

# Hosea

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[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I will direct your minds to the prophecy of Hosea chapter 6 verse 3. The prophecy of Hosea chapter 6 verse 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning. He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

It was an exceedingly troubled world that Hosea looked out upon in his day. He saw with a discriminating I, corruption, irreligion, inconsistency, disobedience, idolatry, everything that was hateful and distressing to a gracious mind. He saw a nation fast departing from the living God. Must have been dreadfully grievous to a mind devoted to God, to a man who came in the name of God. His lot was to preach in troublous times, from which we may draw one or two encouraging remarks. First this, in the very worst of times, God has had and will have his faithful witnesses.

Paul reminds us in Hebrews, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.

Hosea was one of them, a faithful, a true witness, who did not, as you see, mince his words.

He went forth. He had his commission. He said, Thus saith the Lord. The word of God through him was like a two-edged sword. Just a little lower in this very chapter 6, he says, I have hewed them by the prophets. I have slain them with the word to show that Hosea was equipped with that word of God, which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

[ 4 : 28 ] So, therefore, in the worst of times, God maintains a faithful witness.

Consequently, he maintains, in the worst of times, a people, a remnant, according to the election of grace. Because, you see, he does not send forth his servants at an uncertainty. He expressly declares that his word that his word shall not return unto him void. Oh, but the appearances are most discouraging.

He does not read of any conversions as such in Hosea. For the most part, his prophecy is lamentation and woe. But, there was prophet, no doubt. And he uses, as God's servants, all will and must do, two things.

And he uses, all will and must do, two things. Goodness and severity. Behold, therefore, says Paul, the goodness and severity of God.

Now, broadly speaking, you may observe that in Hosea's prophecy. Oh, the solemn severity, the charging home of sin, he doesn't bolster them up. He doesn't speak smooth things. He doesn't sew pillows to armholes. No. Without fear or favour, whether they hear or whether they forbear, they must hear the truth. So, he charges their sins, denounces their idolatries, proclaims God's judgment.

[ 7 : 08 ] But, almost, I believe, in every prophecy, however severe and dreadful, we find that silver bell of the gospel. Divine mercy. To show that God never delights in judgment.

He must judge. He will judge. He must punish sin. But we never read he delights in it. But we do read that he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy.

Hence, these dear prophets had the privilege and the joy of including some notes of mercy in their sermons.

I should well suppose that every minister is glad when he comes to the gospel and he is entitled to handle the milk and wine, the promises, the sweet invitations, the mercy side of his minister, though he must be faithful.

Now, there's another conclusion from the prophet's ministry. Namely, this. It had a two-fold effect.

[ 8 : 56 ] Two-fold effect. And Paul tells us about it in 2 Corinthians. We are a savor of life unto life unto life.

And who is sufficient for these things. It was so in the prophet's day. Now, in the portion before us, this chapter 6 and these three verses, we find the prophet, by the Spirit, using the sweet encouragement, the goodness, the mercy, the kindness, where God expostulates with the people.

And doubtless, as a fruit of his ministry, that word went home to break hard hearts, to recover the rebellious, to restore the backsliders, to bring them down, to reduce them, and make them willing in the day of his power.

In the midst of his upbraidings that surround this chapter, comes this sweet word. Come, let us return unto the Lord.

He has smitten us. He will bind us up. He has torn us. He will heal us. He will revive us.

[ 10 : 59 ] And so on. In which you may observe the prophet with largeness of heart. And, if I may say, like a nursing father.

Does he notice a softening, breaking down under the word of God? How glad he is to see it.

How he would seize, how he would treasure and prize the least semblance of a broken and a contrite spirit among the people.

And so, he is there to fan the sacred flame by these words.

And they're very beautiful, and very touching, and very tender. And do you notice that he identifies himself? He doesn't say, do you return to the Lord?

[ 12 : 02 ] Come, let us return to the Lord. A very self-abasing expression. Not as though, I'm a holy prophet, and you, you are wicked rebels.

Not so. Let us, come, let us, return to the Lord. God. And there's a note of confidence, too, in the expression.

It's the confidence, you notice, of a man that knows his God. That knows the ways of his God.

And he dares to say so much as this. he will heal us. He will revive us. And he goes on to the words of our very text.

Now, these are the expressions of one who knows somewhat of the way of the Spirit.

[ 13 : 14 ] And I cannot help calling him a nursing father because he is one that watches over the souls.

And he watches, too, most tenderly to see that welcome change that pastors and ministers and godly parents and godly teachers are watching for with such anxiety.

That sobriety, that humility, that softening, that breaking down under the chastening hand of God.

just prior to our text in the chapter preceding, he's been uttering some terrible things in the name of God where he says that God will be to them as rottenness, as a moth, as a young lion to tear.

to show that God has chastenings for the proud, has rods laid up for the fool's back, to show that in mercy he will not leave his people uncorrected.

[ 14 : 48 ] You read in the Proverbs, do you not? Spare him not for his crying. sparing not, for if thou beatest him thou shalt save his soul.

God does that, he chastens in mercy, and the closing words are pathetic and full. I will go and return to my place.

In their affliction they will seek me early. Now our text is so suitable for those who begun to come down and are being reduced to humility and teachableness by the rods of their God.

So saith the prophet further to lead them back to their God. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.

His goings forth are prepared as the morn. He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and the former rain unto the earth.

[ 16 : 17 ] Now the text is so suited to the whole family of God without exception it is suitable for the newly convinced sinner who has some good thing in his heart toward the Lord God who has begun to think upon his ways and return and he is on his way as it were on his way back it is suitable for the poor back slider who has grown slack who has left his first love who has restrained prayer who has been deceived and been allured now is thoroughly ashamed filled with his own ways and can't find that broken heart whose trouble and distress and following are far off that seemeth in a distant land it's suitable for him it is not less suitable for the seasoned believer who may be walking in truth walking in obedience it is not less suitable for such and one the word of

God is like that so adaptable to all the phases and changes of gracious experience let us then seek to dwell a little upon what the prophet has to say in this particular verse now the central thought for this afternoon is this to know the Lord that is the objective in the first portion of the text then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord let us pause there and ask examine what it is to know the Lord it's very far from a mere head knowledge very far from a mere verbal ascent to doctrines to know the

Lord is such a knowledge as has a gracious effect that at once distinguishes it from all other knowledge the knowledge of the Lord it's a transforming knowledge it's a fruit bearing knowledge it's a heart affecting knowledge is the knowledge of the Lord though the subject is vast may we approach it from one or two aspects firstly this to know the Lord is to know the teaching of the blessed spirit of God by this we know says

John that we dwell in him and he in us because he hath given us of his spirit how shall I know whether I know the holy spirit how shall I know whether he dwells in me how shall I know whether my knowledge is gracious knowledge saving knowledge you will know by its effect he is a holy spirit he brings a holy life with him he implants holy affections gracious thoughts the life he brings it cannot sin because it is from above the holy spirit is a spirit of life distinct from all other he implants a divine life spiritual faculties eyes to see and behold wondrous things out of

God's law ears to hear to know to understand the joyful sound lips to speak I will turn to the people of pure language and they shall serve the Lord with one consent he implants pure affections blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God he makes a soul willing in the day of his power but willing to know itself willing to expose itself to the truth he that believeth cometh to the truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are in

[ 22 : 25 ] God in truth spirit of truth he is the spirit of life causing the soul to be honest before God search me O God know my heart try me and know my thoughts see that there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting to know God is to know and experience the operations of his spirit testing point I emphasize that this knowledge is superior it is incomparable it is heavenly knowledge it is transforming knowledge it is soul saving knowledge to know to experience the operations of the spirit of

God it is vital and important knowledge for if any man have not the spirit of God of Christ he is none of his that's how important it is try the spirits says John try them and see and test them for many false Christ and antichrists have gone out into the world try them see whether they are of God to know the holy spirit is so vital and desirable and attractive because he leads and guides into all truth and that his teaching is indispensable no man can say that

Jesus is Lord except by the holy ghost the things of the spirit they are foreign to the natural mind they are foolishness to a man he cannot know them he cannot discern but by the spirit how vital how needful how his teaching and they are attractive on this head too his teachings are effectual they are permanent they're lasting the anointing which ye have received abideth in you and you need not that any man teach you he leads into all the truth need not the help of those seducing teachers need no light from blind guides the holy spirit certainly will use men and us but his teachings are harmonious they're savoury they're like the sweet incense the anointing which ye have received which is the antitype of that wondrous anointing oil mentioned in

Exodus 30 which no man was to imitate under pain of death it was reserved especially for the vessels of the sanctuary and for the work of the ministry was this anointing oil fragrant sweet acceptable to God highly typical of the anointing which ye have received it will guide you into all truth into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ the saving knowledge of the Father and there are no jarring notes discrepancies contradictions in his teaching they are one they are harmonious there is no arguments in the

Holy Trinity John expressly says these three that I speak of these three they are one these three they agree in one before their dark appear bewail thy want of sight no imperfection can be there for all God's words are right to know the Lord to know the Lord the Spirit is a blessed thing is a longed for thing a thing to pray for to seek to follow to beg for because apart from him we are darkness itself is hidden from the wise and prudent revealed unto babes by the

[ 28 : 29 ] Spirit even so father so it seemed good in thy sight this same blessed person leads on there's a growing in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ it is he who convinces it of sin of righteousness of judgment to come it is he that leads the soul on here a little and there a little in divine life he is the revealer of Christ Paul prayed for it that he might know that he might have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him the Spirit is the revealer of

Christ consequently he is the comforter I will pray the Father that he may send you another comforter and he shall abide with you forever he is the sealer he seals up a man to the day of redemption he puts his mark upon a man a woman he makes the heart impressionable he makes the heart soft like wax he makes the impression puts the mark of God on such and one they should be mine saith the Lord in the day when I make up my jewels he's a sealer he's the witnesser he tells a man he tells a woman that they're children of God makes them know it and understand it the spirit bear it witness with our spirit that we are the children of

God here's the remembrance sir all through life's journey for the believer he is constantly fulfilling this office he shall bring all things to your remembrance and some of you know how good he is how gracious he is to bring to remembrance the right word at the right time maybe a precept maybe a precept when you're about to turn to the right hand or to the left and he says this is the way walk he in it and make you understand or he will oft times bring to remembrance that word upon which the Lord has called you to hope hang your expectations for your soul for your way through life he brings it to remembrance so your soul is helped strengthened revived to again hope in

God enabling you to say my soul hope thou in God for my expectation is from him to know the Lord what a theme and how indispensable I cannot emphasize sufficiently no other knowledge will touch it it is not a degree of natural knowledge not something that can be acquired through the use of natural knowledge it's distinct in kind comes from above sovereign spiritual discriminating not found everywhere no not by dint of study is this knowledge the Holy Spirit was expressly called on

Pentecostal day a gift and ye shall receive the gift and the Holy Ghost what a reminder is it not that salvation in all its parts is of the Lord but this leads on does it not to know the Lord Jesus is another branch of this divine knowledge where shall I begin where shall I end but we read that the Lord the Holy Spirit shall take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto you to know the Lord Jesus is for the mind to be enlightened the eyes to be anointed with eyes of tis to perceive his beauty and loveliness tis to understand how suitable he is tis to know his special nature the

[ 34 : 23 ] God man verily God verily man co-eternal with the Father tis to see his place in the covenant of grace the surety the mediator between God and men this knowledge is to be graciously informed of his covenant undertakings his resolve to go through and the proof that he did this eye will be an eye of faith to trace him going forth from eternity appearing in time born in Bethlehem growing apace first obey a lad a man going forth to work out a righteousness the

Lord our righteousness in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory to the Holy Spirit leading on opening up the vast depth length and height and breadth of the knowledge of the Son of God how vast it is it passeth knowledge really so to know the Lord needs a qualifying statement namely we see through a glass darkly we know but in part oh the knowledge of Christ as known by the apostle or favored Isaiah was that in part but there's a knowledge attainable by all who seek it and attainable by all believers is wrapped up in this scripture they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them so need not despair poor soul if there's a desire in your heart even like the smoking flecks that

I may know him the power of his resurrection the fellowship of his sufferings be made conformable unto his death then there's the most encouraging prospect they shall all know me not in the fullness not with infinity but they shall know me saving them they shall know me presently to their satisfaction oh what is it to know Christ how can one express it concisely but just drop these hints they that know thy name will put their trust in thee that's the kind of knowledge it is if you know

Christ you want to test whether you know Christ ask yourself where is thy trust where is thy confidence about the salvation of thy soul you soon know you will say to whom can we go though as the words of eternal life we believe and are sure thou art the Christ the son of the living God see if you would ask yourselves whether you know the Lord you must ask yourself whether this knowledge is of a transforming nature you see you can read a piece of history and not turn a hair nor be the slightest bit affected it is not transforming but now if you know the Lord in a saving way you will be able to register some gracious effect in your soul somewhere at some time though you may not yet be able to tell people but it is just like that smoking glass that it will not win and that broken reed bruised reed that he will not pray just like that but the hallmark of divine knowledge is this he received it not as it was the word of man but as it was indeed and in truth the word of

God that worketh effectually in them that they need to know the Lord to know his spirit to know his son and this will be of course to know the father this way experimentally is it not blessed in working of the holy ghost revealing Christ and bringing those that were far off nigh in fellowship with God the father amen to you you you you you you you you you you you you you you