

What we are like and what God is

02-July-2017

(Hosea 7:13-16; Titus 2:11-15)

Good Morning Church Family!

It would be good to have your Bibles opened up to Hosea chapter 7

There's the usual outline in the bulletin to follow and take notes, if you wish

Intro/Metaphors & Similes

One of my favourite movies is Forrest Gump

Many of you have probably watched it?

It has some great lines in it

Like:

"Jenny and me was like peas and carrots - we were"

"My momma used to say life is like a box of chocolates - you never know what you're gonna get"

"Momma always said - stupid is as stupid does"

These quotes are actually metaphors and similes

In our growth groups this week - we had some fun with metaphors and similes

[Powerpoint 1-Metaphor]

A metaphor is:

a word or phrase used to compare two unlike objects, ideas, thoughts or feelings to provide a clearer description

Examples:

You are drowning in a sea of grief – you're so hurt it's like drowning in a sea not filled with water but with grief and sadness

Or

Your heart is broken – your heart is not literally broken into pieces but you just feel so very sad and hurt

A simile is metaphor where the word like or as is used:

[Powerpoint 2-Simile]

Some examples are - and we use them all the time

As brave as a lion

As happy as Larry – whoever Larry is?

As light as a feather

They fought like cats and dogs

Well that went down like a lead balloon

Hosea chapter 7 has heaps of metaphors and similes to describe Israel

[Powerpoint 3-Hosea 7-Metaphors/Similes]

Metaphors like:

Ephraim is a flat loaf not turned over (v8) - which means their worship of God is half-baked or half-hearted

His hair is sprinkled with gray but he doesn't notice (v9) - it's describing someone getting old without realizing it - and that's what Israel was like - they didn't realize how far they were from God

Hosea chapter 7 also has some similes like:

They are adulterers burning like an oven (v4)

Their hearts are like an oven (v6)

All of them are as hot as an oven (v7)

Ephraim is like a dove (v11) – bird-brained

In our section of Hosea 7 this morning - from verses 13 to 16

There is one more simile used to describe Israel

[Powerpoint 4-Hosea 7:16-Simile]

And it's in verse 16

Israel – they are like a faulty bow

What would that suggest?

Well...

They are unreliable - like a faulty bow and arrow would be - you couldn't rely on a faulty bow and arrow to hit the target

So Israel are unreliable - God can't depend on them!

Their worship of God is off the mark - off target - not directed at God at all!

It also suggests - they can't shoot straight!

They are not straight shooters

A straight shooter is an honest and up-front person

So if Israel is like a faulty bow - they can't shoot straight - so they are dishonest - and they are not up-front - they are always hiding or deceitful

What Israel and US are like (Hosea 7:13-16)

Verse 16 summarizes what Israel is like - a faulty bow

And verses 13 to 16 - describe why God comes to the conclusion they are like a faulty bow

[Powerpoint 5-What Israel and Us are like]

And I wonder if any of these descriptions describe what we're like too?

Look at verse 13 -[They have strayed from me](#)

To keep the metaphors and similes going...

They are like a stray dog - whose given up on their owner and gone walkabout

That's what Israel is like - they've given up on their owner - the One True God - and gone walk about - worshipping false gods - and hanging with ungodly neighbours like Egypt and Assyria

What about us?

Are we like a stray dog - we've strayed from God's rules, God's word, God's people - and we're following our own rules - or no rules at all - and hanging with ungodly people?

Still in verse v13 - God says [they have rebelled against me](#)

When I think of rebellion - I immediately think about rebellious teenagers

When we use that metaphor - Israel is a rebellious teenager

Straight away a hundred thoughts hit you - don't they?

That's what's so good about a metaphor isn't it?

In what ways might we be rebellious against God?

Perhaps if we start with the 10 commandments and check which ones we have trouble with? Or which ones we totally ignore? Or perhaps we even grade the 10 commandments - murder is more serious than telling a little lie

God doesn't think so?

He sees breaking any of His rules - as rebellion

Do we need to have rethink about our obedience to His rules?

(pause)

Still in verse 13

God says Israel **speaks about Him falsely**

That basically means telling lies about God

In what ways could we speak falsely about God?

Maybe we might say to ourselves or others - God will understand our sin?

It's only a white lie?

After all I'm only human?

I try to be good!

The commandments are just guidelines!

Or maybe we deliberately misquote the Bible or quote some other source instead of the Bible

Is Jesus central in our thinking and in our faith?

Do we recognize Him as the only way to be right with God?

Do our actions and words line up with our faith - if not we're speaking falsely about God?

Then in v14 - God says Israel

Does not cry for God from their hearts – they just weep on their beds

Basically instead of genuinely and sincerely asking God to help - from the bottom of their hearts (there's another metaphor) - they just cry in bed and whinge and moan?

What about us?

Do we sincerely get down on our knees and ask God to help

Or do we just whinge and complain -

That God is not real - or God is not listening - or God is not answering me?

Are we trusting and waiting on the Lord? In everything? In some things?

(pause)

Instead of crying out to God

Still in verse 14

Israel (depending on the translation in your Bibles) - they either slash themselves or gather together – appealing to their gods for grain and new wine

What this means is

They are seeking help and blessings from the wrong place

Instead of totally relying on the One True God

They are relying on either self-harm to get the false gods to bless them with food and wine - or they are gathering together in worshipping false gods to ask for food and wine

What about us?

What false gods do we have?

Plenty I expect

But the number one false god we have is SELF

If we're coming to church and leaving asking what did I get out of church today

Then we're asking the wrong question

It should be what did *God* get out of my worship today?

And what did *God's* people get out of my worship today?

We're living in a society which has a consumer mentality

And that translates into how we view church and religion...

It's almost like NutraSweet religion (another metaphor) - all sweetness and no nutrition!

It won't be long before we have drive-through churches? Perhaps there are already some?

Once we start thinking life is all about US

We've missed the mark!

It's about bringing glory to *God*

All we think and say and do - should point to *God* and His Son *Jesus*

And as people look at us - they are reminded of *God*

Because they see *God's* love in us

Whereas in verse 14

The Israelites are not turning to *God* or turning others to *God*

They are turning away from God

That's bound to happen when we have SELF as a false god

[Powerpoint 6-Hosea 7:15]

Finally in verse 15

Even though God has

Trained them and strengthened them –

How is He repaid?

By them plotting evil against Him

They are basically traitors to God

God is the one who has always been there for them

God is the one who provided everything for them

But they've betrayed Him by disobedience, rebellion and false worship

What about us?

How serious are we about our relationship with God

Are we betraying Him?

Is He our first priority or an after-thought?

Is God a Sunday only God for us?

More metaphors!

Is God a Mr Fix It God in times of trouble?

Is God a Genie in the Bottle God?

(pause)

What God IS (Hosea 7:13c and Titus 2:11-15)

Well...

That's what Israel and US are like

What about God?

What metaphors and similes can we use for Him?

[Powerpoint 7-What God is]

Well - have a look at verse 13

Despite all Israel's faults

Despite all our faults

God longs to redeem us

God is like a pawn shop ticket

We're on the shelf in the pawn shop (Cash Converters these days)

And we've been sold to the pawn shop -

Sold into our sinful natures and lives

And God comes calling to the pawn shop

And He buys us back for Himself

As His treasured possession

The crazy thing is - He already owns us

But He buys us back - just like Hosea bought his wife, Gomer, back - in Hosea chapter 3

But it cost God a lot!

To find out what God IS then

Turn with me to Titus 2 in our NT passage

Titus 2

From verses 11 to 15

Here's what God IS

God is merciful

He offers us grace

To keep the metaphors going

God's Grace is a Free Gift

It doesn't cost us anything

But it costs the giver of the free gift

That's God

It costs Him His Son - Jesus

It cost Jesus His life

He died for our sin

And the free gift it says in verse 11 - that we get - is salvation

Salvation means being saved from the punishment of sin

That punishment is physical death and spiritual death - separated from God forever

But Jesus offers a way out of that punishment

By saving us from this punishment and taking it upon Himself

So to use another metaphor

Salvation is Jesus on the Cross

To use a simile - Jesus is like a Superhero

He rescues us from all wickedness - it says in verse 14

And He purifies us

To use another simile

Jesus is like a sterilising unit

It's like putting babies bottles in a sterilising unit to get the bottles pure and clean

That's what Jesus does for us - he puts us in a sterilising unit - and washes us clean of all our sins - and puts all those sins and stains on Him - and we come out of the sterilising unit - all clean and forgiven - and right before God

Our Response to who God IS (Titus 2:12)

So if we agree this morning

That we are not much different to the rebellious Israelites

And if we agree and believe that Jesus is the way to be right with God

And if we agree that God is like a redeeming ticket in a pawn shop (Cash Converters)

And if we agree that God is a free gift - which the Bible calls Grace

Then what should our response be this morning to God's grace

[Powerpoint 8-Response]

Well it's there in verse 12 of Titus 2

It says that God's Grace in giving us the free gift of Jesus

Should teach us

To Say "NO" to 2 things:

1. Say No to ungodliness - saying No to anything that is contrary to God's rule

For example:

What we say. Do we have a potty mouth? Do we use highly sexual words and sexual innuendo? Do we use foul language, bad tempered and angry words, do we tear people down with words or build them up?

What about our behaviour? Is our behaviour something worth copying? Does it model what God would expect?

2. And Say No to worldly passions - stuff that will lead us away from God - and lead us to indulge ourselves

Examples:

A great desire to be rich or famous or powerful

Impulsive spending

Lusting after one sexual conquest after another

Lusting after someone else's partner

Addicted to pornography, gambling, alcohol, drugs and technology

So jealous of people - we want what they have - even more and better if possible

Taking advantage of weaker people

Greed - we're not satisfied with what we have - we want more and more

Pride - we want so much to be important - we won't so much to be patted on the back - we want so much to be the centre of attention
We're consumed with hatred for people - you wish them harm

We need to say NO to all of this stuff

And God's grace also teaches us - in v12

To says "YES"

to living self-controlled, upright and godly lives

This can only be done by saying No to ungodliness and no to worldly passions!

So remember these 3 things

Being a Christian means

- a. God is forgiving, but that's no excuse to keep on sinning
- b. It means - being a Godly example for others to follow
- c. It means - it doesn't matter if everyone else is doing it, wrong is still always wrong!

Challenge

So let me leave you with a challenge - some homework to do

You can share it with me next time we're talking

[Powerpoint 9-Challenge]

To keep the metaphor and simile idea going

I'd like us to write down:

I was once a -----

I am now ----

I want to be ---

Here's mine:

I was once a - lost and selfish boy - like the prodigal son - off partying and thinking life was all about me and my selfish wants and needs - and never a thought for anyone but me! Stupid is as stupid does!

I am now - like the returned prodigal son - who has run back into the arms of his loving father - realizing what a dill-brain, I was, and happy to be forgiven - and to just be one of the Father's hired hands - happy to be the Father's servant

I want to be - a servant of the Gospel - the Good News of Jesus - helping and serving more people to come to know Jesus - and then be the doorkeeper in the House of the Lord - welcoming them into Heaven - as they arrive!

You can work on yours.

And then pray and ask God to help you to become more like Jesus!

So...

What we've learnt this morning is:

We are like the sinful Israelites

AND

God is our salvation from sin - in His Son Jesus

So - as Titus 2:12-13 says

Go and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ

Let's pray...