

# Guided Bible Study

Salendine Nook Baptist Church

Hosea 11 v. 1 - 11

A modified Version of Scripture Union's  
LifeBuilder Bible Study Series originally written by  
Dale & Sandy Larsen



# About These Bible Studies

*These Bible studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us – much like we would do in our normal Wednesday Morning Bible Study. To give a sense of group study, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.*

*For the purposes of our Bible Studies we will be using Scripture Union's LifeBuilder Bible Study Series. We will be looking at the book of Hosea, that is found in the Old Testament. The studies were originally written by Dale & Sandy Larsen, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for home study during this time of lockdown.*

*Hope that you enjoy it!*

**Pastor Ian**

# Context

God never gives up on us. When we stray or make a mistake, God continues to pursue us with a relentless love. In Hosea's unfailing love for his wayward wife, he lived out the way God loves his people. His story is a reminder that God will never abandon us.

In choosing to study Hosea, we venture into a turbulent place of love and justice, promise and pain, close to the heart of God. The prophecy of Hosea does not progress logically from beginning to conclusion. Its writing is circular, going back and forth between judgment and mercy. We get a sense of God arguing with himself about Israel – not that God has trouble deciding what to do, but he feels the pain of conflict between what he wants for Israel and what he must do because of their sin.

Hosea shares God's conflict when at God's command he marries – and stays married to – the immoral woman Gomer. It is the conflict of anyone who cares deeply about a wayward person. God condemns Israel's sin and knows Israel deserves to be written off; yet he hangs on, unwilling to give up on them. God eventually let Israel be defeated in the Assyrian conquest, but he did not ultimately abandon his people whom he loved.

# Study 9 -

# Mercy

# Overrules

You get into your car in the church carpark and you're about to start the engine when you feel a jolt and hear a metallic crunch. Someone has backed into you. You jump out, furious, ready to tell off the other driver. Then you see that it's the teenage daughter of a good friend of yours. She gets out of her car but is too stricken and guilty to say much of anything. You know it must be her first car accident. Though you're still upset, and your bumper is still crumpled, mercy melts your heart. 'It's okay, we'll work it out', you say, then you give her a hug.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** *When has someone shown you mercy? How has it made a difference in your life?*

For centuries God has continued faithful to Israel, but they spurned his faithfulness and preferred other gods.

## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

### Read Hosea 11 v. 1 – 11

- What emotions do you sense in this passage?
- What does the passage tell you about the heart of God?
- Centuries before Hosea, Israel followed God out of Egypt in the Exodus (**Hosea 11 v. 1**). How does God describe his care for the Israelites during that time (**Hosea 11 v. 1 – 4**)?
- What has the nation of Israel forgotten (*or neglected*) both at that time and in the intervening years (**Hosea 11 v. 2 – 3, 7**)?
- As the Lord stated repeatedly through Hosea, what would be the consequences of Israel's rebellion (**Hosea 11 v. 5 – 7**)?
- Even in the midst of righteous anger, what pain and longing did God express (**Hosea 11 v. 8 – 9**)?
- Think of occasions when you want to blow up at someone, but then you change your mind. What makes you back off?
- In **Hosea 11 v. 9** the Lord states that: 'I am God, and not a man'. It seems elementary to state that God is not a man. What are the deeper implications of the statement?
- How would God demonstrate his mercy to Israel (**Hosea 11 v. 10 – 11**)?
- In what ways do you need to offer someone your mercy (*and through you, the mercy of God*)?

# Now Later

The heart of God longs for you as he longed for the Israelites in Hosea's time. Choose a symbol of the Lord's mercy: a small cross, a nail, a stone (for the stone rolled over the door of Christ's tomb) or some memento of an event in which you experienced God's mercy.



Place the object where you will see it often. In times of discouragement or rebellion, let it remind you that God loves you and gave his Son to forgive your sins. If you are also burdened for a wandering family member or friend, let the object remind you that God's heart also longs after that person as well.

# To help you in your study

The studies purpose is: To reflect on the mercy of God to Israel and to us.

In this passage God speaks some of the tenderest ‘human’ language in the book of Hosea and, indeed, in the entire Bible. The images reveal the depth of God’s love for humanity just as surely as the preceding images reveal his righteous judgment.

*‘The cry is heart – rendering. God has loved his people, yet justice demanded that they be punished. Since God could not lightly forget the earlier days of Israel’s faithfulness, he decreed judgment with great reluctance. Admah . . . Zeboiim were cities of the plain which were overthrown with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). . . .Although judgment would fall upon Israel, in wrath God would remember mercy. Israel was not to be forever cast off, although she would be sorely chastised’. (Pfeiffer, ‘Hosea’ p. 814).*

If you have ever gotten into a discussion about hell, you have probably heard God’s love maligned as inferior to human love. The argument goes like this: any human parent will forgive and take back a child unconditionally, so how can God bear to see anyone lost? This Scripture turns the tables and reveals the egotism of that argument. Ultimately, all human love is fickle and imperfect; only the character of God is constant and unchanging. Walt Kaiser writes: *‘The sudden shift in Hosea 11 v. 8 – 9 signals new hope for Israel. The main reasons for*

*the shift from a message of judgment to one of hope are to be found in two facts: (1) Israel would suffer a full punishment for disloyalty and would go into exile under the Assyrian conquest and (2) the character of God, like the faces of a coin, have two sides: judgment and compassion.’ In the freedom of God, he chose to deal with Israel after its exile under his attribute of grace and compassion. (Kaiser et al., **Hard Sayings**; p. 324).*



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