

Message #9

Hosea 7:1-16

God does not want a superficial relationship with His people. God wants a deep, personal relationship with His people. The problem is many of God's people prevent that from actually happening because they want to spend their lives fooling around with things of no value and spend their lives fooling around with things that actually prevent God from having a deep, personal relationship with His own family.

In **verse 1** we see that God's desire is to heal the relationship between Him and His people. That is His desire for Israel, that is His desire for the church and that is His desire for individual believers. **It is very clear from the opening words of chapter 7 that God does have the ability and the power to heal a relationship with His people, no matter how sinful they have been.**

But the problem is clearly stated in **verse 2** of this chapter; God is clear to point out that His own people's wicked deeds "are all around them." Hosea is like a medical doctor who is analyzing the spiritual health of God's people and as one commentator said, "The diagnosis is very bad."

Whenever God thinks about healing the relationship between Him and His people He remembers "all their wickedness," which they have not faced nor admitted (**verse 2**). As **verse 1** says, He uncovers the perverse things that His people are doing; He sees the evil works they are involved in and He sees how they are actually living lives that are false. But His own people are not under any conviction about any of this. They do not even think they need to get right with God. As **verse 2** says, "they do not consider in their hearts" the need to turn to God.

Do not kid yourself, God's own people can go to religious worship services and pretend to be right with God, when behind the scenes their lives are involved in perverse and evil things. They can be living a life that is false.

They are so out of tune in their relationship with God that when God permits thieves and bandits and robbers to raid His own people, they don't get it. They don't understand that the reason all of the negative things are happening is because God sees all of the evil and remembers all of the wickedness (**verse 2**).

According to **verse 3**, God's people were more interested in pleasing worldly people than they were Him. Their wickedness and their lying made kings and princes of the world happy. They were more interested in pleasing the political leadership of the world than they were God.

Let's face it. There are many churches today that will support gay rights and abortion and most of the political world will applaud them. In fact, in some cases the government will fund some of these religious institutions because they agree with them. They support wickedness and murder. Many who say they are Christian are more interested today in pleasing worldly leaders than God. Not much has changed since the days of Hosea.

So in Hosea 7 what God says is this:

MY OWN PEOPLE ARE SO FAR REMOVED FROM A TRUE RELATIONSHIP WITH ME BECAUSE OF THEIR SIN THAT THEY DO NOT EVEN RECOGNIZE THEIR PATHETIC CONDITION AND THEIR NEED TO TURN TO GOD, SO GOD WILL PERMIT HORRIFIC THINGS TO HAPPEN TO HIS PEOPLE.

What is described in this chapter should be a warning to us as a nation. It should be a warning to us as a church and it should be a warning to us as an individual. It is possible to become so calloused in our sin and in evil stuff that we do not even recognize that God is hitting us with a string of negatives in an attempt to get us to turn back to Him. Let's face it; Israel has not recognized this for 2400 years. She just doesn't get it.

Now this is a tough chapter to analyze. There are a series of at least three "like" or "as" similes that are figures of speech which are used to compare Israel's condition to their sin and relationship with God. Now the point of these analogies is to state God's case against His own people. Just as Gomer had been consistently unfaithful to Hosea, Israel had been consistently unfaithful to God.

SIMILE #1 – God's own people were all adulterers like an oven heated by the baker. **7:4-10**

Now the simile begins with the charge that God's people are all adulterers (**7:4**); then Hosea says they are like an oven heated by a baker who stops doing what he is supposed to do. He doesn't tend the fire and he stops taking care of the bread (**verse 4**). So the fire just burns hotter and the leaven just spreads. This baker just lets the fire burn and the leaven spread and doesn't do anything about it.

This is a great metaphor for sexual immorality. Once it starts burning and spreading, it takes over and is hard to put out. Passions burn hotter and hotter and the sin and the leaven spread.

In fact, these people of God were so pathetic that on the day of the king, which would be some special political day, they were drinking to the point of being sick. Now what is actually described here is probably the average political day. This is the "royal routine." These guys drink all day and every day. In fact, the princes leave their responsibilities and drink to the point that they are sick. They had totally abandoned their discipline and their responsibilities and get drunk.

The king stretched out His hand with these drunken scoffers (**v. 5**). You do not expect to find your leader in a bar with a bunch of drunks. But this was the description of Israel's leader. This was the description of a leader who supposedly said he is right with God.

I had a pastor friend, who is now with the Lord, who years ago got a call one night from the wife of a man on his board and the wife told him that her husband had just gone to the bar.

Well, my pastor friend got in his car and went to the bar and sure enough the guy was sitting in the bar at a table.

My pastor friend went to the table, sat down, looked this guy straight in the face and said, “What are you doing here? This is no place for a leader to be, now let’s get out of here.” Well, he eventually removed that man from being a leader. Back in Hosea’s day that leader would have fit in with every other leader. They were all at the bar drinking.

In fact, notice that after saying they stretch out their hands with scoffers, **verse 6** begins with an explanatory conjunction “for.” God says in **verse 5** that the king makes alliances with people who are evil. In **verse 6** they unite with people whose hearts are like an evil oven. They plot and plan and they smolder their evil all night long and in the morning they burst into a flame of evil action and debauchery. These are people who go to bed not thinking about God but thinking about evil sin and they wake up the next day and pursue it.

According to **verse 7**, “all of them” are burning to do evil things. These evil people come in and actually take over the leadership and no one calls on God for help. They consume godly leaders and not one person calls out to God for help. **God could help and God could heal, but His own people don’t get this point. They don’t even think of turning to God.**

According to **verse 8**, God’s people are mixing it up with the world. Instead of them being transformed, they are being conformed to the world. **God’s people lost their godly identity. They fit in nicely with the world.** They are like an unturned cake in that they don’t turn to God; they are content to drift along in the world and mix it up with the nations. God’s people were not affecting the world, the world was affecting them.

According to **verse 9**, God’s people were in such a spiritual stupor that they did not even know they had no strength and that their own hair was turning gray. They were so immune to their own condition before God that they did not see the truth about themselves.

Now tell me this—what person do you know that is not aware of the fact that their hair is turning gray? What man or woman do you know who does not spot gray hair? Gray hair is so instantly spotted that they have a hard time keeping Grecian formula and dye on the shelves in stores. There are four or five main colors of hair—blonde, brunette, brown, red and black. Some claim brunette and brown are the same and others say they are not.

Then from these main colors you can create various shades. All of this is designed to cover the gray. People are on the lookout for the gray. Most people stand before a mirror trying to spot any gray hair they can. But these people were not even aware of what was happening in their own personal lives.

There is an interesting verse of Scripture in Proverbs 20:29 that says, “The glory of young men is their strength and the honor of old men is their gray hair.”

Now carefully notice this verse because there is nothing in the verse about the gray hair of a woman. God does not say gray hair is the honor of old women.

We of course may somewhat speculate as to why: 1) He knew most women would not have gray hair. Somehow it would mysteriously disappear. 2) He knew most women do not really get old. They hover around the age 39.

Now gray hair on a man signals a couple of things. It signals that he is aging and does not have the strength he once had. It can be a signal that one has some wisdom and has lived some life and is mature in his walk with God. Well in this case, the nation was not wise and the people did not realize their own deterioration because they didn't even see the gray hair.

These people were not able to recognize their own condition. They weren't even sharp enough to spot gray hairs. These people would not look into the Word of God and let it show the mirror of their own spiritual condition. Their spiritual condition was pathetic and they didn't even spot it.

I am convinced that this is the condition of our nation and of most churches, and of most individuals. They do not recognize their own pathetic condition. Many go to church and are happy with their traditions. In fact, they will hold more to their traditions than to the Word of God. They do not even recognize the fact that they are not close to God. They are not walking in a close relationship with Jesus Christ. We all need to check ourselves daily to see our real condition.

As **verse 10** says, God's people were proud and they did not return to God or seek God. Do not miss this, the reason why most people will not turn to God and to His Word is because they are proud. They are proud of their worship; they are proud of their religion; they are proud of themselves. Pride will always keep people from returning to the Lord.

These people were like an oven that burned for sin and evil every single day. But they were not on fire for the Word of God to do the will of God.

This passage clearly warns us that we better be taking an honest look at ourselves every day. We need to be analyzing where we are in our relationship with God.

SIMILE #2 – God's own people were like a silly dove that does not have any sense. **7:11-15**

God now changes the metaphor from a non-functioning oven to a non-thinking dove. Now what is described here is probably a dove or homing pigeon that lacked the sense to find its way back home.

Instead of God's people finding their way back to God, they were reaching out to Egypt and Assyria (**v. 11**). Doesn't this sound a lot like what is happening in many churches today? They are reaching out to the world for help and support.

Their whole philosophy is let us do things that will bring the world into the church. Let us come up with a plan to please the world of Egypt and Assyria.

God says in **verse 12** that what I will do as they continue to move in the wrong direction is I will frustrate their attempts to get help from others and trap them and chastise them by letting them go into captivity. **Do not miss this point: God can let His own people be taken captive by evil powers, evil forces, evil sins.**

God says “woe” to His own people (**7:13**). That is very serious business. When God uses that word “woe” it is the severest kind of judgment that He will permit. What a “woe” judgment means is that the worst kind of disaster will hit His people and He will cause it.

God lists at least six reasons why He would bring “woe” judgments against His own people:

(Reason #1) - You have strayed from Me. (**7:13a**)

(Reason #2) - You have rebelled against Me. (**7:13b**)

(Reason #3) - You speak lies against Me. (**7:13c**)

When people are not right with God, they invent their own view of God that isn't even true. God loves us just the way we are. We are right with God. God celebrates your immoral behavior. These are lies.

(Reason #4) - You do not cry to Me from your hearts. (**7:14a**)

This is important to see. It is one thing to cry to God from your mouth, it is quite another to cry from your heart.

(Reason #5) - You turn away from Me. (**7:14b**)

(Reason #6) - You devise evil against Me. (**7:15b**)

God says because you have done these things—I will send destruction, not redemption against My own people (**7:14**). When they “wail on their beds” (**v. 14**), I will not deliver them because they are not honestly dealing with Me from their hearts.

SIMILE #3 – God's own people were like a deceitful bow. **7:16**

God says My people are like a deceitful bow. They do not shoot straight. They are religious people who are deceitful. They turn to every direction except upward. They turn this way and that way, but not upward. They do not turn to God. They do not look to be right with God.

So God says I will bring them down. They will “fall by the sword.”

Do not let your pride or your neglect to honestly analyze yourself, prevent you from having a healthy relationship with God. God is prepared to heal you from any sin if you will call out to Him from your heart.