

LOVE WITHOUT LIMIT

Faithless Love

I wonder how good we are at reading warning signs?

I was looking at a jar of peanut butter the other day and it said: May contain nuts', well I hope it does.

Or when getting a coffee from McDonald's it says: This contains hot contents.

Do these warnings change our minds?

Do we take them for granted?

Rather than explaining each verse in these 2 chapters I think God wants to show us how not to get into these places but return to him.

You may have heard this before but it made me laugh:

This is the transcript of a radio conversation of a US naval ship with Canadian authorities off the coast of [Newfoundland](#) in October, 1995. Radio conversation released by the [Chief of Naval Operations](#) 10-10-95.

Americans: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision.

Canadians: Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision.

Americans: This is the Captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

Canadians: No. I say again, you divert YOUR course.

Americans: This is the aircraft carrier [USS Lincoln](#), the second largest ship in the United States' [Atlantic fleet](#). We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I demand that YOU change your course 15 degrees north, that's one five degrees north, or countermeasures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

Canadians: This is a [lighthouse](#). Your call.

Hosea warns the people time and again to change but they don't.

God is our lighthouse we may want him to divert his love from us, but God just says I am not changing it's your call.

Hosea 4 & 5 is right in the middle of the mess, and Gods judgement on Israel
lan entitled Faithless love....

There is no faithfulness shown to God by the people, I wonder can we love someone but have no faith in their abilities, no faith that they will meet our expectations? Do we give up on people too easily?

I expect over the years we may have had to deal with many difficult relationships, and people do deal with difficult relationships. God had a whole nation and it does not get much worse than in these two chapters.

Or could Hosea say the same from God about our society? Or do we see our world through rose-colored glasses?

We can detach ourselves from this passage thinking that was then, but this is now, surely, we are different!

There is a plaque at Auschwitz Concentration Camp that says: The one who does not remember history is bound to live through it again (George Santayana). A place once visited never forgotten.

When I am struggling with my faith, I am right alongside Israel in this passage, and I can drift from God so easily:

Hosea 4 1-3

Hear the word of the Lord you Israelites, because the Lord has a charge to bring, against you who live in the land.

There is no faithfulness, no love, no knowledge of God in the land

There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery

They break all bonds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed

Because of this the land mourns and all who live in it waste away

The beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying

I am not sure how many of us look underneath societies lid, life is brutal out in the real world, I am a Foster-carer and I hear stories that would be too farfetched for East Enders, about the damaged lives of children coming into care.

I volunteer as a chaplain at the YMCA Foyer in West Green and help cook a meal once a week, and I hear from teenagers and young adults about their struggles with ADHD, Autism, Anxiety, self-harm, depression and the abandonment by the care system. Deep down they are good people, you have to see them for the people they are, not the mess they bring with them, life has just taken them down a different path.

Some young people at work were talking about cocaine and commenting on how easy it was to get hold of it, it seems to me that it's as easy to get drugs nowadays as it was cigarettes back in my day.

Turnover of the pornographic film industry generates more revenue in the states than all films made in Hollywood with revenues in the multi billions. Only this week on Tuesday on the news, 1 in 9 children primary school age will be exposed to pornography.

The press is full of issues around Global warming, our land is moaning and we have all watched on nature programs the predictions of how many birds, fish and animals have already become extinct and will continue to die over the next decade.

It's seems to me we have the same challenges as Hosea did, how do we engage with a world that does not want to know God, at face value.

Even for us life is busy, and we get tired and lose our way,

It may sound a bit old fashioned but payer and staying close to God and his word seems to be key to surviving this worlds challenges; the gift of peace that passes understanding; it is better Gods way - not because we have to but because we want to.

Even though people come to church, Gods people can become distracted and divided about religious issues, there is a danger in church that we focus on what divides us more than what unites us. How did church grow in the early days? Because love was present amongst them.

I wonder how saintly Hosea was, did he struggle with life? Back in the old testament the Holy Spirit came upon the Prophets to speak Gods word, so what happened when the spirit was not with him, how well did Hosea do?

David cries out in Psalm 51: 'Do not take your spirit from me,' how is your relationship with the Holy Spirit going?

Our life group has watched the film Amazing Love on YouTube, which is a contemporary film on Hosea, in it you see Hosea crying out: 'Why do I have to stay with Gomer?'

But he does, because he trusts in God's bigger and better purpose for his life and our lives, God never gives up on us. And Hosea is faithful to God.

Thankfully the Holy Spirit does not just come upon us for the odd prophecy, he has pitched his tent in us and in our heart. Jesus said all authority on Earth has been given to do his work. Paul said the spirit will lead us into all truth.

In Hosea v 6

My people are destroyed from the lack of knowledge, this knowledge was the knowledge of God, his ways and his word.

In the book of Revelations when writing to the Church in Ephesus it says: 'Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen.'

What is your first love?

I used to think my first love was Jesus, and it is, but God, in the time I spent with him chatting and praying with him, but God, reminded me that an aspect of my first love was also his word.

What was at the heart of, and foundation of, Jesus ministry? The Word of God.

We often read in John 1 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.'

God has only ever spoken once to me in an audible voice, and all God said was read. Through the ups and downs of life, Gods word has been the rock on which I stand; worship songs inspired by his word.

I heard a survey the other week that most people would rather pray than read Gods word. Prayer is important but a relationship is built on His word.

How is your relationship with Gods word?

How often do we read Gods word? Does God's word set the standard for our lives?

Hosea

But let no one bring a charge,
let no one accuse another,
for your people are like those
who bring charges against a priest.
⁵ You stumble day and night,
and the prophets stumble with you.
So I will destroy your mother—
⁶ my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.
“Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also reject you as my priests;
because you have ignored the law of your God,
I also will ignore your children.
⁷ The more priests there were,
the more they sinned against me;
they exchanged their glorious God^h for something disgraceful.
⁸ They feed on the sins of my people
and relish their wickedness.
⁹ And it will be: Like people, like priests.
I will punish both of them for their ways
and repay them for their deeds.
¹⁰ “They will eat but not have enough;
they will engage in prostitution but not flourish,
because they have deserted the LORD
to give themselves ¹¹ to prostitution;
old wine and new wine
take away their understanding.
¹² My people consult a wooden idol,
and a diviner’s rod speaks to them.
A spirit of prostitution leads them astray;
they are unfaithful to their God.

More than any Generation we have access to Gods word, be it through a bible, an app, or a daily scripture to ponder on.

Eugene here produces his own verses, one every day and puts it on his Facebook site, and we have a daily prayer meeting except Saturdays in the Church. I am using the Bible Project materials, going through the bible in a year.

God's word is a bit like eating we need 3 square meals a day to keep us healthy however small, yes we can fast, and yes we can skip meals and will be OK, but over time the less we eat the weaker we will become, until we die.

I have spoken to a few people recently who have been struggling with their faith, not from this Church, but the underlying message from them was that they had not read Gods word for themselves for a number of years and thus drifted from God.

The Israelites have drifted from God

V 6 My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge

God says they consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood.

I have tried it - the bible in one hand and a stick of wood in the other - I did not get a lot back from the stick.

It might seem strange to us, as we would not worship a wooden idol, but we have many idols in our lives - I suspect, money, mobile phones, TV, hobbies time to do our own thing, living life with our own agenda.

When God invited people to his banquet, they all came back with excuses, I am busy does x,y and z.

When I did not know God, I looked for love in all the wrong places, put my trust in all the wrong things, because I knew no different, I had no idea of the life I could have as a Christian, a life of freedom and hope because Jesus died for me.

Life is not a bed of roses, being a Christian is far from it, but at least I have a manual to follow, someone who loves me for me, provides a peace in the midst of the storm - and we have each other to build us up.

V16 says

The Israelites are stubborn, like a stubborn heifer, how can the Lord pasture them like lambs in a meadow?

Are we going to be like a stubborn heifer, Like the ship's captain who would not budge, listen to wisdom and change direction?

V 2 They break all bounds and bloodshed follows bloodshed

When we stop following Gods ways life goes from worse to worse, by this I mean we drift in our relationship with God further and further away. And God just waits for us to come back to our senses.

I remember Nicky Gumble shared a story how he volunteered to take over as a referee at a football match, whilst waiting for the proper ref to arrive.

It did not take long before the first injuries started, rules were not being followed - was he was offside; where's my free kick; penalty; another player was injured; the game was in chaos. Until the experienced ref arrived.

He set the tone, the boundaries of the game, players could excel without the fear of a vicious tackle and the game was played at its best.

God gives us the guidance to enjoy life, through reading his word, prayer and the Holy Spirit and that unlike Nicky we have Jesus who can bring order to our lives if we come back to God and live life his way.

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