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Hosea (Pt 4) – The Consequences of Refusing to Give Thanks

October 31, 2021

Sermon Text: Hosea 2:1-13

Scripture Reading: Romans 1

Hos 2:1-13 Say to your brothers, “You are my people,” and to your sisters, “You have received mercy.”

(2) “Plead with your mother, plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; (3) lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and make her like a parched land, and kill her with thirst. (4) Upon her children also I will have no mercy, because they are children of whoredom. (5) For their mother has played the whore; she who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my

flax, my oil and my drink.’

(6) Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. (7) She shall pursue her lovers but not overtake them, and she shall seek them but shall not find them. Then she shall say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now.’

(8) And she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal. (9) Therefore I will take back my grain in its time, and my wine in its season, and I will take away my wool and my flax, which were to cover her nakedness.

(10) Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall rescue her out of my hand. (11) And I will put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed feasts. (12) And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees, of which she said, ‘These are my wages, which my lovers have

given me.’ I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall devour them.

(13) And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned offerings to them and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers and forgot me, declares the LORD.

Chapter 1, you recall, ended with the Lord’s promise to completely fulfill His covenant with Abraham, the Promise, which is the New Covenant in Christ and the basis of our salvation:

Hos 1:10-11 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.” (11) And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Hosea will elaborate on this in the last half of this 2nd chapter.

It seems that the first verse in chapter 2 goes along with 1:10-11, so that it reads like this:

Hos 1:10-11 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.” (11) And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Hos 2:1 Say to your brothers, “You are my people,” and to your sisters, “You have received mercy.”

Those familiar terms which are the positive form of the names of Hosea’s children (Not a people, and No Mercy) are reversed in Christ – “you are my people” and “You have received mercy.”

Then there is a sharp change at 2:2 where Hosea continues with God’s pronouncement of judgment against Israel for their evils.

But let’s consider verse 1 in more depth first. Listen to this very good explanation of verse 1 from the Keil and Delitzsch Old Testament Commentary – [Note: this commentary is available free as an add on module in the e-sword software just like Matthew Henry and others are]

To confirm the certainty of this most joyful turn of events, the promise closes with the summons in Hosea 2:1 “*Say ye to your brethren: My people; and to your sisters, Favored.*”

The prophet “sees the favored nation of the Lord (in spirit) before him, and calls upon its members to accost one another joyfully with the new name which had been given to them by God” The promise attaches itself in form to the names of the children of the prophet. As their names of ill omen proclaimed the judgment of rejection, so is the salvation which awaits the nation in the future announced to it here by a simple alteration of the names into their opposite through the omission of the *Lo*.

So far as the fulfilment of this prophecy is concerned, the fact that the patriarchal promise (to Abraham) of the innumerable multiplication of Israel is to be realized through the pardon and restoration of Israel, as the nation of the living God, shows clearly enough that *we are not to look for this in the return of the ten tribes from captivity to Palestine, their native land.*

Even apart from the fact, that the historical books of the Bible (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther) simply mention the return of *a portion* of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, along with the

priests and Levites, under Zerubbabel and Ezra, and that the numbers of the ten tribes, who may have attached themselves to the Judaeans on their return, or who returned to Galilee afterwards as years rolled by, *formed but a very small fraction of the number that had been carried away* (compare the remarks on [2Ki_17:24](#));

...the attachment of these few to Judah could not properly be called a union of the sons of Israel and of the sons of Judah, and still less was it a fulfilment of the word, “They appoint themselves one head.” [ie, Christ] As the union of Israel with Judah is to be effected through their gathering together under one head, under Jehovah their God and under David their king, this fulfilment falls within the Messianic times, and hitherto has only been realized in very small beginnings, which furnish a pledge of their complete fulfilment in the last times, when the hardening of Israel will cease, and all Israel be converted to Christ ([Rom_11:25-26](#)).

It is by no means difficult to bring the application, which is made of our prophecy in [1Pe_2:10](#) and [Rom_9:25-26](#), into harmony with this.

[1Pe 2:10](#) Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Rom 9:25-26 As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’” (26) “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

When Peter quotes the words of this prophecy in his first epistle, which nearly all modern commentators justly suppose to have been written to Gentile Christians, and when Paul quotes the very same words ([Hos 2:1](#), with [Hos 1:10](#)) as proofs of the calling of the Gentiles to be the children of God in Christ; this is not merely an application to the Gentiles of what is affirmed of Israel, or simply the clothing of their thoughts in Old Testament words..., but an argument based upon the fundamental thought of this prophecy.

Through its apostasy from God, Israel had become like the Gentiles, and had fallen from the covenant of grace with the Lord.

Consequently, the re-adoption of the Israelites as children of God was a practical proof that God had also adopted the Gentile world as His children. “Because God had promised to adopt the children of Israel again, He must adopt the Gentiles also. Otherwise

this resolution would rest upon mere caprice, which cannot be thought of in God”.

And accordingly the innumerable multiplication of the children of Israel, predicted in [Rom 9:10](#), is not to be restricted to the actual multiplication of the descendants of the Israelites now banished into exile; *but the fulfilment of the promise must also include the incorporation of believing Gentiles into the congregation of the Lord* ([Isa 44:5](#)). This incorporation commenced with the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles by the apostles; it has continued through all the centuries in which the church has been spreading in the world; and it will receive its final accomplishment when the fulness of the Gentiles shall enter into the kingdom of God.

And as the number of the children of Israel is thus continually increased, this multiplication will be complete when the descendants of the children of Israel, who are still hardened in their hearts, shall turn to Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Redeemer ([Rom 11:25-26](#)).

In other words, all of this to say, that 2:1 is looking into the church age when, in Christ, the true Israel is created by faith alone in Christ alone, consisting of Jew

and Gentile, and at the close of which there will be a great revival among the Jews so that, as Paul says, “all Israel will be saved.”

Hos 2:1 Say to your brothers, “You are my people,” and to your sisters, “You have received mercy.”

Jew and Gentile, in Christ, now call one another “brothers and sisters.”

And then the return to the theme of coming judgment:

(2:2) “Plead with your mother, plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts;

It is not clear who these children are who are to plead with their mother. Some believe it is the faithful remnant, a very few among the wicked Israelites of Hosea’s day, exhorted to rebuke the Jews and plead with them to repent. Others take it to be generally addressed to the Israelites who were complaining about the supposed injustice they were receiving from the Lord. If this is correct, then God is returning to the marriage imagery that Hosea’s marriage to an adulterous wife pictured. We could state it like this:

“So, you complain that My chastisements of you are unjust? Don’t lay the blame upon Me. Go to your adulterous mother, my wife, who has made you all children of adultery and therefore illegitimate children with no inheritance. Your mother has sinned and I have divorced her. You are no longer My people and I am no longer your God. And it is because of your sin.”

This adultery of course was spiritual adultery – idolatry and breaking of the covenant. Listen to John Calvin say it:

“The Israelites, when they saw themselves rejected, wished to throw the blame on God. For by the name, mother, are the people here called; it is transferred to the whole body of people, the race of Abraham. God had espoused that people to himself, and wished them to be like a wife to him. Since then God was a husband to the people, the Israelites were as sons born by that marriage. But when they were repudiated, they held that God had dealt cruelly with them, casting them away for no fault of their own. ‘Contend, contend with your mother.’ Your dispute is not with Me.” [Calvin’s Commentaries]

Let’s think further at this point about this bent the sinner has to place the blame for his misery upon God or

someone other than himself. We must watch for this sin in our own selves as well. Blaming God. Blaming someone else.

Isa 58:3 ‘Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers.

Mal 3:13-14 “Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, ‘How have we spoken against you?’ (14) You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts?’

We saw this back in Eden as well, right?

True repentance confesses. It accepts full blame for itself. *Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned.* When someone else has sinned, when the oppressor oppresses, when we suffer at the hands of the wicked, it is not our fault. But when we sin, we must accept the blame which rightfully is upon us.

“[True repentance is seen] *When he who has sinned not only confesses himself to be guilty, and owns himself worthy of punishment, but is also*

displeased with himself, and then with sincere desire turns to God.

Many, we see, are ready enough to confess their sins, and yet they go on in the same wicked course. But Hosea shows here that true repentance is something very different, I will go and return, he says. Repentance then consists in the act itself; that is, repentance produces a reforming change in man so that he reconciles himself to God, whom he had forsaken.” (Calvin)

You have no doubt seen many examples of the wicked insisting on “passing the buck.” It comes naturally to even little children. When this trait blossoms into its full ugliness, you have the wicked man who *never admits fault*. If he hits you in the face, it is your fault. If he steals something from you, it is your fault. If God brings calamity upon him as judgment for his sins, it is God’s fault. And that is exactly what these Israelites were doing – blaming God. They shamelessly walked in a hardened contempt of God, embracing all types of evil, worshipping their Baals, and yet any calamity that came their way was not their fault.

Have you ever had to deal with the kind of person the Bible calls a “sluggard” or a “fool”? Here he or she is, in a pathetic condition, as a result of their own sin,

and yet nothing is their fault. Everyone else is to blame. The government, the rich people, some co-worker or boss who had it in for them, the bank...but it's never their own fault.

We need to take care not to accept blame put upon us by these kinds of people. But we also need to take care not to fall into the same sin of refusing to accept blame when it is due to us. And we certainly must never blame God of dealing unjustly with us. If you are in Christ, then everything that happens to you is meant by God for your good.

This form of man's sin is amazingly powerful, blind, and wicked. He walks in unrepentant, shameless, open sin and yet demands that God bless him, and if God will not, then *God* is guilty of injustice, unkindness, lack of mercy. This is man's attitude toward God, and yet as we will see further developed in this chapter, *it is plain and evident to all men that every good thing they have comes from God!* Do they give Him thanks? No. The sinner credits himself or his false gods for it all.

Rom 1:21-23 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (22) Claiming to be wise, they became fools, (23) and

HOSEA, PART 4

exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Now Hosea continues on this theme:

(Hosea 2:2) "Plead with your mother, plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; (3) lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and make her like a parched land, and kill her with thirst. (4) Upon her children also I will have no mercy, because they are children of whoredom. (5) For their mother has played the whore; she who conceived them has acted shamefully. **For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'**

This is incredible enough when pagans do this, but here we have it in the Israelites who had God's Word. They knew full well that they were to worship the only true God and that He is the only source of bread, and water, and clothing, and everything they possessed. (Remember that this had been a time of prosperity for Israel—yet they said that their Baals were the source of these good things).

Most people of course do the very same today. They credit everyone and everything else besides God for the supply of good things they enjoy. How many people stop to think and to really give God thanks for their food, their houses, their clothing, their health, the air they breath and the water they drink? Listen to Psalm 50 – it so perfectly describes what Hosea is speaking of -

Psa 50:1-23 A Psalm of Asaph. The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. (2) Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. (3) Our God comes; he does not keep silence; before him is a devouring fire, around him a mighty tempest.

(4) He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people: (5) “Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!” (6) The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge! Selah

(7) “Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. (8) Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. (9) I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. (10) For every beast of the forest is

mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. (11) I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. (12) “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. (13) Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

(14) Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, (15) and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

(16) But to the wicked God says: “What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips? (17) For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you. (18) If you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers. (19) “You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. (20) You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son.

(21) These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you. (22) “Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver! (23) The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!”

As things began to turn sour for them because the Lord was bringing judgment, what did they do? Repent and turn to Him? No. They resolved with renewed fervor to chase after their idols and they insisted that things had been better with that religion!

'For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'

The Lord now, through His prophet Hosea, gives even more sobering warning:

(Hosea 2:6) Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. (7) She shall pursue her lovers but not overtake them, and she shall seek them but shall not find them. Then she shall say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now.'

(8) And she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal. (9) Therefore I will take back my grain in its time, and my wine in its season, and I will take away my wool and my flax, which were to cover her nakedness.

If you have ever done much hiking around here in the Oregon coast range, you know that unless you find some old logging road or well-used game trail, much of the area is virtually impassable. And one of the biggest obstacles is the salmon berry brush or worse, those blackberry vines. This is a good picture of what the Lord is speaking of when He says that unless the Israelites repent, he would-

hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths.

And this frustration, this blockage, would be in direct connection to their idolatry-

(7) She shall pursue her lovers but not overtake them, and she shall seek them but shall not find them.

In other words, her pursuit of these idols will do Israel no good. Listen to Calvin again on this:

"Hosea means that the people would be reduced to such straits, that they might not lasciviate (ie, lewdness,) as they had done in their false religion; for while they enjoyed prosperity, they thought that everything was lawful for them. Hence their contempt for the Word of God.

By *hedge* and *thorns*, God means those adversities by which He restrains the ungodly, so that they may cease to flatter themselves, and may not thoughtlessly follow. ‘I will constrain them so to groan under the burden of evils, that they shall no longer allow loose reins to themselves.’”

sin difficult that we may not continue in it. We have reason to bless God both for restraining grace and for His restraining providences. [Matthew Henry commentary].

It is amazing how hard the sinner’s heart is. These people, even in hard and difficult circumstances now, still refused to admit that God’s hand is against them and that repentance is called for. As Calvin puts it – “*they were utterly stupid and destitute of every feeling. It is a prodigious madness when men run so stubbornly even when God’s had is obviously against them.*”

Let’s close with this great summary from Matthew Henry, and then we will plan to look next time at this matter of Israel saying “*I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now.*’

“*Crosses and obstacles [ie, thorns and hedges and walls] are great blessings, and are so to be accounted. They are God’s hedges, to keep us from transgressing, to restrain us from wandering out of the green pastures and thus withdrawing from His purposes for us....to make the way of*