



Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus A Discipleship Journey

The OLD TESTAMENT- Their Story is Our Story

Hosea The Pining Love of God Hosea Chapters 1-14

Hosea is often called the prophet of God's unconditional love. He was a contemporary of Amos and preached during the time prior to Israel's fall to the Assyrians. He preached during the last years of Jeroboam when Israel enjoyed peace and prosperity. Hosea also prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam's successors, which were chaotic years for Israel.

So, over a period of about thirty years, Hosea had seen seven kings come and go. Pursuing their own greedy ends and trying to play power politics, the ruling class ignored the poor and the needy in their midst and led the people into idolatry. They became pagans.

Early in Hosea's preaching, God commanded him to marry a prostitute and have children. Hosea remained faithful to her, loving her even when she strayed. Hosea used the image of his own marriage to preach his message to Israel. As Hosea's wife was unfaithful to him, so too was Israel unfaithful to God, wandering off in worship of other gods. However, just as Hosea was faithful to his wife and awaited her return, so too God was faithful to Israel and awaited its return from the distractions of power, wealth, and other gods. Hosea even gave a call to repentance for Israel because he knew of God's unconditional love.

"Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is He who has torn, and He will heal us; He has struck down, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him. Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; His appearing is as sure as the dawn; He will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth."

Hosea 6:1-3

Hosea, Chapter 11, describes God as a loving parent. This is one of the most touching passages of the Old Testament. Despite God's tenderness and care, Israel behaves as a rebellious child. God is heartbroken by Israel's rejection, but is compassionate in calling for its return.

God, loving father and mother, thank You for Your generous and unconditional love. Let me remember that You always love me even when I have done something wrong. Help me to return Your love by living in a way that is pleasing to You. Amen. (adapted from Hosea 11:1-7)

So, through Hosea's life, ministry, and prophesizing we learn that God's love pursues us no matter what we have done. The Lord never gives up on us. He loves us unconditionally from our birth until our death, and He wants to invite us to live with Him forever in paradise. All we need to do is repent, ask for forgiveness from God, and do our best to make changes to our lives so to lessen the chance of straying from Him again. Do not worry though. We are born in the human condition, and we are flawed. God knows this, and He will always be there to forgive us if we are truly sorry.

Am I faithful to God? If I am not at times, what gets in the way of that? What changes can I make in my life to grow closer to God in faithfulness and discipleship?

