

Calm in the Storm

Hosea 6

(preached 6/29/22; Pine Grove BC Wed PM)

Introduction

It has been an incredibly dry month around the church.

Other areas have gotten inches of rain, but we have only received a fine mist of rain on a couple of occasions.

The monthly total been less than an inch, and that dryness combined with last week's heat wave, has made the area around the church a brown wasteland.

That is a great picture of the book of Hosea.

It is a spiritual wasteland.

In the same way that Hosea's wife was steeped in the sin of adultery, the entire nation was steeped in its own sins of adultery against the Lord.

There was violence and bloodshed and idolatry and greed and sexual sins.

Long story short, the book of Hosea presents a nation in spiritual drought.

Yet in the midst of that spiritual drought, every once in a while, there will be small rain shower of spiritual hope.

Tonight in Hosea 6, we will begin with a brief shower of hope followed by more verses of drought.

Now, this pattern is nothing new in the book of Hosea.

In fact, flip back to Hosea 1 and let's do a quick review of this book to get us ready for Hosea 6.

In Hosea 1, we meet a real prophet of God in the 700s BC named Hosea.

He is married to a real woman named Gomer, and they have real children.

But Hosea's life is not picture perfect.

Instead, Gomer commits adultery.

And the point of the 1st chapter is to see the sin of Gomer as a picture of Israel's adultery on their God.

Look at verse 2 of Hosea 1..

2 When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, [a]forsaking the Lord."

And then the next few verses begin to detail the judgment for Israel's sin.

Look at verse 4..

4 And the Lord said to him, "Name him Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will [b]punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

These verses are references to Israel's judgment in 722 BC when the northern kingdom would fall to the Assyrians.

So the whole book of Hosea is a call for the northern kingdom to repent or face the judgment of the Lord.

This was Hosea's role in the plan of God.

His wife was an example of Israel's adultery, and his life's purpose was to call both Gomer and Israel to repentance.

Now long story short, Gomer did repent and was restored to her husband.

We saw that in Hosea 3.

But Israel as a nation did not repent and remained in their adultery.

So the rest of the book of Hosea is filled with the naming of Israel's sin and the promise of God's judgment.

Yet in the midst of that, we get verses like Hosea 1:9-11..

Look at those verses real quick.

9 And [e]the Lord said, “Name him [f]Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not [g]your God.”

So clearly, God is promising judgment, but then verses 10-11..

10

***[h]Yet the number of the sons of Israel
Will be like the sand of the sea,
Which cannot be measured or numbered;
And in the place
Where it is said to them,
“You are not My people,”
It will be said to them,
“You are the sons of the living God.”***

11

***And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be
gathered together,
And they will appoint for themselves one leader,***

***And they will go up from the land,
For great will be the day of Jezreel.***

Hosea 1:9-11 are the outworking of Habakkuk 3:1-2..

***1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to
[a]Shigionoth.***

2

***Lord, I have heard [b]the report about You and [c]I
fear.***

***O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years,
In the midst of the years make it known;
In wrath remember [d]mercy.***

And we talked about this verse before in the book of Hosea.

And we have talked about this verse in terms of our nation which is currently under God's judgment.

And tonight, this verse will apply as well in Hosea 6 as we get a glimpse of God's mercy even as he promises judgment to Israel in 700 BC.

But isn't this the nature of the God of Scripture.

He shows mercy even in the midst of wrath.

And why is that?

Well, in the case of Israel, God must show mercy because He made promises to Abraham.

God's covenant with Abraham was an everlasting covenant to bless Abraham's descendants forever.

And to use Abraham's descendants to bless the entire world.

In other words, God must show mercy to Israel as a nation.

Though he is free to temporarily judge them for their sin, he is bound by His word to eventually show mercy to them.

And this is exactly what we see promised in the book of Hosea and in nearly every other prophetic book of the OT.

In fact, if you look at Israel's journey in the OT, it is the story of blessing and judgment.

The mercy shown to them as God delivered them from Egypt is followed by judgment as they worship a golden calf and end up wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

Then the mercy shown to Israel in giving them military victories and bringing them into the promised land is followed by the judgment of being led by a series of judges because everyone in Israel was doing what was right in their own eyes.

Then the mercy of God giving them a good king like David is followed by the judgment of the nation splitting into two parts because of the sin of the 3rd king Solomon.

And as we get back to the book of Hosea, another judgment as Israel continues to live in sin.

But even in the midst of that looming judgment, the Lord wants to make it clear that it was not be a final banishment of Israel.

But instead, there would the promise of restoration after Israel's repentance.

Now if we look at the judgment that came to Israel in 722 and Judah in 586, it was followed by a period of mercy as the Lord allowed Israel to return to their land in 516 BC.

And though they would remain there until the first century AD, more judgment would come to them in 70 AD as the Romans marched in and overthrew them again.

And that judgment has remained until today.

Israel is still scattered all over the world, and though the Jewish people were allowed to return to their land in 1948, they still have not returned to their God by trusting in His Son.

However, they will.

In fact, this future restoration of Israel is previewed in Hosea 6, even though it was written over 2500 years ago.

And that is a reminder that the faithfulness and mercy of God never cease.

The God of the Bible keeps his promises, and though He may judge His people temporarily, He always remembers mercy in the midst of His judgment.

Therefore I have entitled Hosea 6, Calm in the Storm.

The majority of the chapter will detail why Israel was going to be in storm of God's judgment 700s BC.

However, the 1st 3 verses will be a promise that the storm of God's judgment will end with the calm of Israel one day being restored to their God.

So let's begin in verses 1-3 of Hosea tonight with what I call Israel's Future Restoration..

I. Israel's Future Restoration (1-3)

1

***"Come, let us return to the Lord.
For He has torn us, but He will heal us;
He has [a]wounded us, but He will bandage us.***

2

***"He will revive us after two days;
He will raise us up on the third day,
That we may live before Him.***

One thing to note about these verses is the centrality of the God in this passage.

Notice all the 3rd person pronouns.

He has torn us.

He will heal us.

He has wounded us.

He will bandage us.

He will revive us.

He will raise us up.

He will come to us.

Simply put, sin is the result of self-centeredness, but obedience to the result of God-centeredness.

When Israel fell into sin, it was always the result of their own sinful desires.

This is what sin is.

It is an act that ignores the existence of God.

Some have said that the “i” in the middle of the English word sin is quite appropriate since all sin is grounded in self centeredness.

And clearly, this was Israel’s issues time and time again as a nation.

But one day, Israel will repent of their self-centeredness and return to a God-centered view of the world.

In that day, they will acknowledge that God has torn them and wounded them due to their sin.

But they will also acknowledge that God alone has the power to heal them and bandage them and revive them and raise them up.

Remember, a proper view of God begins with a proper view of God's authority, power, and sovereignty.

When Israel lived in sin, they saw themselves as their own authority.

They saw themselves as powerful and sovereign.

But revival begins with biblical view of man and a biblical view of God.

And though the revival of Israel is still future to us tonight, Hosea didn't know that so he called Israel to repentance in verse 3..

3

***“So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord.
His going forth is as certain as the dawn;
And He will come to us like the rain,
Like the spring rain watering the earth.”***

And please note once again the foundation of repentance and restoration and revival.

The knowledge of God.

Look at the first line of verse 3.

Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord.

The Hebrew verb 'to know' is yada.

And two different forms of that verb found twice in this first line of verse 3.

In addition to that, turn to back to Hosea 4:1..

***1 Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel,
For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the
land,
Because there is no [a]faithfulness or [b]kindness
Or knowledge of God in the land.***

Then look down to verse 6 in Hosea 4..

***6
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.***

In case there was any doubt, the Lord wants to make it clear that a knowledge of Him is necessary for a proper relationship to Him.

Though I have beat this horse before, there is a lack of knowledge of God in our culture.

For years, pastors neglected to teach their people about God.

Instead of filling their people with truths about God, they filled their people with an emotional connection to God.

I will give you an example.

Pastors would spend 10 minutes on the Bible verses and 15 minutes on the story at the end that led into their invitation.

Ultimately, they ignored instruction about God and instead hoped to guilt people or scare people or lure people with an emotional appeal to come to God.

But the book of Hosea is clear that a relational knowledge of God is based on a biblical knowledge of God.

You cannot have a right relationship with God without knowing who God is.

Therefore, Hosea 6:3 is calling Israel to know God presently and to press on to know God more fully.

Simply put, all revival, all restoration, all salvation begins with a knowledge of who God is.

And Israel was no exception.

Restoration and revival would come as they sought a knowledge of God.

Sadly, that pursuit of the knowledge of God would not come during the days of Hosea.

Instead, Israel would remain in its sinful state.

Therefore, Hosea returns to the reasons for judgment in verses 4-11..

I call this Israel's present trouble.

II. Israel's Present Trouble (4-11)

Look at verse 4..

4

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?

What shall I do with you, O Judah?

For your [b]loyalty is like a morning cloud

And like the dew which goes away early.

Now remember after Israel split into 2 parts, the northern kingdom was called Israel or Ephraim, and the southern kingdom was called Judah.

And though Hosea was called to preach to the northern kingdom, he addresses all of Israel here as a shallow and fickle nation.

He compares all of Israel to a morning cloud and the morning dew.

Sometimes, you can get up in the morning and it looks cloudy but once the sun gets up, the clouds burn off and it never rains.

Some mornings, you get up and there is dew on the ground but it also quickly dries out when the dew hits it.

This was Israel in their relationship to the Lord.

They appeared loyal and committed to him, but their loyalty quickly disappeared when something better came along.

In other words, they were only loyal to the Lord for very short periods of time.

And once again, we see the Hebrew word *hesed*.

Turn back to Hosea 4:1 again..

***I Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel,
For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the
land,
Because there is no [a]faithfulness or [b]kindness
Or knowledge of God in the land.***

In the same way that Israel lacked a knowledge of God, they also lacked loyalty or faithfulness to God.

And the word for faithfulness in Hosea 4:1 is the same word for loyalty in Hosea 6:4.

God has a *hesed* love of Israel, but Israel did not have a *hesed* love of God.

Think back to the book of Exodus.

They follow the Lord out of Egypt, but when they find trouble in the wilderness, they are ready to turn back to Egypt and go back into slavery.

In other words, they were a nation that couldn't be trusted in their commitment to the Lord no more than you can trust a morning cloud to bring rain.

And sadly nothing has changed in the people of God today.

They are plenty of Christians who are loyal to Christ when they need something.

They will miss church for months, but will ask the church for prayer they are sick.

They will miss church for years, but will ask the church for money when they are broke.

They will have perfect attendance when they are going through affliction, but they are gone immediately after their needs are met or after their feelings are hurt.

These kind of folks today are just like Israel, -they have the loyalty of a morning cloud and the morning dew.

But such disloyalty to God comes with a price.

Look at verse 5..

5

***Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets;
I have slain them by the words of My mouth;
And the judgments on you are like the light that goes
forth.***

Verse 5 speaks of the prophets, the words, and the judgments, and the point is clear.

Disloyal people, unfaithful people find judgment.

And to make sure that Israel understands why she deserves judgment, the Lord repeats the reason in verse 6..

6

***For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice,
And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt
offerings.***

Just to be clear, -the Lord despises false worship.

He despised Israel offering sacrifices while their heart was far from him.

He despised Israel giving their burnt offerings to him while withholding their heart from him.

And there are 1000s of believers who gather in churches weekly and offer the same false worship today.

They write a check to God but know nothing about him.

They attend church service but never even open their Bibles to gain more knowledge of Him.

Lest you think this is an Israel-only problem, don't be mistaken.

False worship is a church age problem as well.

In fact, false worship is a mankind problem.

Look at verse 7..

7

***But like [c]Adam they have transgressed the covenant;
There they have dealt treacherously against Me.***

Now the Hebrew word for man is adam.

Therefore some translations, like mine, translate this as the proper name Adam thinking this verse is referring specifically to Adam's disobedience to God in Genesis 3.

And though that is possible, I see the use of adam here as simply a reference to mankind in general.

In other words, Israel's disobedience to God is nothing unique.

In the same way that every man and woman has disobeyed the Lord, Israel is equally guilty.

In fact, when the last part of verse 7 is combined with verses 8 and 9, the implication is that Israel had often sinned more like mankind in general than a nation formed by the Lord from the descendants of Abraham.

Look at verse 8..

8

***Gilead is a city of wrongdoers,
Tracked with bloody footprints.***

9

***And as raiders wait for a man,
So a band of priests murder on the way to Shechem;
Surely they have committed [d]crime.***

You can see both of those cities on this map.

Gilead is in the northern kingdom east of the Jordan River and Shechem is in the northern kingdom west of the Jordan River.

And simply put, these cities in the northern kingdom were evil.

Gilead was a city of bloodshed, as evidenced by the bloody footprints there.

And Shechem was filled with murderous priests.

And the reason for pointing this out is simple.

The sins of the northern kingdom were no different than the sins of the surrounding nations.

In other words, the northern kingdom has lost its distinction as the people of God.

Instead of being a people who stayed far away from sin of murder, they had become murderers.

Instead of being a people who avoided bloodshed, they committed violent acts.

Therefore, judgment is coming.

And let me just say this.

WE live in an era where the church is losing its distinction from the culture around us.

We live in an age where people walk into a church service and hear the music of the world and even the philosophies of the world from the pulpit.

WE live in a church age where instead of rejecting the sins of the world, the church is adopting the sins of the world.

There is homosexuality in the church.

There is adultery in the church.

There is greed in the church.

There are even pro-abortionists in the church.

The church of 2022 has become the Israel of 750 BC.

Instead of being separate from the sinful culture, many in the church have wed themselves to the sins of the culture.

How disgusted the Lord must be.

In fact, note verse 10..

10

***In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing;
Ephraim's harlotry is there, Israel has defiled itself.***

Needless to say, the sins of Israel were obvious to all.

Israel's harlotry has led to her defilement.

Israel's sin was deserving of judgment, and that judgment would come in 722 BC at the hand of the Assyrian army who would bring that nation into captivity.

But lest Judah felt safe or superior, Hosea even has a word for her in verse 11..

11

***Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you,
When I restore the fortunes of My people.***

A lot of commentators believe that the last line of verse 11 belongs with verse 1 of Hosea 7 because the first line of verse 11 is not a promise of a blessing of harvest.

Instead, the harvest of verse 11 is a harvest of judgment.

In the same way that the northern kingdom deserved judgment, the southern kingdom did as well.

And they would harvest judgment almost 150 after their northern neighbor.

In the same way that verse 4 addressed both kingdom, verse 11 also addressed both kingdoms.

Judgment was coming to all of Israel because all of Israel was guilty of playing the harlot.

Now what can apply from all of this?

Conclusion

#1 - Pursuing a knowledge of God is blessed by God.

I have said this before and I will repeat this many more times, but a pursuit of biblical knowledge should be fundamental to the Christian.

People who claim to be believers but have no interest in the knowledge of the Bible are immature at best but most likely not saved at all.

People who say they know the Lord but lack a biblical knowledge of God rarely know the Lord in a saving way.

A clear fruit of true salvation is a hunger for the knowledge of God.

#2 - Offering false worship is judged by God.

Hosea 6 reminds us that sacrifices without faithfulness and knowledge earn the judgment of God.

And man that word is needed now more than ever in the church.

I have already said it, but please make sure that your act of worship is not empty ritual.

Please make sure that your act of worship is not just going through the motions.

Make sure that your worship of the Lord comes from a heart that knows him and is loyal to Him.

And finally..

#3 - Repentance is rewarded by God.

The first 3 verses of Hosea 6 remind us that the Lord is slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness to all who turn from their sins and turn to him.

As far as Israel has fallen, they had not fallen beyond the gracious hand of the Lord.

God will temporarily judge his people.

He will tear them and wound them, but He will also heal and bandage and reeve and restore those who come before him with repentance and humility.

Israel has not done that as a nation, but they do, the Lord will be on the edge of town waiting for them to run to them and embrace them and save them.

And even today, the Lord will do the same for anyone who turns from their sinful ways and put their faith in His Son.

If sin has wounded you, Christ can heal you.

And all of us said, Amen.

Let us pray.