

Hosea 11:1-11, **'Father heart of God'**, July 31<sup>st</sup>  
Also Luke 12:13-21.

Last week Daniel preached Hosea 1, today our focus is on Hosea 11. The next two weeks, Isaiah 1 and 5, will be the focus, and then the last two weeks of August, Jeremiah 1 and 2. So we are soaking a little in the prophets. Our messages will be shorter than normal, as we are altogether as a church.

Hosea is one of the 12 minor prophets. These prophets are called Minor, not because they are seen as less important, but because of their length compared to the Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, those four known as Major Prophets.

We jump into Hosea 11. We will call this message – the Father heart of God.

At Missionary School, there were two books we had to read – one – Mountain Rain by Eileen Crossman and a second book, the Father heart of God by Floyd McClung, who served for a time in Amsterdam. We had to read and reflect on what the book inspired, challenged, even healed within us, over our image of God. The experience of OM was that increasing numbers of young missionaries, were struggling with their image of God...

Hosea 11 – is about the Father Heart of God...

Four parts to our reading. All 11 verses are words spoken by God through Hosea.

V1-4,

v5-7,

v8-9

and finally v10-11.

**V1-4. You could call this 'Parental love'.**

When you read 'the more they went away from me' this is a summary of the whole book in many ways. Most of the words around about judgement on Israel – the northern kingdom – as it has, in general, turned away from its worship of God. But there are other words, spoken which are about love and grace.

'When Israel was a child I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son.' Hosea has described – as you heard last week – as God as a husband and Israel as a wife.

Now, Father language is used.

Right at the start, before Israel could do anything – it was loved by God.

And yet, God goes on to say – the more they were called the more they went away from me. They drifted away. He describes how he, like a Father, helped Israel – Ephraim – to walk. He bent down to feed them. 'To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek.'

And yet – God says – they did not realize it was I who healed them.

This is amazing language – would these be words you would associate with God? This is God's own description of how he relates to his people.

Yet equally amazing were the two statements – he called them, but the more they were called, the more they moved away. The second was - they did not realize it was I who healed them.

They drifted away. I was thinking about why we can drift away. There are a number of reasons of course. One I want to mention today.

Spiritual warfare. At New Wine, I attended a series of seminars led by Open Doors, two of them were by a Kenyan OD worker. He reminded us of the spiritual warfare we are in. The devil like a prowling lion, looking for someone to devour, resist him, standing firm in the faith... Paul talks about when the day of evil comes, put on the spiritual armour. We have an adversary who is interested through whatever means to draw you, me, away from the Lord. Be alert.

They did not realize it was I who healed them.

#### **V5-7**

##### **Judgement will fall.**

They will be dispersed – return to Egypt, Assyria will rule.

Why – because they refuse to repent... My people are determined to turn from me...

They take the name on their lips – ‘ even though they call me God most High’... yet their lives, worship do not reply it. This is not judgement like in Judges – where Assyria will occupy and then leave, when a heroic faithful king is raised up. No. To exile. Taken from the land. As had been promised all the way back with Moses.

The Father Heart – again like a parent – he is totally loving for Israel. But they do not change, they want to turn away and so he will send them away.

To be loving is not about 'anything goes'. That is a great danger with God being described only as love. It ignores that he is holy. It suggests that if God is love, then anything is possible.

**V8-9. The Love of the Lord never ceases.**

It is not the end for Israel. How – can he give them up? How can he treat them like Admah and Zeboyim which were towns / villages around Sodom and Gomorrah – so destroyed.

He will have compassion, he loves them.

God then goes on to say: For I am God and not a man – the holy one among you.

The human nature is that once failed, we do not give a second chance, or take revenge...

God forgives.

**V10-11**

**Restoration.**

They will follow the Lord – or as another translation says – they will go after the Lord. There is a change of heart in the people. As Nehemiah 1 will state – God's promised, that if their hearts will change, he will restore them to the land.

He will roar and they will come.

Before when he called, they did not come and in fact they went further away.

Now he will roar and they will come – they will hear his voice and they will come from the lands.

They come, trembling, at the majestic God.

And God will settle them in their homes. As a parent helps his kids move and settle in, God will help them settle.

**Closing PRAYER.**