

## 10.24.21 – The Book of Hosea

**Sermon Description:** What does it mean that “God desires mercy, not sacrifice”? This phrase is used by Hosea and later by Jesus to rebuff religious people (that look a lot like us!). But how can it be that God spurns these sacrifices, especially since he instituted them? And why is it that mercy is so much better? That’s what we’re excited to explore this week!

**Main Passage:** Hosea 6:6

**Title:** Mercy >> Sacrifice

**Topics:** God>Character of God>Mercy

**Tags:** mercy, compassion, sacrifice

### **Gospel Application/Question:**

- In listening to the message, did God bring to mind a situation where you’ve been believing sacrifice (e.g. checking all the boxes) was more important than mercy (e.g. the relationship)?
- If so, what would it look like to trust afresh in the mercies of Christ and bring those same mercies to bear on this situation?

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### **Important notes**

- Emergency Preparedness
- Baby Hazel and Baby Lucy
- Prayer for Katie Neal

**Introduction** – The Old Testament in brief

### **The Book of Hosea**

- Chapters 6-10 in nine verses: 7:7, 7:10, 7:14, 7:16, 8:4, 8:6, 8:14, 9:1, 9:7
- Today’s text: Hosea 4:4-6 (specifically, verse 6)

### **Hosea 6:4–6**

<sup>4</sup>“What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears. <sup>5</sup>Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets, I killed you with the words of my mouth— then my judgments go forth like the sun. <sup>6</sup>**For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.**

Big question: If these sacrifices and burnt offerings were prescribed by God, why is he now insinuating he does not want them?

The purpose of the sacrifices and burnt offerings were (at least) two-fold: (1) Experience a restored relationship with God. Sin impedes that relationship. So these sacrifices were a short-term fix until the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ (see Rom. 3:25-26). (2) Reflect on your heart. Sin comes on account of our heart's unwillingness to trust in God's word and ways. So the sacrifices and burnt offerings were also intended to be a time of introspection. There are countless times in the Old Testament where God's people are called to remember the Lord and his great deeds.

So, does God desire such sacrifices/offerings? Yes...if those sacrifices/offerings come with introspection, recollections of the Lord, and hearts that are warmed and open to him. What appears to have happened is they are simply doing them robotically without much thought/feeling. God says, "I see you. And I want you to see me. I don't want to take things from you. I want to give things, like mercy, to you."

**"I desire mercy, not sacrifice."**

**Jesus references this verse at least twice within his ministry. Consider these three stories.**

Story #1: **Matthew 9:9-13**

<sup>9</sup>As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. <sup>10</sup>While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. <sup>11</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>12</sup>On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>13</sup>But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Story #2: **Matthew 12:9-14**

<sup>9</sup>Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, <sup>10</sup>and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" <sup>11</sup>He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? <sup>12</sup>How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." <sup>13</sup>Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. <sup>14</sup>But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

Story #3: **Matthew 12:1-8**

<sup>1</sup>At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. <sup>2</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." <sup>3</sup>He answered, "Haven't you

read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? <sup>4</sup>He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. <sup>5</sup>Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? <sup>6</sup>I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. <sup>7</sup>If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. <sup>8</sup>For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Big question: What can we glean from these three stories regarding the differences between mercy and sacrifice?

#### MERCY

Eat with. Dine with.  
"Follow me"  
"I'm healing the sick"  
"I'm calling sinners"  
Heal // Do good  
Value the person  
End hunger  
Feast  
Do what is not lawful...  
...yet remain innocent  
Give life

#### SACRIFICE

Abstain. Exclude.  
Results in uncleanness  
Make them bear the loss.  
Make them incur the shame.  
Harm // Withhold good  
Value their laws  
Perpetuate hunger  
Fast  
Follow certain Sabbath laws  
Condemn the innocent  
Take life

In summary: Mercy >> Sacrifice

Have you ever heard of the phrase, "merchants of rage"? Merchants of rage delight in amplifying the problems around them. They are a merchant of rage meaning that the commodity they buy/sell/share is anger. They are a merchant of rage. Their lives are an ever-present exchanging of anger.

In contrast to "merchants of rage," Jesus deals in commodities of mercy. In Christ, we've been shown a better way. He deals in commodities of mercy. He is a merchant of mercy, dispensing mercy/grace/compassion to all those he comes in contact.

- Mercy, more than sacrifice, shows us God's heart in the gospel. God does not sit idly by and demand our sacrifice. Rather, he initiated. He came to dine with us. He sought to provide a food that would end our hunger. Sacrifices perpetuate hunger. He came to satisfy us that we might sit and feast with him. He showed mercy, not by taking life, but by giving his life. Do we understand this? Do we believe this? Have we slipped into believing that Christianity is more about the sacrifices than God's mercy? Avoid that. Don't do that. Don't say that. Follow that rule. Abstain. Exclude. "Unclean!" He has shown us a better way. Mercy. Love. Eat with. Esteem. Help. Heal. Give.
- In the church. What are we known for? If "God desires mercy, not sacrifice," why is the reputation of the church often become a list of sacrifices and other Christian identity markers? Why are we not known by God's mercy? How might this change? What would it look like for our church to be characterized by God's mercy? "Hey, have you heard

about Hope Community?” “No. What’s their story?” “They just can’t stop talking about God’s mercy...and they’re just different.” “Different, weird?” “Yeah, maybe a little. But different, good. Just really grateful for God and his love and compassion and forgiveness and mercy.”

- In everyday life. In listening to the message, did God bring to mind a situation where you’ve been believing sacrifice (e.g. checking all the boxes) was more important than mercy (e.g. the relationship)? If so, what would it look like to trust afresh in the mercies of Christ and bring those same mercies to bear on this situation?

John’s story: A movement from sacrifices to mercy

A front-facing view of a red and white fire truck parked in front of a fire station. The truck features a prominent red grille with a central silver mesh section and two red circular lights. Below the grille are two sets of rectangular headlights. The truck is equipped with a roof-mounted emergency light bar and various hoses and equipment on the front bumper. The background shows two large red arched fire doors set into a light-colored stone building.

# Emergency Preparedness

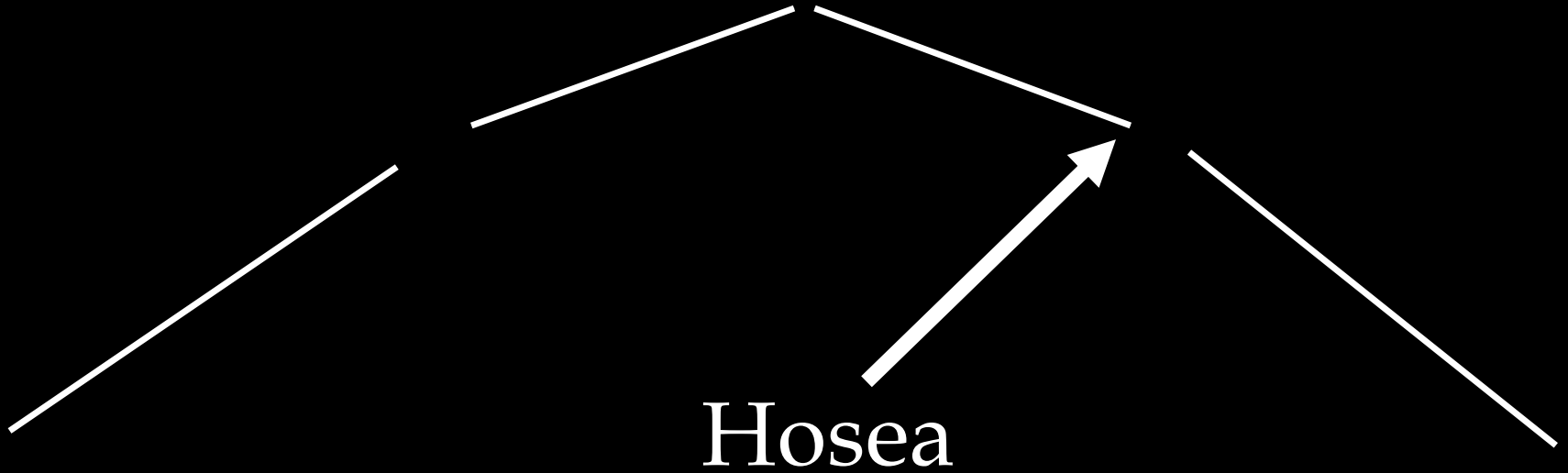


# The Old Testament in brief

Abraham

David

Exile





# HOSEA



## Hosea 7:7

<sup>7</sup>All their kings fall, and none of them calls on me.

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## Hosea 7:10

<sup>10</sup>Israel's arrogance testifies against him, but despite all this he does not return to the LORD his God or search for him.

## Hosea 7:14

<sup>14</sup>They do not cry out to me from their hearts but wail on their beds. They slash themselves, appealing to their gods for grain and new wine, but they turn away from me.

## Hosea 7:16

<sup>16</sup>They do not turn to the Most High.

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## Hosea 8:4

<sup>4</sup>They set up kings without my consent;  
they choose princes without my approval.  
With their silver and gold they make idols  
for themselves to their own destruction.

## Hosea 8:6

<sup>6</sup>This calf – a metalworker has made it;  
it is not God.

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## Hosea 8:14

<sup>14</sup>Israel has forgotten their Maker.

## Hosea 9:1

<sup>1</sup>Do not rejoice, Israel; do not be jubilant like the other nations. For you have been unfaithful to your God; you love the wages of a prostitute at every threshing floor.



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## Hosea 9:7

<sup>7</sup>The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great.

## Hosea 6:4–6

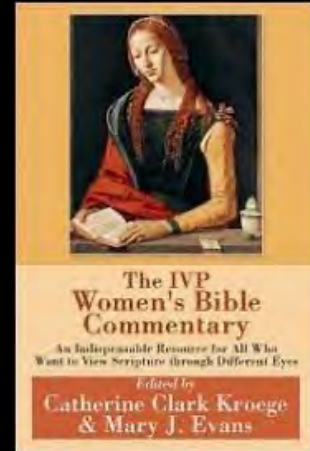
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The injuries are those inflicted by enemies during conflict, and the illnesses relate to captivity and exile. Ephraim appeals to Assyria for help, but the Assyrians were not to be trusted. Yahweh will tear Israel apart and destroy them as a lion tears its prey.

It is Yahweh they should fear, not Assyria.

No one can rescue them.

Catherine Kroeger, Mary Evans, and Elizabeth Elliot,  
The IVP Women's Bible Commentary: An Indispensable Resource for  
All Who Want to View Scripture through Different Eyes  
(InterVarsity Press, 2002), 439.



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In the church

In everyday life

# John's story



## Hosea 10:12

<sup>12</sup>Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.