

Relentless

Part Four: "On the Third Day..."

We started Sunday with Hosea 6:1-3:

"Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

We then looked at I Corinthians 15: 1-8:

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Why do I believe this is a reference to Hosea? There are only two possibilities, Jonah and Hosea. Paul gives no indication that the story of Jonah is where we should go. Instead, he references an even more unique passage from Jonah later in I Corinthians 15. More on that later.

Look at Hosea 14: 1-8:

Return, Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount warhorses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion." "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. People will dwell again in his shade; they will flourish like the grain, they will blossom like the vine— Israel's fame will be like the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? I (The LORD) will answer him and care for him. I am like a flourishing juniper; your fruitfulness comes from me."

Blossoms, Flourishing Vines, fragrances, grain, wine, and it's all from God. God uses the imagery of FERTILITY to point back to himself. He is the God over all—but in Hosea, Israel has

specifically turned toward fertility cults of worship under the Baals. God is saying all their FERTILITY comes from him. In fact, the imagery sounds like it could describe a GARDEN!

Read John 20:11-16

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

This is not a small sidebar. Mary is not as mistaken as we may first assume.

This is a new creation. A new Garden. Eden. A new gardener, a new ADAM. Winter is over. Spring is here. Hosea 14 fulfilled. **Easter.**

A Word about symbols.

Read Acts 17:16-34

How does Paul use the imagery that they already have to teach the Gospel?

Is it possible to redeem symbols?

The power of fertility in Hosea was not discounted, and the imagery of Hosea 14 would point as clearly to the Ba'als of fertility as they would to YAHWEH, but the symbolism and imagery aren't changed, the methods of worship (like human sacrifice and prostitution) and attribution of the power are. All authority and power is now attributed to God.

What do we do with the eggs and bunnies? We have more precedence than the cedars and wine of Lebanon.

Matthew 16:24

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

What could this have meant to them? "Cursed was anyone hung on a tree" Deut 21: 22-23.

How could Jesus use a Roman symbol of execution for the worst rebels?

Galatians 6:14

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

If God can redeem a wooden tool of execution, He can surely do wonders with a cottontail. We can use the imagery of Spring, new life, eggs, and rabbits to point to the creator and sustainer of it all. Easter is a day when many are open to the idea of Resurrection and new beginnings. We can point them to Jesus. As for us as believers, EVERY DAY IS RESURRECTION DAY! We don't have to wait for Easter to celebrate new life—His mercies are new every morning!

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are **new every morning**; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." (Lamentations 3:22-24)

IV. Back to Hosea.

Hosea 13: 14-15

"I will deliver this people from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. **Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?** "I will have no compassion, even though he thrives among his brothers. An east wind from the LORD will come, blowing in from the desert; his spring will fail and his well dry up. His storehouse will be plundered of all its treasures.

Read all of Hosea 13. This small couplet of questions in v 14 doesn't fit very well as a statement of hope in Hosea. Many scholars believe it better seen as a call to death itself to rain down judgment on Israel. V14 might read "Will I deliver...?" as a rhetorical question. Regardless of the translation, it's not a comforting passage, but Paul gives it an Easter makeover in his passage on the Resurrection.

Read I Corinthians 15:54-57

(This is the other Hosea reference in this chapter, after "**on the third day**")

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."(Isaiah 25:8) "**Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?**" (Hosea 13:14) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul turns the meaning of the question upside down. **This is Christus Victor**. Death and the Grave are called on to do their worst. Jesus takes it on and shakes it off. I mentioned Mercy Me's, "[Bring on the Rain](#)". It's a powerful assertion of faith.

Christ is RISEN. He is risen INDEED. Bring on the REIGN!

