. Verse 2 says their heart is false.

In other words, their heart was divided. It didn't rest in God. And so it led them to invest in other things that were empty and hollow in the end.

So first, false investments led to empty returns. Now the second problem was that they spoke false words and reap bitter results. This is verse 4.

They utter mere words. With empty oaths, they make covenants. So judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field. Now some say that this refers particularly to Israel's political leaders, the kings who ran back and forth between Egypt and Assyria, trying to make treaties or covenants without actually wanting to follow through on them.

And we could surely make the same criticism of political candidates two days before election day, making all kinds of promises that they don't even have the power to implement or making false accusations against one another.

[18:50] And it's true that when political discourse becomes dominated by empty words, that people gradually become bitter and cynical. But you know, Hosea's not just talking about political leaders.

He's talking about all the people. He says, they. It's not just the kings. It's all of them. You know, if you're, we were talking earlier about some of the challenges of parenting.

If you're a parent like I am, you know how hard it can be to simply let your yes be yes and your no be no, even when your child starts screaming on the sidewalk in front of the playground because you say, now it's time to go home.

Or when the dinner guests knock on the door and they're people that you haven't had them over yet and they don't really know you very well and you're trying to make a good impression on them and you've just had to give your child a time out because of repeated disobedience.

It's hard to follow through because there's all kinds of things that make it difficult. Parenting is a test. It can be a humbling test. It so quickly brings us to the end of our human resources.

[19 : 58] It brings us face to face with our inadequacies, with our impatience, our selfishness, our fear of losing face before others, our need for grace from God.

But you know, sooner or later, we reap what we sow. And if we make empty promises to our children, our children will eventually become bitter toward us because they don't trust us.

And if we don't follow through on our word, whenever our children resist us, we will eventually become bitter toward them because they don't listen to us because we never follow through on what we said.

Or think about relationships between people who are well off and people who are poor. Some of the same dynamics of empty words can play out here. Empty words and bitter results.

Eleven years ago, when I was in college, we started the Night Runners homeless ministry. We go to a local homeless shelter every week on Wednesday nights and spend about an hour just building relationships with people, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[21 : 02] If you're interested, you can talk to me more about that. We've been intending to make an announcement for a month or two, and so there's your announcement for Night Runners. I just haven't got around to it. But when we were starting this ministry, one of my mentors at that time said to me, he said, one of the most important things is that you need to keep your word, whatever you say, 100% of the time.

So don't say, I'll come back and I'll be here next week to visit if you're not sure whether you're going to come back or not. Because if you don't keep your word, nothing else that you say will matter.

Because almost everyone who is homeless or poor has been burned by broken promises and empty words. They've seen a lot of people come and go and never come back.

And you need to earn their trust. But it also goes the other way too. If you're in a situation where you need help, where you're poor or homeless or for whatever reason you need to ask for help, there's always a temptation to manipulate people, to guilt trip them, or not tell the whole truth, or promise what you can't give later in order to get what you want now.

And almost everybody does it. But it poisons relationships. You know, there's no shame in asking for help. We all need help.

[22 : 21] That was the first session of our Sunday school class back in September. If you missed it, that was the main message. We all need help from God and from each other. There's no shame in asking for it.

But there is shame in manipulating and deceiving. Because it only leads to bitterness. And so at Trinity, we want our ministry to people who are poor or needy or outcast to be full of compassion.

Because Jesus Christ, even to people who are undeserving, because Jesus Christ shed his blood on the cross for guilty sinners like us who did not deserve it. And at the same time, we must be committed to holding people accountable and building responsibility.

Because if we don't do that, if any ministry doesn't do that, you will end up harming the very people that you want to help. Well, one other example of empty words.

What about little white lies? I'll be home at 5. Well, really, there's no chance that I'll be home before 5.30. Text. On my way. Reality.

[23 : 26] I haven't yet logged out of my email. And sometimes, I'm guilty of these kind of empty words. I think, why do I do it?

Well, if I'm being defensive, I'll say, well, I just, I'm just not good at estimating time. Which is true, but not the whole story. Honestly, it's largely my desire to please someone else and get them off my back.

Of course, when I'm on the receiving end, when a chronically late person tells me they're on their way and then doesn't show up for 45 minutes, it certainly doesn't please me.

A chronically late person doesn't please anyone by saying that they will arrive exactly on time. You see how we are all. These things affect all of us.

And the problem with false and deceitful words, just like false investments, is that they proceed from a false heart. That word, in verse 2, their heart is false. It's literally a word that means smooth, as in a smooth talker, or a slippery person who can't be pinned down to his word.

[24 : 38] See, our false words reveal a problem in our heart. So we make false investments, we speak false words, and third, we seek a false glory.

This is verses 5 through 8. Verse 5 and 6, the inhabitants of Samaria tremble for the calf of Beth-Avon. Its people mourn for it, and so do its idolatrous priests, those who rejoiced over it and over its glory, for it is departed from them.

Ephraim shall be put to shame. Israel shall be ashamed of his idol. You know, the Bible says that we are created to share in God's glory. And glory means, is a word that means beauty, or splendor, or fame, or weightiness.

We are created in God's image. We are naturally glory seekers. If we don't seek our glory in God, we'll inevitably seek it somewhere else, because this is how we're made as people, to seek glory and honor.

So if we don't seek glory from God, we might seek it in ourselves, in our own accomplishments, or in something else that we attach ourselves to, a sports team, or a reality TV show, or our Facebook status.

[25 : 53] How many people say, I like you? Doesn't that give you a sense of weightiness, happiness, and glory? Of course, it sounds silly when you hear it like that.

How many friends you have, or how many people like us? You see, living on the other, and yet, we're glory seekers, and yet, living on the other side of the fall, we're also creatures who experience profound shame.

And what these verses are saying is that a misplaced source of glory leads to a distorted sense of shame. In other words, when we seek our glory from something other than God, then we become ashamed of things that we don't need to be ashamed of, and we aren't ashamed of things that we really should be ashamed of.

You see, the people of Israel found their glory in this idol that they had made. And as a result, they weren't ashamed when they lied and stole and were disloyal to their covenant with God, but they were ashamed.

Verse 6, it says, Ephraim shall be put to shame. Israel shall be ashamed. They were ashamed when their idol was taken away to Assyria. So what do you glory in?

[27 : 09] What makes you feel beautiful or significant or admired? What do you rejoice over? But the thought of it being taken away from you makes you tremble.

Or you could also ask the opposite question. What makes you feel ashamed or rejected or worthless? And what does that reveal about where you're finding your glory?

We're all seeking glory somewhere. Now the thing that Israel gloried in was taken away from them, and they were devastated.

They were put to shame and even despair because they sought their glory in a vain thing. They made false investments and reaped empty results.

They spoke false words and reaped bitter and poisonous weeds. They pursued a false glory and only reaped shame. And the rest of this chapter is a vivid description of the results of Israel's misdirected investments, words, and glory.

[28 : 16] Verse 7, the king will perish like a twig on the face of the waters, helplessly carried downstream by the current, washed away by the Assyrian Empire.

Verses 9 through 10 and 13 through 15, most of the second half of the chapter describe a horrific battle that will result in the whole nation being destroyed as Shalman destroyed Beth Arbol on the day of battle.

Shalman was probably the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser. And the Assyrians were one of the most brutal empires to walk the earth. This would have been an image of unspeakable horror, like the killing fields of Cambodia or like the churches in Rwanda filled with corpses during the genocide.

And Hosea says, thus shall it be done to you because of your great evil. Your heart was false. You ran after the Assyrians. And so I gave you up to them and they will have no pity.

For the last seven weeks, we've looked at this middle section of Hosea. Dark chapters exposing the ugly depths of Israel's sin and the certainty of God's coming judgment.

[29 : 31] And I hope that as we have looked into these chapters that we have seen not just their sin and their disobedience and their disloyalty, but our sin and our disobedience and our disloyalty.

Of course, the specific manifestations may vary, but the human heart from which they all proceed is the same. And yet God exposes Israel's sin. God exposes our sin for the purpose of bringing us to true repentance and ultimately restoration.

Martin Luther once said, God wounds in order to heal. He kills in order to make alive again. And so in the midst of this dark chapter, there's verse 12.

And verse 12 is a shining light of hope. Sow for yourselves righteousness. Reap steadfast love. Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, that He may come and rain righteousness upon you.

Hosea says, even after you've wrecked your relationship with God, even after you've wasted your inheritance in false investments and reaped empty results, even after you've spoken false and deceptive words, and reaped bitter fruit, even after you've sought your glory in a vain thing, and reaped only shame.

[30 : 46] It is not too late. It is the time to seek the Lord. You can't change what's happened in the past. And there are no guarantees if you wait until some undetermined time in the future.

But today, it is not too late. It is time to seek the Lord. And the New Testament echoes this message. Paul says, now is the time of God's favor.

Now is the day of salvation. The author of Hebrews says, today, if you hear God's voice, don't harden your hearts, for the promise of entering His rest still stands.

So maybe you've been considering Christianity for some time. and maybe you've begun to see some of your own brokenness, some of the ways that your heart isn't right.

And you're beginning to see your need for God, but you haven't yet turned to Him and put your faith in Him. Turn to Him and believe in Him today. Maybe you've been around the church for a while.

[31 : 50] Maybe you always thought that you were a Christian. And only recently you've been questioning, what does that really mean? And is that a reality in my life?

It is time to seek the Lord. Or maybe you are a Christian, but your love for God has grown cold. You've fallen into patterns that you know aren't pleasing to God.

It is not too late. It is time to seek the Lord. The book of Hosea is a story of God's alluring and pursuing and triumphant love that wins His people back to Himself.

And so as we've looked at the story of Hosea and as we continue in this book, some of the most beautiful passages over the next month, I hope that you will see not just Hosea's love for his unfaithful wife, not just God's love for his unfaithful people Israel way back then, but God's relentless and costly and inexplicable and alluring and triumphant love for you and me.

God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, that whoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.

[33 : 13] It's His love that calls us to return to Him. See, verse 12 is both a call to repentance and at the same time it's a promise of restoration.

You might say, what is repentance? Well, repentance is not just being mad at yourself or feeling sorry for yourself for all the wrong things you've done. In fact, you can be very mad at yourself and very sorry for yourself and not repent at all.

And repentance doesn't mean just trying harder to do good things and be nice to people. You see, the problem with both of those responses is that they're merely self-focused.

Repentance is a word that means turning. Turning from sin and self and idols. Turning to the living God. Sow righteousness and reap steadfast love.

You know, in the Bible, those aren't abstract words. Those words, righteousness and steadfast love, describe what it means to be in a covenant relationship with the living God who is himself righteousness and steadfast love.

[34 : 20] So it's a call from Hosea to turn back to the Lord. Now what does that look like? What does it look like to turn back to God?

What does it look like to sow righteousness and break up our unplowed ground? You know, we should notice Hosea doesn't say you can't do anything unless God works in you first, so just do nothing and wait for God in his inscrutable plan to rain down his grace upon you.

No. He says, break up your unplowed ground. Dig into the parts of your life that aren't producing good fruit. Deal with the idols in your heart that lead you to make false investments and speak false words and pursue a false glory.

If your love for God has grown cold or if you've drifted into habitual sin, if you're stuck in the mud of doubt, don't just sit there, seek the Lord.

God's word is one of the very means that he uses to bring us to him. And so as you hear his word and respond to him, God is already working inside you to bring about that very response.

[35 : 29] And so seek him. What does that look like? Open the Bible. Bring your doubt and fear to God in prayer. Keep coming to church. Spend time with other believers who can help you sort things out.

These are the means of grace that God uses to break open our hearts to his love and his transforming power. So verse 12 is a call to concrete repentance, returning to God, but it's also a promise of his gracious restoration that he will come and rain righteousness upon us.

You know, you can try as hard as you want, but you will never be able to make it rain. You might be able to predict the hurricane semi-accurately.

You might be able to prepare for it, but you're not going to be able to stop it. But the good news is this isn't a hurricane warning. It's a promise of showers, of abundant blessing, life-giving, growth-producing, gracious rain from God.

He will come and shower his righteousness upon us. You see, it's a promise of God's grace. It's a promise of something that we can never do for ourselves. That he will plant his very life within our souls.

[36 : 44] The chapter began with the image of Israel as a fruitful vine that had become corrupt and hollow. But Jesus Christ, on the night before he was, that he was betrayed and handed over to be crucified, said to his disciples, I am the true vine, the true source of unending life.

So come to me. Find in me your greatest treasure, your true glory. Become attached to me and I will pour out my life into you so that you will bear good fruit that will last.

Let's pray. God, we thank you for this message of what went wrong in Israel's relationship with God and what some of the things that go wrong and that reveal how far our hearts have strayed from you.

But we thank you also for this invitation to come home to you. Lord, to come home running to you because your arms are open wide. Lord, we pray that as we come to the Lord's Supper that we would draw near to you by faith and that we would return to you and that we would receive your promise of forgiveness and restoration in Christ.

In his name we pray. Amen. Amen.