

## Hitting Close to Home The Book of Hosea

How did this video make you feel? It's likely true, that the closer this video hits home for you, the greater the emotional response it ignites within you!

I don't talk about feelings from the pulpit very often because feelings can be deceptive. But God has made us emotional beings that feel a wide range of emotions - joy, sadness, excitement, fear, worry, love, compassion, sorrow, etc.

God would not have made us this way if He didn't intend for our feelings, our emotions, to play a role in His redemptive plan!

The track record of God's people, all throughout history, is one of turning away from the One who entered into an everlasting covenant relationship with them!

God sent prophets (spokesmen) to reveal the truth about how often, & how far, the people's rejection of their God went! But their words were not enough!

Here in Hosea, God tried a different approach of getting through to His people! He let them feel their rejection thru a real life, close to home, illustration! It didn't change their hearts, but it did/does give us a sense of what God must feel

Back in 2019, I preached a 9-week series on the book of Hosea. For more information about Hosea and the book that bears his name I encourage you to go on our website or follow the link that was sent out in Friday's email!

But this morning, I don't want to just engage your mind, I want you to feel! B/c God can use our emotions to bring about transformation in us today.

Examples:

- As a Youth Pastor, I was able to minister far more effectively to teenagers who were living in broken homes, because I could empathize with them as one who shared that same experience!
- I know what it's like to be cheated on - not to the extent of Hosea, or the guy in the video, but I have known/felt that rejection as well (not once, but twice)! It is an awful feeling that I hope never to feel again!
- It's no secret that the human sexuality issue is dividing our society, & even the Church today. I am so grateful that as I seek to be faithful to what the Word of God declares on this topic, that God has allowed me to experience close relationships with those whom this issue hits very close to home!

Though our emotions should never be the sole deciding factor of what we believe, or how we live, they do help us to better understand what is at stake!

Sometimes we need to feel it, to better understand it! Whether we're talking about the examples I just shared, or poverty... race... incarceration... loss... etc.

God knew that His people needed to feel the weight of their sin & rejection, if they were ever going to repent and return to the Lord. Words were not enough, so he raised up Hosea to live out God's message, in the flesh!

**Hosea 1:1-11** – Don't just hear it, feel it!

- God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute, an unfaithful bride! And not only to marry her, but to have children with her, even illegitimate children!

vs. 2 - "Go take to yourself a wife of whoredom & have children of whoredom..."

Can you imagine marrying someone you knew would be unfaithful? Or raising your children, not knowing if they truly are your children?

Hosea had to feel what God was feeling in order to paint an accurate picture! vs. 2 - "for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord."

- God then commands Hosea to name the 3 children: "Jezreel" (bloodshed, destruction), "No Mercy", and "Not My People"

Last week we talked about the significance of our name! These are not the names however that anyone would ever want to live into!

Imagine what it must have felt like to bear these names! Imagine your name being "Uvalde...", or "Derek Chauvin...", or "Illegitimate/Bastard..."

I'm not trying to be vulgar, but I want us to feel it, like Hosea/his children. The closer it hits home, the more emotional response, the more real it is!

- **Hosea 1:10-11** - Punishment, wrath, rejection are not the end of the story! But they do serve the purpose of revealing what would have been, apart from God's everlasting love for His bride, despite her playing the whore!

The book of Hosea is a beautiful picture of a loving husband who never forsakes His bride! It points to who our God is in Jesus Christ (our perfect groom)!

God pursues us continually, removing every obstacle in the way! He loves us despite our sin, & overcomes our resistance with His mercy! Do we feel that?

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