

Hosea 5:15–16:2, “Torn, Struck Down, and Raised”
3/22/20, Fourth Sunday in Lent
Pastor Alex Amiot

Hosea 5:15–16:2 (NKJV)

¹⁵ I will return again to My place
Till they acknowledge their offense.
Then they will seek My face;
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”

¹ Come, and let us return to the Lord;
For He has torn, but He will heal us;
He has stricken, but He will bind us up.

² After two days He will revive us;
On the third day He will raise us up,
That we may live in His sight.

The prophet Hosea is such an interesting one to read. Hosea was prophesying before the fall of the northern Kingdom of Israel. It was a time when prosperity had turned into volatility, not unlike what we are facing today.

Hosea came calling the people to repentance as every prophet did. In Hosea there are two images for us to grasp what the Lord was trying to do through him. There is the image of husband and wife: where the Lord is the Husband or the bridegroom; and His people Israel are the wife or the bride. Israel had been an unfaithful bride and the Lord was calling them to return. The other main image in Hosea is that of Father and child—father and son—where the son has been wayward not trusting in the Father.

It is amazing how the entire canon of scripture points to Jesus Christ. “You search the scriptures thinking in them that you will find life, but it is they that testify of Me.” Jesus said.

In Hosea 11:1 there is the line, “out of Egypt I call My son.” Here the Lord is talking about the people of Israel. Then in the Gospel of Matthew 2:13, Matthew says that verse refers to Christ. When Hosea uses that line to refer to Israel and Matthew uses that line to refer to Christ, we learn that Jesus is the fulfillment of all that Israel was meant to be.

We have another instance of this kind of fulfillment in our text today from Hosea. Hosea 6:1 says, “Come and let us return to the Lord.” This desire to be near to the Lord is what the Lord wanted for His people Israel, and it is what Jesus had toward the Lord. This delight to be in His Father’s presence.

Hosea 6:1 goes on to say, “He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.” This is referring back to Hosea chapter 5 a little bit earlier when the imagery of a

lion attacking and harming and subduing the people is vividly portrayed. Hosea is full of vivid imagery. “For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.”

And then 6:2, “After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up that we may live in His sight.” What does that call to mind? “On the third day He will raise us up?” I think of Easter immediately.

Of course Hosea is speaking here on behalf of the people of Israel and what a prayer of repentance and faith would look like for them. But he is also prophesying Christ's resurrection. How so? Because in Jesus you find the One that is the fulfillment of all that Israel was supposed to be.

On the third day He raises us up. In Matthew chapter twenty, Jesus gives this prophecy from his own mouth to His disciples as they were going to Jerusalem, “that the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes.”

Okay, that's bad.

“And they will condemn him to death. And deliver him to the gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify.”

Okay, it sounds like it's over.

“And the third day he will rise again.”

What! He's coming back? This was beyond the disciples' ability to grasp. Yet it was the plan of God for our salvation that Jesus would be torn and stricken, but after two days revive. The third day He would be raised up. That He would be betrayed, that He would be crucified, and that He would rise again.

Sometimes this happens—if you remember what watching sports was like—When your team is really struggling in the game and it looks bad. “It looks bad” is the first phase of this experience. You don't think that they're going to make it. But if they make it it would be great, but it's a longshot.

And then it gets worse, and you think, “Oh it's over. There are only so many seconds left in the game and we are down by too much and there is no way that this can happen. It's over.” And then once in a great while your team pulls through, and it's just the greatest thing! So it goes from its bad, to its over, to victory!

Jesus shows us how it was going to be bad. Then it was going to appear as if it was over. Then there'd be this display of victory. It was going to look bad when he was betrayed to the chief priests. But the disciples didn't necessarily think it was over at that point. Peter followed and even sat in the courtyard.

But then He was condemned to death. He was delivered to the gentiles, mocked, scourged, and crucified. It's like it was over. It went from bad to being over. But then He rose again! Just as He told them He would in Matthew chapter twenty. It was this progression from it's bad, to it's over, to victory.

In Hosea chapters five and six there is this language of being torn down and stricken but then revived. We have scriptural context and good standing to say that this is ultimately a

prophecy of Christ's death and resurrection because of how Hosea speaks of the people of Israel and how Matthew speaks of Jesus boiled down to one so to speak.

But in today's text from Hosea there is also an application directly for the people of Israel. This can become an application for us as well. The Lord in Hosea 5:15 shows patience. The Lord is patient with his people. He is patient with you and me. He said, "I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their offence. Then they will seek my face. In their affliction they will earnestly seek me." He is patient.

Hosea 6:1 then becomes the cry of our hearts then. "Come and let us return to the Lord. For He has torn, but he heals us, He has stricken but He will bind us up."

What does it mean to be torn or stricken? Well on the one hand the Lord has allows calamity. The Lord has allowed suffering. We don't try to explain why this happens because it is beyond our knowledge. But in the midst of it we cling to Christ. We know that the Lord is with us. We know that He is our Good shepherd even in trials and tribulations even in the valley of the shadow of death. He is with us.

So on the one hand we are torn and we are stricken by trials and sorrows, and the Lord heals us and He will bind us up from them. But on the other hand it is also instruction for our hearts.

It is the work of the Lord to bring conviction of sin to you and to me and in that way His word works to tear down our pride. To strike down our sinful flesh. And as this begins to take place in our hearts it goes from looking bad as in "You know, I think that wasn't right. I'm not so sure that I should continue down this path. This is looking bad." It goes from bad—this prick of the conscience—to remembering the law of God that the wages of sin is death.

And from there you go from it's bad to it's over. What I deserve for my sin is death separation from God. And it is to that broken heart that one who is suffering under the guilt of sin because of God working through His law it is to that one that God's word of Gospel and comfort and patience and deliverance and victory comes.

Christ has died for you so that you dear fellow sinner that could be counted as a saint in God's sight because Christ has taken your sin away, washing it away with His blood. And he has clothed you with a robe of righteousness by faith in Him. For when God sees you He sees His dear child who He loves. And there you've gone from bad to its over to victory. Christ has given you his victory!

"Come and let us return to the Lord for He has torn and He will heal us. He has stricken He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us. On the third day He will raise us up." That we may live in His sight. How does the Lord raise you up? It's through His word of Gospel comfort and forgiveness. And it is through the resurrection of Christ. You are united in baptism with His death in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God.

Why do we put so much stock in baptism? It's because of verses like Colossians 2:12 that teach us what God does through it. "Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were

also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” It is not the work of the pastor, or the work of the parents, or the work of the one being baptised. It's the work of God, the powerful working of God.

These promises which connect our spiritual lives to Christ's death, and our spiritual lives to Christ's resurrection so that His resurrection becomes ours. “On the third day He will raise us up so that we may live in His sight.” No longer dead in our trespasses and sins, but alive in Christ Jesus. Let us continue in this returning to the Lord as the Lord continues in His work in striking down our sinful pride and raising us to life by His glorious gospel.

Romans chapter eight is our epistle lesson today. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.” These are words of comfort for you and for me.

Hosea was speaking in this time of prosperity turned into volatility. The people needed to hear a call to repentance. So do we. We need to hear a call to repentance. This “return to me” call. We need to feel that law in our hearts doing its work of conviction. Tearing down, striking down, going from “it's bad” to “it's over” so that we do not find any comfort before God based on our works.

So we confess our sinful works and look not to our own strength, knowing that if we relied upon ourselves it would “be over”. It does not rely upon you to save yourself. God by his mercy has called you into life through the Gospel. He has done the work. He has raised Jesus Christ. And He has united you with Christ's resurrection by faith in His word.

Thanks be to God! May the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.