

**The Hand of God**  
**Hosea 6:1-4**  
**June 22, 2020**

“Come, let us return to the LORD;  
for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;  
he has struck down, and he will bind us up.  
<sup>2</sup> After two days he will revive us;  
on the third day he will raise us up,  
that we may live before him.  
<sup>3</sup> Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD;  
his appearing is as sure as the dawn;  
he will come to us like the showers,  
like the spring rains that water the earth.”

Hosea is a great spiritual teacher who enters the complexities of life and pulls out the simplicity of spiritual guidance. Love is his shield against the misfortunes of life; against sin, hatred and pain. His preaching of the message is coupled with dramatic actions that turns his teaching into visible representations of the hand of God. The same hand of God that tears us down, is the same hand that heals and revives us from God's pruning shears. Hosea dramatizes God's actions towards his people through God's request for him to marry a prostitute, and if she strays to forgive her and bring her back home. It is a most peculiar request, but it does exemplify what God has offered to humanity throughout history. God offers us love, even though he chastises as well. These two actions come from the same heart and hand of our forgiving God.

Hosea makes no arguments or excuses for these actions of God. He simply recognizes them as part of the created world, part of the way God stimulates our spiritual senses to engage a complex world. Marrying a prostitute was God's way of dramatizing Israel's unfaithfulness, and God's faithfulness to his promise to be their compassionate God. In this time of uncertainty, in which we feel the very heavy hand of creation's unpredictability, we need the message of Hosea. God's pruning shears will take a rest, and the watering habits of God will be refreshing to us. We will once again feel the ease of walking among people, without fear; and the hands of God will pick us up and carry us to a restful place. The last verses of Hosea are refreshing, *“They (Israel) shall again live beneath my shadow, they shall flourish as a garden; they shall blossom like the vine, their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon.”*

The beauty of Hosea's spiritual teaching is its simplicity. Spirituality is not a quest to get things right, it is a faithful exercise of the heart, recognizing that the distractions around us create clouds of confusion, instead of providing more light. When Hosea was asked by God to go and marry a prostitute, there were probably hundreds of reasons not to do it. But for him it was simple. He did what God requested, in the midst of all the confusion of life. It was simple and pure, even though the woman he was marrying was not, and most of the world. He saw God's chastisement of Israel all around him, but he chose not to make it his private complaint against Israel, or God. Instead, he said I am going to love God, love my people, and my wife, by forgiving them in their sin. He kept his eyes on the hand of God that tears down and heals. In this simplicity of faithfulness, he says, “Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.”