

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her.” – Hosea 2:14 (ESV)

I. THE CRITICAL NEED OF THE HOUR

- A. As we begin to transition into an hour of shakings and turmoil, there is a critical need for voices that have prophetic understanding and prophetic insight.
- B. Many believers and unbelievers are mostly unaware of the shakings that have begun but will increase exponentially in the coming days. There is a massive need for messengers that can give prophetic clarity on these judgments as well as call men to repentance.
 - 1. As He did before Israel was sent into captivity, God will again raise up prophets who will speak, as Jeremiah did, the Lord's heart in the midst of the pressure.
 - 2. This call will be glorious, but also exacting and demanding. Many will turn in repentance because of the judgments of the Lord, but many will harden their heart, reject the message, and persecute the messenger. *Most difficult of all, much of the fiercest opposition will come from those who are part of the church.*
- C. We must have clarity both on the great need of messengers but also on the type of messenger, and message, that will be required. To declare the word of the Lord to a world in crisis is going to evoke the kind of response that is did for Jeremiah. Many of these messengers will be weeping prophets like Jeremiah and many will probably lose their lives at the hands of the very ones they desire to bring into salvation.
- D. Because of the time period we are entering into, believers must be anchored to God's heart and have confidence in His character. *The judgments of God cannot be approached, nor understanding of them sought, until we have full confidence in His heart.*
 - 1. If we do not, we will become offended and our love will grow cold.
 - 2. The shakings that are coming are going to seem very severe to us. We are going to be severely tempted to question the Lord's leadership and methods as He shakes the earth.
 - 3. It is easy to be on the Lord's side so long as it does not touch as personally. As His shakings encompass the earth and affect all peoples, whether or not we agree with Him will become a personal question rather than a theological or academic question.
 - 4. Our agreement with the Lord will not be based on facts anymore, but with real effects on real human beings that are connected with us. *This will be the real test of whether we have enough confidence in His character to be in agreement with His leadership.*

II. THE UNIQUENESS OF HOSEA'S EXPERIENCE

- A. Hosea had a very unusual experience of God's heart and experienced God's emotions in a unique way. God called Hosea to experience the same emotions that God Himself experienced by leading him into a marriage that paralleled God's marriage to Israel.
 - 1. Hosea experienced the joy and intimacy that is redemption as he sought to redeem an adulterous woman and bring her into a marriage relationship.
 - 2. Hosea experienced the heart-rending effects of adultery, as she was unfaithful to him.
 - 3. He experienced the divine humility of taking her back in the midst of her adultery.
 - 4. Hosea was required to express his love amidst the experience of pain and humiliation that paralleled God's own pain in His dealings with His beloved people.
- B. Hosea's experience is recorded for us into to give us a unique insight into God's heart and how He feels. Through Hosea's eyes we see and feel what God has experienced in His plan to redeem a people.

III. THE REVELATION OF GOD'S HEART IN JUDGMENT

- A. It is impossible to view judgment, or even general shakings, properly without a proper understanding of God's heart. To often we are interested in an academic question about whether a certain sequence of events are "judgment" or not, but we have not actually entered into the experience of God's heart in judgment.
- B. God's judgment is entirely different from man's judgment because God is altogether different (i.e. holy) than man.
 - 1. His judgments challenge our understanding, not because He lacks love, but because we are too fallen to understanding the violent intensity of true love.
"...for God is love" – 1 John 4:8b
"For our God is a consuming fire." – Hebrews 12:29
 - a. The only way for us to truly understand His judgments it to come into an understanding of what love is. God does not "have love," He defines it. He is love. Therefore whatever He does is love.
 - b. God is also a consuming fire. That consuming fire *is love*. Our love is weak and sentimental. God's love is described as a consuming fire. His love is so passionate and consuming that it confronts a lack of love. Our dark minds will accuse Him of being harsh and cruel, but the reality is that He confronts us with what real love actually is.
 - 2. The very judgments that men mock and sneer at, the angels rejoice in declaring God's wonder and glory amidst His judgments.

“O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the foreigners’ palace is a city no more; it will never be rebuilt.” – Isaiah 25:1-2

- C. *His judgments also seem severe to us because we do not understand the fullness of sin that is within us. If we had a full revelation of how dark our own hearts are, His judgments would seem perfectly reasonable to us. Ultimately it is our own view of ourselves that keeps us from coming into full agreement with God’s judgments.*
- D. Our hearts must be established and firmly rooted in confidence that God is good and everything that He does is good *because He does it.*
 - 1. Man fell in the garden because he wanted the right to evaluate good and evil rather than living under God’s assessment.
 - 2. When God’s judgments are in the earth, we are forced to agree with Him because of who He is and rest in confidence in His character rather than in *our own evaluation of what we perceive to be good and evil* in our perception of specific events.
 - 3. When His judgments are in the earth, we are brought face to face with both His goodness and our fallenness. These are fundamental doctrines, but they are tested severely when God’s judgments are in the earth. Only those who are rooted in His goodness and humble enough to accept their own condition will have an unoffended heart flowing in love as pressures increase.

IV. GOD’S REVELATION TO HOSEA

- A. One way that God invites us into agreement is by inviting us into His heart. He wants us to know what He feels and how He feels so that we will have confidence in what He does. In Hosea 2, God gives Hosea His heart towards Israel.
- B. God gives a very specific overview of Israel’s condition. It is critical that we understand that Israel is set before us as a vivid illustration of the condition of all men. God’s relationship with Israel is meant to be an illustration of the condition of all men and the character of God. That does not mean that we interpret everything figuratively, but rather that God’s very literal dealings with Israel and promises to Israel are meant to reveal to us the contrast of the human heart and the divine heart. Israel illustrates the response of every man’s heart.
 - 1. Israel has forgotten the one that loved her and rescued her from death. Israel’s selfish desires have caused her to give herself to everyone she thought she could get something from. She does not realize that she is giving herself to false gods that in turn seek her own destruction (Hosea 2:1-5).

2. God releases judgment against Israel in order to break her delusion and shock her back into reality. She does not realize who the One is that truly loves her and is instead giving herself to false gods who are “false lovers.” They seek to destroy and consume her not tenderly love her as YHWH does (Hosea 2:6-9).
 3. God describes the intensity of His judgments. His judgments against Israel will be intense because her delusion is intense. His love is like a consuming fire. He desires to liberate her from her delusion and He must break off everything that keeps her in delusion (Hosea 2:8-13).
 4. God’s grand conclusion is that He will allure Israel, leading her into a desert where He can speak tenderly to her. God must bring Israel into a desert. She must be in a barren, arid place so that she can see who it is that truly loves her. The One that sought her out in the desert in the beginning (Hosea 2:3).
- C. God prepared specific judgments against Israel so that she would be forced into a place where He could speak tenderly to her. It was His burning love that was the fuel of His judgments. He had to get her to a place where she could hear His love and receive it.
1. Her delusion was so great that she could not hear His voice or receive her love. Severe judgments were the instrument that brought her into a position to receive His tender love.
 2. God is so intent on Israel’s love that He confidently proclaims that, after a season of severe judgment, Israel will again give herself to Him and call Him “husband” rather than “god.”
“There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. ‘In that day,’ declares the LORD, ‘you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’ [literally ‘my baal’]” – Hosea 2:15b-16

V. UNDERSTANDING HIS LOVE

- A. The intensity of God’s love is the reason for the intensity of His judgments. His judgments are deliberately designed to break off delusion and to position men to see Him rightly and experience His love.
1. God’s love is so intense and consuming that He is not content with being called “my god.” He will be called “my husband” by those who love Him because that is the intimacy that He desires with man and He will remove everything that hinders this.
 2. His love for mankind is so strong that He will have what He wants. He will have a people that know Him as “husband” and live in close relationship with Him and experience His love. His love cannot be denied. Many men will refuse Him, but He will not be refused forever. Many will be lost, but His judgments will also lead many into love.

3. His judgments are what free us from ourselves and position us to see Him rightly. Judgments break off delusion and we are left stripped and naked before Him. Stripped and naked, with all coping mechanisms removed, we have the option to respond in love. In His kindness, He has shown us our true condition. In that moment we can grow in offense, or we can receive His love.
 4. The glory of His judgments is that we deserve wrath because of our great sin, but He specifically tailors judgment so that it will draw us to Him in love rather than destroy us. His judgments always are fueled by a flame of love and always end in an invitation to love.
- B. God summarized His judgment of Israel to Hosea with a description of tender and faithful love. Hosea was experiencing the torrent of emotions that God experienced as he tried to love an unfaithful woman.
- C. Because Hosea had a unique experience of God's emotions, God gave Hosea perspective of His judgments. God wanted Hosea to connect to His tender heart of love in the midst of judgments that seemed severe though they were rightfully deserved. *Hosea understood this very well because he had been personally betrayed by the one he sought to love.*
- D. We will not survive the coming season unless we know the consuming nature of God's love. *When we begin to experience the fierceness of His anger, we must understand that His anger comes from the fierceness of His love.*
- E. Those who understand God's heart will receive great reward in the hour of judgment because all who respond to Him will receive the benefits of His love. He will allure us in the desert wastelands of His judgment so that He may speak tenderly to us. He will mercifully cut us off from everything that competed for our affections.
1. We must embrace this process. If we do not, we will become embittered and ultimately cut ourselves off from His love.
 2. God's desire is that we respond to His judgment that we may no longer know him as "god" but begin to know Him as "husband."
 3. The intensity of the judgments that are upon us will cause many to faint with fear and grow embittered against God, but we must be anchored to His heart and we must begin to instruct many because God's heart desire is to bring men to repentance so that they might be prepared for the restoration of all things.
 4. *The great need of the hour is prophet teachers who can instruct the earth in the ways of God and give perspective for God's judgments. We desperately need faithful witnesses with understanding because what is coming is so far beyond anything we have ever known.*