

God's Desire for Sinners to Return

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[0:00] I killed you with the words of my mouth, my judgments flashed like lightning upon you.! For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings.

! Like Adam, they have broken the covenant, they were unfaithful to me there. Gilead is a city of wicked men, stained with footprints of blood. As marauders lie in ambush for a man, so do bands of priests.

They murder on the road to Shechem, committing shameful crimes. I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel. There Ephraim is given to prostitution, and Israel is defiled.

Also for you, Judah, our harvest is appointed. Whenever I would restore the fortunes of my people, whenever I would heal Israel, the sins of Ephraim are exposed and the crimes of Samaria revealed. They practice deceit, thieves break into houses, bandits rob in the streets, but they do not realize that I remember all their evil deeds. Their sins engulf them, they are always before me.

[1:01] They delight the king with their wickedness, the princes with their lies. They are all adulterers, burning like an oven, whose fire the baker need not stir from the kneading of the dough till it rises.

On the day of the festival of our king, the princes will become inflamed with wine, and he joins hands with the mockers. Their hearts are like an oven. They approach him with intrigue.

Their passion smolders all night. In the morning it blazes like a flaming fire. All of them are hot as an oven. They devour their rulers. All their kings fall, and none of them calls on me.

Ephraim mixes with the nations. Ephraim is a flat cake, not turned over. Foreigners sap his strength, but he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray, but he does not notice.

Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this, he does not return to the Lord his God or search for him. Ephraim is like a dove, easily deceived and senseless, now calling to Egypt, now turning to Assyria.

[2:06] When they go, I will throw my net over them. I will pull them down like birds of the air. When I hear them flocking together, I will catch them. Woe to them, because they have strayed from me.

Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me. I long to redeem them, but they speak lies against me. They do not cry out to me from their hearts, but wail upon their beds.

They gather together for grain and new wine, but turn away from me. I train them and strengthen them, but they plot evil against me. They do not turn to the Most High. They are like a faulty bow.

Their leaders will fall by the sword because of their insolent words. For this, they will be ridiculed in the land of Egypt. The Lord sincerely desires that wicked sinners repent and return to him.

Is that your idea of God? Is that your view of God's heart? Or do you see him as one who is all too eager to damn the wicked, taking some pleasure in their pain?

[3:20] Do you have any doubts whatsoever of God's willingness to receive sinners? Yes, his longing to do so. Well, Hosea is qualified like no other prophet to take us right into the heart of God, where we see his sincere desire that the wicked come to him and live.

You'll remember when Hosea's wife, Gomer, left him and chased after other lovers. God told Hosea, go love her again, though she is an adulteress.

Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods. They're wicked, rebellious idolaters, and I love them.

So you go love her. And he went to love her, to woo her, to win her unfaithful wife that she was.

And in so doing, to demonstrate God's love for vile sinners. Now, you see, Israel had been just as unfaithful to her wedding vows.

[4:35] Those vows that she took to God at Mount Sinai to forsake all others and to give herself only to him. And instead of loving the Lord with all her heart, she forsook the Lord and went after other gods.

And yet, the Lord loved Israel in their rebellious state. And though he judged them and poured out devastating destruction and punishments upon them, he still went to them and called them to repent of their waywardness and to return to him.

And he did it with a genuine desire that they would return. Now, in the opening three verses of chapter six, God has just called Israel to repent through Hosea, his prophet.

Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us. He has injured us, but he will bind up our wounds. So there's been the call.

Come on, Hosea says, let's return to the Lord. And now we see the response of Israel. God called God's call to return is met by Israel's stubborn refusal to return.

[5:59] But what comes through loud and clear in our text today and throughout this book is God's desire that they would return. He's he's he's really wanting them to come back.

And to avoid the coming judgment. God is not unmoved by Israel's stubbornness.

God is here in the posture of a father dealing with his rebellious son.

Saying, son, what can I do with you? What can I do with you? He wants to bless him. He wants to pour out his love gifts and shower him with good things.

But there his wicked behavior. Israel's wicked behavior stands in the way and stop such expressions of his love.

[7:20] Their stubborn refusal to repent leaves in no other choice but to discipline them yet again. What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah?

Though I desire to bless and heal and restore you. Yet dealing with you on the basis of our covenant struck together at Sinai.

You leave me no other option but to judge you for your unfaithfulness. When you go back and read the covenant stipulations at Mount Sinai. You can read in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26.

The marriage vows. The arrangement that was struck. If they obeyed and remained true to God, great blessing would follow. But if Israel became unfaithful.

Then God's blessings would be replaced with his cursings. I will punish you for your sins seven times over, he says.

[8:19] I will kill you with or I will. I will break down your stubborn pride. I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant.

And so that's the judgment that is announced here in this text. Verse five. Therefore, I cut you in pieces with my prophets. I killed you with the words of my mouth.

My judgments flash like lightning upon you. My words through the prophets to you were killing words, not life giving words. Curses, not blessings.

And why? Well, it's given at the end of verse four. Because your love is like the morning mist. Like the early dew that disappears.

Now, if you got up early this past week. There were many mornings when you saw the morning mist. And the sun streaming through the morning mist. And the grass was wet with the early dew.

[9:19] But if you came back at 12 noon. It would be gone. Burned off by the heat of the sun. Vanished. And God complains.

Such is your love for me. Oh, Israel. Such is your love. It's quickly gone. Your love at the altar didn't last long. It was a short honeymoon with you, God says.

For as soon as temptation came along to break my laws. You abandoned me for your desires and your idols. During the worship service. Oh, you can profess such love for me.

But it's nowhere to be seen. When the world comes knocking on Monday morning. You ditch me for its ways. What about your love? What about my love?

Is it like the early dew of morning? You see, God's putting his finger on the most important thing about our relationship to God. It's love.

[10:21] It's your love. That's what he's after. Your love. Love is the very heart of God's law and covenant with Israel.

What is the summary of the law? Is it not to love God with all your heart? And is it not to love your neighbor as yourself? That is the summary of all the law and the prophets.

Love obeying. Love fulfills the law. Every one of the Ten Commandments is fulfilled by love. That's how you'll act if you love me and if you love your fellow man.

It's the essence of their covenant faithfulness that God wants from them in this marriage. But their love has vanished. It's gone. Like the early dew.

So how can he bless them when they fail to meet the central stipulation of his law? What shall I do with you? What can I do with you?

[11:27] I can only send you the curses and judgments fitting for you. And he tells them again in verse six, why his judgments are so severe. Because I desire mercy.

Has said covenant love. That's what I desire. Steadfast, abiding, unfailing love. Mercy.

Not sacrifice. And the acknowledgement of God. Rather than the burnt offerings. And again, the very thing that God wanted is what's missing.

Has said is missing. Covenant love is missing. It's dried up like the morning dew. It's gone. And so they thought that by once in a while throwing a bullock or an ox or a sheep God's way.

That that ought to keep him satisfied. He ought to be pleased with me. And so they kept up the sacrificial systems. Bringing their animals and offerings. As if that's what God desired.

[12:30] How many people today think God's after their worship. In the sense of their presence in the building. And they come to some place of worship today. Thinking that's what God wants.

And he wants some of my money. And they put it in the plate. And they think there. Now I've given God what he wants. He ought to be happy another week. And God says, no, I don't want sacrifice. I want chesed. I want love. Mercy. In your dealings with me. And in your dealings with each other. You're wrong.

It's not these things that I'm after. I'm after your heart. Steadfast, unfailing love. That abides. Not that vanishes. Like the morning dew.

No amount of sacrifices. Or religious rituals. Can make up for the lack. Of love. Though I give my body.

[13:35] To be burned. And though I give all that I have. And have not love. It profits me nothing. No, what God desires is mercy. And what he desires is the acknowledgement of God.

The knowledge of God. Knowing him in such a way that involves acknowledging him with your obedience. Doing what is right and just.

Is this not what it means to know me? He says in Jeremiah 22. I desire for you to know me. And that means doing what you know I want you to do. Justice.

Love. Mercy. And so they perverted religion. They turned it into an externalized thing. Going to worship. Bringing the offerings.

As if that's the big thing. As if that's the big thing that God wanted from them. In other words. They gave outward obedience to the ceremonial law. Even while they trampled all over God's moral law.

[14:31] That distinction is being made. In the Old Testament. In Hosea. You're bringing the ceremonial law. Obedience. At least outwardly. But you're not obeying my moral commandments.

Summarized in the ten words. At Sinai. But without obedience. The obedience of love to God and man. Their sacrifices and their worship. Was a stench.

In his nostrils. Verse 6. And the Jews of Jesus' day. Were much the same as the Jews of Hosea's day. And the Lord Jesus loved this. Verse 6.

And he used it often. In his dealing with people. In his day. Because it showed the heart. Of true religion. What I desire. Is. Steadfast love.

Mercy. Not sacrifice. And that's why I can't restore blessing to you Israel. That's why I must pour out my judgments. What can I do?

[15:31] Because you like Adam. Verse 7. Have broken the covenant. You were unfaithful to me there. Now. How is Israel like Adam? Well children. You remember. God made a covenant with Adam.

A relationship with stipulations. With rules. That's a covenant. And God made an arrangement with Adam. A relationship. In which. Here's the deal. You're free to eat from all the trees of the garden. Except one. Don't eat of this tree of the knowledge of good. And evil. And you will live forever. But if you eat of it. You will surely die. And Adam.

Ate from the forbidden tree. And broke. The covenant. He's a law breaker. A covenant breaker. And Israel had done.

The same thing. At Mount Sinai. They were given. The stipulations. Ten words. Here's. Here's. Here's the deal.

[16:27] You have no other gods. Besides me. And right on down through the ten words. We will do what he says. And off. They go. The new married couple.

Jehovah. And Israel. And their love dried up. Like the morning dew. And they started worshipping other gods. And bowing before idols. And misusing. The Lord's name. And breaking the Sabbath day. And not honoring father and mother. And murder. And stealing. And adultery. And all the rest followed. Like Adam. You've broken. The covenant. And so you've brought down on your head. The curses of the covenant. Because cursed is the one who breaks the covenant. And instead of the blessings. I'd love to shower on you. I have no other recourse. But to give you. Its judgments. You know. We too like Adam. Have broken the covenant.

[17:25] Every son and daughter. Of Adam. Was in Adam. And when he fell. We fell. And we daily. Add our own vote. To his. Because we too break. His covenant.

We too break. The ten commandments. The moral law. What God requires. Of men. To live before. Him. In a right way. Loving him. And loving neighbor.

We're all law breakers. Covenant breakers. Like Adam. We've broken the covenant. You know. Our only hope. Is Jesus Christ. The one man. Who. Was a covenant keeper.

Completely. Perfectly. Kept. All ten words. Every command. Every obligation. Laid on him. Kept perfectly. That he is the covenant keeper.

Might take. Our covenant. Breaking upon his head. And be damned. In our place. And he takes the curses. Of the broken covenant. That he might give us.

[18:22] The blessings. Of the fulfilled covenant. Where Adam failed. Jesus. The last Adam. Triumphed. And has a righteousness. To give to every.

Guilty sinner. Who trusts in him. That's the good news. Of the gospel. And that was the good news. That the Israelites. Needed to be brought. To embrace. In Hosea's day.

Well some of their covenant. Breaking is spelled out. For us in this section. Their failure. To love God. Led to gross crimes. Against men. And it's always that way. Verse eight.

The whole city of Gilead. Is stained. With bloody footprints. They're. They're wicked. Murderers. Who've breaking. The sixth commandment. Verse nine. Even the spiritual leaders. The priests. Were in on the murders. And shameful crimes. Lack of respect. For human life. Always results. From a lack of respect. For God.

[19:17] When there is no fear. Of God. Before their eyes. Their feet. Are always swift. To shed blood. It was true. In Hosea's day. It's true. In our day. In our nation.

And in our world. People who do not fear God. And keep the first. Four commandments. Will invariably. Be breakers. Of the last six. They'll not treat.

Their fellow man. With love. Their love. Is dried up. Like the morning dew. Unfaithfulness. To God. Leads to unfaithfulness.

To our fellow man. Verse 10. It's sexual defilement. Breaking the seventh commandment. Horrible things. Prostitution. This is why. Judgments are falling.

And are coming. And also for you. Judah. Verse 11. A harvest. Is coming. Isn't that interesting? He's dealing with Israel. The northern kingdom. And he says. And by the way. Judah.

[20:10] Don't think you're off the hook. Harvest is coming. For you too. Isn't that interesting? How judgment is spoken. Of harvest day. Kids. That means. That every one of your thoughts.

Words. And deeds. Is a seed. That you're planting. Nothing. And every sinful thought. Sinful word. And sinful deed. Is a seed. Gone into the ground. And a day of harvest.

Is coming. You too. Judah. You too. John. You too. Grace fellowship. A harvest. Is coming.

For you. Don't be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps. What he sows. The one who sows. To please the flesh. From the flesh.

Will reap. Destruction. Eternal. Destruction. The law of. Sowing. And reaping. Has not been. Withheld. Or been. Amended. Or repealed. For Israel.

[21:05] For Judah. For you. Or for me. It will catch up. With all. Harvest. Is coming. You better be found. In Christ.

In that day. The one. Covenant. Keeper. Now that's something. Sinful man. Has a hard time. Believing. That there's a harvest.

Coming for their sin. They don't see God. So they don't think. He's watching. They don't know God. So they don't think. He's holy. And full of wrath. For sin. So though they lie.

And steal. Verse 1. Of chapter 7. Breaking the 9th. And 8th commandments. Deceiving. They do not realize. Verse 2.

That I remember. All their evil deeds. Their sins. Engulf them. They're always before me. They think. They can sow sin. Without ever reaping. The harvest. Of destruction. As if God doesn't see. [22:02] Or that he forgets. About our sins. Like we do. He won't punish them. And God assures them. I do not forget. Yet. I remember.

All. Your evil deeds. Every sinful word. Thought. Indeed. I remember. All. They're always. Before me. They're never. Out of my mind. Have you thought about. All the wickedness. That's in front. Of God's mind. Every day.

On this planet. The things being done. In secret. In the dark. Where no other eye. Goes there. It's always.

Before me. Jehovah says. I remember them. Every one of them. Be sure. Your sin. Will find you out.

[22:56] The harvest. Is coming. And that's why. God would not. Restore blessings. To them. Oh he desired. To bless them. He desired. To stop. The invading armies. And the destructive.

Diseases. And the drought. He desired. To bring blessing. Upon his people. And upon their land. But. He says to us. At the end of chapter 6. In the beginning.

Of chapter 7. Whenever. I would. I would. Restore. The fortunes. Of my people. Whenever. I would. Heal Israel. Their sins. Of Ephraim.

Are exposed. And the crimes. Of Samaria. Are revealed. And so. God comes. As it were. Laden down. In his hands. With blessings. And he's coming. To Israel.

And he gets. To the door. And he sees. Their sins. And they forfeit. The grace. That could have been. Theirs. And instead. They reap. More and more. Judgments. But don't miss.

[23:48] The fact. That he would. When I would. Restore them. When I would. Come and heal them. I met. With this. Response. Of rejection. And rebellion. Gracious desire.

Is blocked. And forfeited. By their. Continuing. In sin. It's always. Before him. He cannot. Get it out. Of his sight. It's always. Remembered.

And it forfeits. Every. Blessing. Well. The only hope. For these people. Is that God. Would make. A new covenant. With them. In which. He would. Forgive. Their sins. And remember. Them. No. More. And that's. What he does.

In his great covenant. Keeper. Jesus. He writes. The law. On their hearts. And he forgives. Their sins. And remembers. No more. So when he comes. Knocking. With blessing.

[24:45] And salvation. Blessings. He sees. The righteousness. Of Jesus. And he heaps. Upon them. Blessing. Upon blessing. In Christ. We have all these blessings.

sins. But outside of Christ. Cursings. The cursings. Of the broken. Covenant.

How can God. Remember. My sins. No more. Not just because. He's got a bad memory. He doesn't. He sees everyone. He remembers. Every sin. But because.

In the new covenant. Jesus Christ. Pays. For all the sins. Of his people. They deserve. Hell. Infinite wrath. And Jesus says. Okay. Put the debt on me. And he goes to the cross.

And says. Now put the payment. On me. Put the punishment. On me. Punish me. For these sins. And God didn't spare. His own son. But punished him. And for every one of his.

[25:39] Believing people. On the ledger. In heaven. That punishment. Or that debt. Of sin. Has been blotted out. Taken away.

Forgiven. It's done away with. It's remembered. No more. It's cast into the depths. Of the sea. It's separated as far as. East is from the west. It's gone.

Remembered. No more. That's what Israel needs. That's what you need. That's what I need. And it's only found in Jesus. But they would not come. To him.

They would continue on. In their sin. But oh. What is the cleansing power. Of the blood of Jesus. To make our sins. To be remembered. No more.

Never again. Gone. They're not there. In Christ. They're not remembered.

[26:35] Outside of Christ. They're remembered. And will be before his face. Through all of eternity. As he punishes you. In hell. It's that good. And it's that bad.

God is that merciful. And God is that righteous. Flee to him. Turn to him. So God desires to bless. His runaway bride. But their commitment.

To their sin. And stubborn refusal. To return to him. Keeps his blessing. From them. And ensures only judgment. Is coming. And so chapter seven. Just continues. Through the same cycle. Of Israel's sin.

God's judgment. Israel's sin. And God's judgment. But along the way. What we're seeing. Is God's longing. That she would. Return to him. And end that cycle.

Of sin. And judgment. Just turn. And come to me. It'll all be over. I'll heal you. I'll restore you. I'll forgive you. I'll remember your sins. No more. And we have that.

[27 : 29] That beating. That longing. That longing. To return to him. Throughout this section. Now he gives us five word pictures. That describe Israel. See if you can't.

Understand Israel a bit. From these pictures. First of all. She's a hot oven. She is a hot oven. With various burning lusts. Within. Verses three to seven.

Verse four says. They are all adulterers. Kings. Princes. People. They're all adulterers. Burning like an oven. Whose fire. The baker. Need not stir. From the kneading of the dough. Till it rises.

It is hot folks. You don't have to stir it. It's hot. And what's it hot with? Adulterous. Sexual immorality. Lust. Are controlling. These people. And Hosea.

Is exposing. Especially the corruption. In the palace. In this section. The king. And his court. Are doing nothing. To turn the nation. From their evil. They're just burning. In the same lusts.

[28 : 28] Themselves. The adultery. Has come into the palace. Bedroom. As well. And the oven. Is burning. Not only with. Adulterous. Lust.

But with. Lust. Lust. You see it. On verse. Verse 5. On the day. Of royal celebration. The whole place.

Is a drunken. Orgy. The princes. Become. Inflamed. That's a word. For hot. That's what you find. In an oven. They are hot oven.

Inflamed. With wine. Their oven. Hot. Hearts. Are blazing. With a lust. For drink. And Isaiah. Stepped in. On one of these. Parties.

These celebrations. Of the king. And he said. All the tables. Are covered. With vomit. And there is not. A spot. Without filth. And folks.

[29 : 21] The destiny. Of the nation. Is resting. On these guys. That's what makes. It so horrendous. They're the leaders.

The ones. Who should be. Stopping. The flow. Of evil. That God's blessing. Might return. But they're just. Partying. With them. Adultery. Alcohol. Thirdly. Selfish.

Ambition. Everybody's. Trying to please. The king. And the princes. So they're telling them. Whatever they want. They're doing for them. Whatever they want.

Even though it's wickedness. And lies. Anything to please them. This oven of Israel. Is not cooking up. Anything good. It's. It's hot. And it's burning.

With. Selfish. Ambition. These guys are lusting. For power. They want to be rulers. Or they want to get rid of one ruler. And bring another one on. So they flatter their rulers.

[30 : 17] And if. One of them ceases to. Make them happy. Well then. Their selfish ambition. Ripens to assassination.

They bump him off. To make themselves. Or someone else. King. This is a whole reference. To the political instability. Of this. Era. In Israel's life. 30 years. Before her destruction.

Israel. For those 30 years. It was filled. With plots. And coups. And assassinations. Four assassinations. In 12 years. You remember.

An assassination. In our country. It's been a while. Can you think. If we had had. Four and 12 years. What we'd be in. That's the way it was. In Israel. Instability. Derek Kidner says.

One conspirator. After another. Hacked his way. To the throne. Only to be murdered. In his own turn. And that's pictured. For us here. In verses 6 and 7. Their hearts.

[31 : 15] Are like an oven. Selfish ambition. To rule. And they approach him. With intrigue. Deception. Conspiracy. Is on their hearts. And their passion.

Smolders all night long. They go home. And their lust. For power. Is just. Brewing. All night. They're plotting. But in the morning. It blazes into a flaming fire.

And breaks out into murder. All of them. Are as hot as an oven. They devoured. Their rulers. There it is. There's the assassinations. All their kings.

Fall. Saddest of all. In all this mess. None of them. Calls on me. The nation is heading. For certain destruction. And no one is praying. Are you praying? No one is praying. That's their supreme sin. They're trying to fix their problems.

[32:12] On their own. Thinking they can get on. Without the Lord. And so they forfeit the grace. That could have been theirs. They are a hot oven. Secondly. They're an inedible pancake. Verse 8.

Ephraim mixes with the nations. Ephraim is a flat cake. Not turned over. Now kids. You've never eaten a pancake. Like this one. And the reason is. Because your mom flips them over. When they get done on the one side. She turns them over. But not this pancake. I don't know where mom went. Maybe to the basement. Or outside. But she left it on too long. And so on the bottom side.

It's burnt black. And on the top side. It's still gooey. It's worthless. It's ruined. Who wants to eat that? And that's what Israel was.

A pancake. Unflipped. Ruined. Worthless. Notice. It was through mixing with the nations.

[33:12] That she became a flat cake. Not turned. She didn't maintain her identity. As the holy people of God.

Walking before him. According to his commands. But she mixed with the nations. And learned their ways. And did their practices. And their worship. And lived like them. And in doing so. She became. Burnt on one side. And gooey on the other. Cold toward God. And hot toward the nations. And burned by them. For her alliances. As she turns to the nations. And learns their ways.

And makes alliances with. It'll come around and bite them. And burn them. Israel is ruined by her own mixing with the nations. She's got a divided heart. And then there's graying hair.

Verses nine and ten. Foreigners sap his strength. But he does not realize it. His hair is sprinkled with gray. But he does not notice. Men. Haven't you found that true?

[34:11] That. Our first gray hairs came on us unawares. There was no fanfare. There was no announcement. I'm here. We just came to the mirror one day.

And there they were. And we said. Where did they come from? They've been coming a long time. But we didn't see them. We didn't realize it. And it's a picture of old age. Stealing up upon us. And sapping our strength. And we don't even know it. It's a picture of the guy. Who thinks he's still in his prime. Still thinks he should be able to do what he did. When he was 20. And he finds out he can't.

He can't. His strength is being sapped. That's Israel. Oh she was blessed by God. She was the head of the nations. Not to tail.

And yet. When she forsook the Lord. Her strength. Was sapped from her. And she didn't even know it. Like a man's first gray hairs go unnoticed.

[35:08] Israel didn't even know that her strength was being. Just sucked right out of her. How so? Well by her alliances with the nation. She ended up having to pay heavily. A tribute.

And her economic strength. Was being sapped up by the tribute. She paid for these alliances with the nations. To protect them against enemy nations. When she should have been trusting in the Lord.

And by learning the nation's ways. She brought judgment upon herself. And those curses from God. Will sap strength from you. Read them in Deuteronomy. In Leviticus.

She's. Her gray hairs. Her strength is being sapped. And her pride blinds her. To it all. She's like a senseless dove. Now here's a silly dove.

Verse 11. Ephraim is like a dove. Easily deceived. And senseless. Now calling to Egypt. Now turning to Assyria. Have you seen a silly dove? Fluttering frantically around.

[36:09] From tree to tree. Never sure where it's wanting to go. Or the direction to get there. That's the picture. It's a senseless dove. And that's Israel.

In making her alliances with the nation. Just as the dove goes from tree to tree. And back and forth. So Israel. Scatterbrained Israel.

Is flying here and there for help. Now to Egypt. Now to Assyria. She's changing her. Her alliances. With every new king. One king gets bumped off.

The next one that assassinated him. Comes to the throne. He changes alliances. We're no longer going to. Have a treaty with Egypt. We'll break our treaty with Egypt. We're just not going to keep our word anymore. What's that?

That's. Not loving your neighbor as yourself. Hmm. We'll now. Make a treaty with Assyria. And the next king.

[37:06] We'll go to. Some other nation. Like a silly dove. Flitting. Here and there. That's Israel. Flying from one place to the other.

One nation to the other. Breaking treaties as fast as she makes them. Unfaithful to her word. That's not covenant love. What happens to a society when men no longer keep their word?

It destroys from within. When husband and wife begin to deceive and to lie to each other. And government and citizen.

And employer and employee. The whole fabric. It comes undone. And that's what's happening in Israel. Like a senseless dove. They're breaking their treaties.

And. They should be. Coming to God and resting in him. But they're flitting around looking for help elsewhere. And so she'll fly here and there. And then right into the net of God's judgment. What she didn't expect.

[38:02] That's what he says. In verses 12 and 13. You'll be destroyed. Because you've strayed from me. And you've rebelled against me. When we look elsewhere for help.

Instead of coming to God folks. It's rebellion against him. That's how he takes it. Takes it that personally. We're meant to come to him. And we look to ourselves. Or we look to someone else. And we rely on them for help. You've abandoned me. But don't miss the end of verse 13. It's the theme of this whole message. I long to redeem them.

Even as he's pronouncing woes. And deserve destruction. He says I long to redeem them. It's like a pain father. Who must punish his rebellious son.

But he takes no delight in it. I long to redeem you. It's the third time in our text today. That we've seen God's heart. To have wicked sinners return to him.

[39:01] Repent. Turn. Leave your sinful way. And come to me. I long to redeem them. But. See. Here he comes. I long to redeem them.

But. They speak lies against me. Still refusing. He's ready to rescue them.

They're stiff arming him. They don't cry out to me from their hearts. Verse 14. They want my gifts of grain and new wine. But not me. And they turn away from me. And I showed them my good will.

And training and strengthening them for battle in the past. But rather than trusting in me now. They plot evil against me. The only hope.

The only solution for Israel. The only solution for you. My lost friend. Is that you will stop. Your headlong run. To hell. And turn around. That's called repentance.

[40:01] And return to the Lord. You were made for the Lord. Return to him. That's the only hope there is for Israel. So. But notice verse 16.

Tells us. They do not turn. To the most high. They are like. A faulty. Bow.

And that's our fifth word picture. A faulty bow. A faulty bow doesn't do what it should. It shoots arrows that miss the mark. And if you're in a life and death situation.

It can be. All important. For that bow. To do what it's meant to do. And that's to shoot straight. But Israel's a faulty bow. A twisted bow.

It doesn't shoot straight. God said. Do this. And she's over here doing that. God said. Don't do that. Israel's over here doing that.

[41:01] She's a faulty bow. Not doing what God had called her to do. Missing the mark. Going the wrong direction. Going astray. They. They refuse to turn to the Lord.

And so judgments. Must follow. You know what we've seen this morning. We've seen what we saw last time. Many weeks ago. In. The previous chapter.

When God's judgments fall upon Israel. She makes two responses. And both of them are faulty.

And wrong. God's judgments fall. Land's drying up.

Not enough food. Enemies are coming in. What does she do? She gives him more sacrifices. More religion. Without the heart. Don't want your religion.

I want love. I want mercy. Second thing she did. She ran off to the nations. To get help. Got the invading enemy coming in.

[42:05] I need help. What's God want them to do? Turn to him. And he'll help them. How many times. Had he helped them. Against enemies. Far greater. If their heart was right to them. He would help.

And destroy their enemies. Quickly. But no. They don't want to return. To the Lord. They love their sin. Too much. So. Instead of returning. To the Lord. They go after other nations. To help. Come help. Fight against them. We'll pay you. Those two responses. Are found in our text. Again today. And both. Increase their judgment. Because they're an offense. To God. They're turning away. From him. They're refusing. To come back to him. When everything. Screams around them. You better get right. With God. And they're saying. Anything but that. More. Sacrifices. More money. To other nations. But not. To get right. With the Lord. So again. Israel's sin. Is met by God's judgment. The chapter ends. With the leaders.
[43:01] Falling by the sword. And then. Being ridiculed. In the land of Egypt. What a fitting end. Their substitute. Savior. Will mock them.

In the end. As they see them fall. To become a nation. No more. As she goes away. Into captivity. And so the prophecy. Ends with them. Back in bondage. Isn't that interesting? Israel. Who had once been. In bondage. In Egypt. Now. Back. In bondage. And the sad thing is. It didn't need to be that way. It was also unnecessary. That's the point of Hosea. It's also unnecessary. God would forgive. He would remember their sins. No more. If they just returned. He would heal them. He would have them back. But they would not have him. And that's the situation. With every sinner. Here this morning. Jesus Christ. Will have you. As you are. I don't care who you are. What you've done.

[44:00] He delights. To receive sinners. Amen. But you won't have him. And so you must have his judgments. And if you do not turn to this Jesus for mercy.

He will damn you in hell forever and ever. But if you turn to him. If you turn from your sins. And come. With nothing good to say for yourself. Just Jesus have mercy on me. Because of what you did. On the cross. You died for sinners. I'm the sinner. Come and forgive me my sin. He'll have mercy. And he'll do it gladly. And he'll do it quickly. And he'll show you. That he's not only able to save. He's willing. To save. He wants you to come to him. Ezekiel the prophet says. As surely as I live. This is. This is the Lord taking us. An oath. As surely as I live. Declares the sovereign Lord. I take no pleasure. In the death. Of the wicked. What is. What does the Lord give.
[44:58] To the wicked. If they don't return to him. Eternal damnation. But he says. I do not take pleasure. In that. I do. I take no pleasure.

In the death of the wicked. But rather that they turn. From their ways. And live. Turn. Turn from your evil ways. Why will you die. Oh house of Israel. Does that sound like a God. Who would just as soon. Damn as save. Does that sound like a God. Who would just as soon. Curse. As bless. I'm wanting to bless you. Why won't you turn. He's shooting the shots. Across your bow. Back and forth. They go. Turn. Turn. Why will you die. The next one's coming for you. Don't go another step. Without me. I'm serious about sin. That day. When God made a covenant. With Israel. He said. This day. I call heaven and earth. As witness against you. That I have set before you.
[45:54] Life and death. Blessing and cursings. Now. Choose. Life. So that it may go well. With you. And your children.

After you. You see. God doesn't dispense. His gospel. God doesn't send. His prophet. To announce judgment. And just say. Well. Y'all. If you don't. If you don't repent. And come to me. And trust in me. Then. Then it's hell for you. But if you do. It'll be heaven. Now. There. With a casual. Leave it to you. I really don't care what you do. You make the decision. God is not like that.

I have set before you. Life and death. Blessing and cursing. Now. Choose life. Choose blessing. Stop rebelling. Stop holding me off. With my blessing. Of eternal life. Because of your love affair. With sin. Choose life. Oh.

[46:55] But my people. Would not listen to me. Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over. To their stubborn hearts. To follow their own devices. If my people. Would. But listen.

To me. If Israel. Would but follow. My ways. How quickly. Would I subdue. Their enemies. And turn my hand. Against their foes. Those who hate the Lord.

Would cringe before him. And their punishment. Would last forever. But you. You would be fed. With the finest. Of wheat. With honey. From the rock. I would satisfy you. That's your God. He really wants you. To return to him. And if you do. He will receive you. And he will jump for joy. He will celebrate. He will rejoice. Heaven. Will be full. Of rejoicing. Because of one sinner. That repents.

[47 : 50] And comes to God. Now that God of Hosea. Visited this planet. And one day. He was walking along. And he found a sinner. Who was a tax collector.

Some of the lowest scum. Of the day. Jacking up the taxes. Of the Israelites. To pay to the Romans. And pocketing. The winnings himself.

And Jesus came. To this. Matthew. He came to his tax collector booth. And he said. Matthew. Follow me. And Matthew followed him. Matthew was so delighted.

In his Lord. That he would have mercy upon him. That he threw a party. For all of his cronies. His old tax collecting buddies. And many of them showed up. And not just them. But many sinners. All the riffraff of society.

The worst sort. They're all there. And Jesus is the guest of honor. He's eating with them. And drinking with them. And talking with them. And the Pharisees.

[48 : 48] Are observing all of this. And they. They don't like what they see. And so they complained. To Jesus' disciples. You see.

They said. Why does your teacher. Eat with tax collectors. And sinners. And Jesus heard what they said. And so he answered them.

It's not the healthy. Who need a doctor. But the sick. But go. And learn. What this means. I desire mercy.

Not sacrifice. For I have not come. To call the righteous. But sinners. To repentance. You see. The Pharisees. Didn't have the time of day. For tax collectors. And sinners. They had turned their back on God. May they be damned. And Jesus. Comes.

[49 : 45] And seeks them. And seeks to save them. He really wants to see them. Come to him. And believe. And receive eternal life. And why does Jesus.

Send them back to Hosea. The prophet. Why does he send them to our text. Go and learn. What Hosea 6. 6 means. I desire mercy.

Not sacrifice. Because the Pharisees. Had turned religion. Into just an external. Worship. Ceremonial laws. Kept scrupulous. Yes. Okay. But they trampled on.

The moral law of God. They didn't love their neighbors. Themselves. And as for these neighbors. These tax collectors. They wish them. To be in hell. And Jesus says.

I am. The God of Hosea. Who even when Israel of old. Abandoned me as an adulteress. Going after other lovers.

[50 : 44] I still love them. And wanted them to return to me. Now I am here in the flesh. And there are some Israelites here. Who have abandoned me for other loves.

This Matthew was a lover of. He was an oven. And he was hot with a lust for money. And he was burning with a desire for wealth. And I wanted him to come to me.

And taste true freedom. And he has. And these sinners here. Who have given themselves to adultery. And this lust. And that. And are burning like.

I want them. To repent. And that's why I've come. I've come to heal the sick. And they're sick. And that's why I'm here. So go. Go.

Go to Hosea. And learn what it means. I desire mercy. Not sacrifice. Sinner friend.

[51 : 39] Go to Hosea. Learn what it means. This Savior. Truly desires. That the very worst of sinners. Come to him. And believe. He really wants you.

To experience. Eternal life. We'll sing his call. As our answer to. His word. 393.

This is what Jesus says. He says. Come. Come. That's all you need to do. Come. You can come right there in your seat. You can just cry out to the Lord. And ask him to save you. Tell him you're ready to.

Turn from your sin. If he'll just have you as you are. Here I am. Take me. Jesus. I come to you. Do that even as we sing. Let's stand as we sing. 393.

And hear the voice of Christ. Pleading. For the lost. To come. I don't have the heart. To turn from my sin.

[52 : 38] I'll come to Jesus. And tell him that. And every gift. That brings you nigh. True belief. And true repentance. He gives. He gives. Tell him you don't have faith.

Tell him you don't have repentance. I will heal their waywardness. And love them freely. Let's pray. Where do we meet such justice.

As seen in. Our God. You. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. That you would crush your son. When he bears sin. So holy are you.

Where do we meet such love. Such mercy. That you would receive. Vile sinners. Not for anything good. That we have done. But for the goodness.

And the blood of Jesus. Thank you for him. Bring other sinners. To. To seek him. To see him. As their only refuge. Keep. Keep them from running off.

[53 : 37] To Egypt. And the Syria. And all the other places. For help. Show them that none but Jesus. Can do. Helpless sinners good. We ask in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.