

## The Minor Prophets – Hosea (Why Do Christians Sometimes Suffer?)

Hosea 1:1-4, 6, 8-9 | 23 July 2023 | Rev Dr Aaron Tay

### Reflection Questions

1. Hebrews 1:1 says *“In the past God **spoke** to our forefathers **through the prophets** at many times and in various ways”*.

What do you think were the reasons for God sending His prophets? To know more about Him? To know His will? So that His people will obey His will?

In the sermon, Pastor Aaron mentioned about the prophet Oded (2 Chronicles 28), and how he dared to obey God even in a dangerous situation. And because of his courageous obedience, his faith and courage created a miracle.

**Do you know of someone whose obedience of God (despite a difficult situation) had brought forth blessings? Perhaps it is your personal experience, or someone you know, or a story you have heard before. Please share.**

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#### Our Vision

To be disciples of Jesus Christ

#### Our Mission

We exist to make disciples who love God, love one another and love the lost



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2. The books of the Minor Prophets are **important and useful to us** even today – because **God spoke** through them to His people and even non-Israelites on many important issues, in different circumstances :
- Giving salvation and forgiveness to those in big trouble. (Jonah)
  - In the midst of economic prosperity, yet there were social injustice, idolatry and immorality. (Hosea and Amos)
  - Giving warning of judgment that must follow sin (consequences of reaping disaster if we had sowed in sin). (Nahum)
  - But if there is repentance, God will surely grant His grace. (Micah)
  - If a new generation did not follow their parents' faith, but go back to sin, beware of judgment (Zephaniah) – a lesson for us to faithfully pass our faith to our children and grandchildren.
  - Why do God's people suffer, even under unrighteous people? Could it be a result of our own disobedience? (Habbakuk)
  - But God will not let those unrighteous people go unpunished, and He promises to bless His people once again. (Obadiah)
  - When there is trouble and opposition, the Lord will use His Word and His servants to encourage us, so that we might have renewed strength, assurance and vision. (Haggai and Zechariah)
  - Finally, the Lord will not leave us alone when we again encounter problems. He will guide us with wisdom and He

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promises to bless us and be with us. Let us simply be obedient to Him. (Joel and Malachi)

**Do you identify with any of the situation/circumstances found within the Minor Prophets? If it was in the past, share about it to edify the Body. If you are facing it now, perhaps the group can pray with you.**

3. The Book of Hosea is probably not known to many Christians. Take the opportunity now to read aloud Chapters 1 to 3 in your group.

**After having read the three chapters, share with each other what you have learnt about the character of God. What gives Him joy or makes God sad or angry? How does He respond?**

4. If God is all-powerful and loves us deeply, why do Christians suffer pain?
  - a. Because “we reap what we sow” – if we had sown ungodliness, we would reap consequences of pain and suffering.
  - b. Because “this world is under the bondage of sin” – the sinful acts of other people may at times affect us.
  - c. Because God wants to prune us (make us stronger, and be more like Jesus) – perhaps some suffering will cause

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us to be more concerned about His will, about other people.

- d. Because we choose to obey God in faith; in some instances, God will allow us to suffer because it will glorify Him (as His perfect will is done) – as in the case of Hosea or Job or the apostles .

**Please share about your suffering and pain as a result of any of the four reasons. Together as a DG, please try to share at least one story/personal experience from each of four reasons.**

***Take some time now to pray for each other, for those who are experiencing some pain and suffering. You may also pray for relatives/friends of group members who are suffering.***

5. Hosea 1 – 3 paints to us a picture of God who was very angry with the sins of His people, to that point that God declared judgment. Yet it also shows us a God who forgives, as a result of His mercy and love. Historically we know that the people of Israel were cured of their sin of idolatry as a result of the Exile. In that sense they were grateful of God’s forgiveness, hence they could change.

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**While we should forgive no matter what is the response, forgiveness is truly only useful if the person being forgiven is also appreciative. Are you grateful of God's forgiveness over your sins? If you are, what are the signs/fruits? Think about it. Discuss if you feel comfortable to share.**

**Some people have the opposite problem – they are so guilt-ridden over a certain sin/incident they cannot forgive themselves, and refused to seek God for forgiveness and grace.**

**This is not God's will for us. He gives us grace so that we can experience the abundant life, free even from guilt and shame. Talk with your Disciple Group Leader, or Pastors if you need someone to pray with.**

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