

Pondering Christ in Hosea

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Well, hello, and welcome to Ponder by NorthernLife. We are having a conversation about the Word of the Lord as it was preached to us on Sundays and as we encounter it in our everyday lives. My name is Jack, I'm joined by Tristan, Ben and Jono.

And today we are talking about Christ in Hosea. We're reflecting on Jono's sermon in the night service on Christ in Hosea. Jono, did you want to summarise that for us?

Love to.

Hosea is a really powerful book of the Old Testament that tells a story that's quite unique.

God asks a prophet, Hosea, to marry an unfaithful woman to represent through his life what God himself is experiencing with his people who are an unfaithful spouse.

And so it's just an interesting book and a painful book to read when you think of what Hosea has asked to go through.

I focused in on a very special verse to me, a memory verse that I had a long time ago when I was, in our last podcast, we talked about special fillings of the spirit. And I had that when I was about 19.

And one of my early memory verses was this one, Hosea 10-12, sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, break up your fellow ground, seek the Lord until he comes, and showers righteousness on you.

And so I spent time unpacking that one verse, because I think it speaks to the context, which is probably 850-750-722, the lead up to the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria.

And this passage speaks in to anyone who is needing to be rescued from heading in the wrong direction and brought back to a renewed relationship with God.

Any reflections on that, Tristan and Ben?

Yeah, I enjoyed the passage that was selected because Hosea, we did this in college two weeks ago, and we basically spent most of the lecture looking at the mirroring between Gomer and what it looks like for us today as being unfaithful.

And I really enjoyed that agricultural richness of the passage in terms of, there's a lot to unpack in just one verse.

And it was really powerful to like just sit there and be showered, like just really just camp there for a second and recognise that there's still really like good gems in the overarching story of Hosea. So yeah, I enjoyed this.

I mean, it was nice to be there in person as well.

Oh, there's so much good stuff in there. I like the point especially about breaking up fallow ground.

It's quite a challenging question to think about what parts of my heart and my life are fallow and hard and need to be tilled and plowed and broken up that God might do a work. It's challenging.

And that actually leads me into our first question, Ben. Once we've identified fallow ground, whatever that may look like, what actually does the process of breaking it up and churning it up look like? Is that purely an intellectual thing?

Is there an action we might need to take? What does it mean to break up the fallow ground in our hearts?

I think it's just repentance. We talk about the word repent a lot because Jesus used the word a lot. The word in Greek is metanoia, which means to rethink your thinking.

Think about the way that you're thinking.

And that doesn't mean that repentance is only intellectual, but that it starts in the mind, and then having realised that you're heading in the wrong direction, changing your mind means changing every part of your life.

So breaking up the fallow ground is like, oh God, I've made a mess of my life. I am disobedient to your will in this part of my life. I'm holding on to control, clinging to my own will, not submitting to your will in this part of my life.

And I realised that repentance, metanoia, and then I do what is necessary to trust in God and to kind of be obedient to what he's leading me to. But I think repentance is what, that's the point you made in the sermon.

Yeah, I think a three way, like a three point thing to remember on what Ben was saying is something I grew up with is to first acknowledge, recognise, repent. So you acknowledge that there's some fallow ground within your heart.

You recognise that that's the Holy Spirit softening your heart to it. And then you repent afterwards.

Like that's just a good or helpful, like three point thing that I always kept in like my back pocket when I was like, when I recognise something, then it's, okay, what do I do now? That leads to repentance. So, yeah.

I covered it a bit in the sermon, but just reflecting on it now, I think it does have a lot to do with repentance for sure.

And as I said in the sermon, renouncement of vows of allegiance towards a way of living like a lordship, that is not the Lord.

So I want to realign lots of words with re, starting with re, but then there's often reconciliation, renewed reconciliation with the father, God the Father, but also sometimes other people, because my fellow ground has been hatred or unforgiveness to

others. So it could be I need to forgive others, be reconciled with them. And then there's a renewal.

So there's sort of a nurturing of, I talked about grass, the agricultural idea of breaking up the ground and then sowing again, and then you have to fertilise and water.

And so looking after it like that for renewal, and ultimately rejoicing in the new. So it's a process. It's the agricultural image is very helpful.

And maybe people don't realise that. It's like, break up your fellow ground. Okay, does that just happen?

Like, boom. Well, God in his wisdom gave the truth packaged in agricultural imagery. Jesus talks about sowing seed so much that the kingdom is something that takes time.

And I think that's just, the kingdom of God is one that's filled with light. And I always feel like it's very important to know that light doesn't exist without time and space.

You know, it's what light is, waves, and it needs to have time so that we can see it. And it's almost like the grace of God needs, often time, to see it shown up in my life.

Thinking about this idea of sowing righteousness, I wondered if we could give an example of one thing that people could do this week to practically sow righteousness in their lives.

It may be something you've experienced in the past or that you've seen done well. What is something that listeners could take away? It's like, okay, I'm gonna do this this week to try and sow righteousness in my life.

Well, it's really important to put in context, the Hosea idea is coming out of a world of injustice that Amos speaks to.

It's just people are not treating others like God wants them to. So to sow righteousness from the context of Hosea, the 8th century BC, is to do right.

Stand up for someone, speak out against a bully, do something that God would do if he had your skin on. That's what it is to sow righteousness, is to do good, act justly. In fact, some commentators talk about this being quite similar to Micah.

Act justly, walk humbly with our God, and love mercy.

One thing I've tried to take up over the last month is actively praying for people when they're in front of me. Instead of saying, I'll pray for you later, I'm like, no, let's take time now, and let's pray for you now.

Because I think there's a real sense of power when you're actively praying for someone and they're right in front of you. And it's personal and it's intimate.

And it's, yeah, I think something that really sows righteousness is actively praying for someone in front of you rather than saying, I'll pray for you.

To give another third angle, Proverbs 3 verse 27 says, Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.

And so I often think about this, we said in sermons a few times, Court and I go for a walk every day down Pretoria parade. And sometimes you see, I probably shouldn't say this because I don't do it all the time.

Sometimes you see rubbish on the ground. It's like, oh, I could pick that up and put it in the bin, which is right there. It's a tiny thing that no one's going to see, no one really cares about, but it is a good thing that I'm able to do.

Or likewise, a friend who's discouraged, who comes to you, you can pray for them, you can also speak words of life into them.

So it's like, you're sowing righteousness, you're sowing the seeds of justice and goodness when you do the good that God puts in front of you to do. And that could be any number of things.

Yeah, I've recently discovered a medieval understanding of something called the Seven Acts of Mercy, which is based on Matthew 25, where Jesus says, whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me.

And so the Seven Acts of Mercy, let me see if I remember, is feed someone who's hungry, give water to someone who's thirsty, clothe someone who's naked, visit someone who's in prison, visit someone who is sick, bury some, engage in the burial of the

dead, show kindness to strangers. That's like that idea of the Seven Acts of Mercy. Like some of them are really simple, like going to visit someone who's sick.

If you know someone who's sick or in hospital, going and visiting them, okay, it takes a bit of time, is pretty easy to do. You know, cooking a meal for someone.

They don't even have to, you know, be someone who's starving, but say, hey, come over, we'll provide a free meal for you. These are things that people have learnt to do.

And so those are, that's what came to mind for me, I guess, when I was thinking about it.

So finally, what is, you talked about this idea of reaping unfailing love, this beautiful idea of-

Reap the fruit.

Reaping the fruit, sorry, of unfailing love. This beautiful idea of just appreciating the love of God for us each day.

I wondered if you guys could talk about a particular time or moment where you really felt like you were reaping the fruit of unfailing love, or alternatively being showered in righteousness as the other promise.

I think of that in the context of family, that when we have kind of big family dinner, it runs all together again. There's just so much love in that household with, you know, there's grandkids coming and spouses adding to the family.

And we only have the love that we have now and enjoy the sweet times because of literally decades of sowing the fruit of love from my parents, my grandparents.

And so now my family is so blessed, I'm so blessed to reap the fruit of love in this family that has not come about easily, but it's come out, come about over a very long time.

That's cool.

It's just a blessing.

Your mom's going to enjoy hearing that on her drive home. I feel that pretty well every time I'm at church and our amazing team leading us in worship.

And it's just that time where you're focused on the Lord in such a simple, clean, uncomplicated way. And you're offering praise. And in that moment, you're just feeling the love of God, because everything's right.

It's just this lovely simplicity about the people of God meeting together and just all together worshipping.

I had a very real moment yesterday in the morning, when I wasn't in the sermon for Joel, I was downstairs with the kids. And we looked at, we just started off the series on Fruits of the Spirit.

And we looked at John 15.5 at the beginning, where it was where he speaks about, I'm divine, you are the branches. And we focused on abide in me, like that part of staying connected.

And I just, I made up the silly activity of the kids holding hands around the room and saying, and just trying to shake off each other and say, that's a, if that's a bad day and you're still connected, that's what, that's the mind, that's Jesus,

that's holding on, that's staying connected. And all of them were like, wow, wow. And it was, I got so emotional in that moment. I just pivoted to do a game, so I wouldn't start crying.

But the more powerful moment was coming upstairs and hearing both of the sermons saying, referencing that verse, referencing John 15, five, looking at the spirit, looking at the fruits of the spirit.

And I had this moment in my head, I was like, surely, Lord, the parents are going to ask a kid, what did you do in Sunday school? Oh, we did this. And then the parents are going to be like, oh, we looked at that upstairs.

And then there's just a conversation that could happen about God within the car ride home. Like just a genuine moment of the Lord being present in saying, we're connected through this, we're connected through God's word.

And most of those families aren't like church families, church going families. So that's just so, it was a real moment yesterday, which was, yeah, it was amazing.

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That's beautiful.

And none of that was planned. It was all, it was all, it all came together by God's grace.

All right. Well, with that beautiful image of the fruit of unfailing love, I think we'll wrap up there. Thank you all for listening.

Thank you guys for coming on the pod, and we will catch you next week.

Bye bye.