

Abandoned and Restored

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[0 : 00] Music. Isaiah chapter 1 verse 6 through chapter 2 verse 1.

! She conceived and again bore a daughter.! And the Lord said to him,! Call her name no mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel to forgive them at all.

But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen. When she had weaned no mercy, she conceived and bore a son.

And the Lord said, Call his name not my people, for you are not my people, and I am not your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered.

And in the place where it was said to them, you are not my people, it shall be said to them, children of the living God. And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head.

[1 : 14] And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Say to your brothers, you are my people, and to your sisters, you have received mercy.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? One of my favorite stories to read as a child in Sunday school and in children's church was the story of Samson.

And I remember in my Sunday school class a children's book of the story of Samson. I remember looking through those pictures and see this big, burly, muscular man and thinking, man, that guy is cool.

That's who I want to be. He's like the incredible Hulk of the Bible. Reading later about Samson, again, his story is contained in Judges chapter 16. You see that, you know, Samson was a man of great strength.

But one of the most tragic things that the Bible ever says has to deal with him in chapter 16, verse 20 of the book of Judges where there it says that this man who is the greatest and strong, or the strongest man, I should say, of all time realizes that the Lord had left him.

[2 : 37] And he loses all of his strength. And you remember the reason why the Lord had left him is because Samson had continually turned his back on God and finally he revealed the secret of his strength which really was that God had made this promise to him.

And he turned his back on God and in that moment he was sapped of all his strength. He was abandoned by God.

In Genesis 6, we hear God's lamentation over his fallen creation, over fallen mankind. And he expresses his regret that he even made them to begin with.

Let's read in Genesis 6, 5 through 8, and the Lord regretted, it says, that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds on the heaven, for I am sorry that I have made them.

But Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord. Here we see again the wrath of God's abandonment. And then again, we'll see in Judges 10, after the flood, well after the flood, but before Samson, God said this to Israel in Judges 10, 13 through 14, yet you have forsaken me and served other gods, therefore I will save you no more.

[4 : 03] Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen. Let them save you in the time of your distress. And so here again, we see the wrath of God expressed by his abandoning those who willfully persist in their sin.

He abandons them to face the consequences of their sinful living. This was God saying to them in effect to Israel, I'm done with you.

You've wanted to have it your way. Well, guess what? Now you're going to have it. A similar statement is issued by God in Proverbs. Proverbs 1, 24 through 31.

There it says, because I have called and you refuse to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one was heeded. Because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I will also laugh at your calamity.

I will mock when terror strikes you. When terror strikes you like a storm and when your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you, then they will call upon me what I will not answer.

[5 : 10] They will seek me diligently but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. Therefore, they shall eat the fruit of their way and have their fill of their own devices.

Now here's the thing. When we read those verses, we're tempted to think, now that doesn't really sound like God to me. He must have been really grumpy when he said those things.

Just having a bad day. But isn't this his word? Isn't this God's word to us? Isn't this his revelation of who he is to we his people?

And is he not justified in all that he says and does? In Matthew 15, Jesus has had a run-in once again with the Pharisees and he again exposes their hypocrisy.

And his disciples come to him and they say to him, do you know that the Pharisees were offended by what they heard you saying? And Jesus answered them, every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.

[6 : 26] Let them alone. They are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit. And so here again, we have Jesus, the Son of God, reiterating the point that God made in the Old Testament that people, that nations, even the covenant nation of Israel, they can come to a point where God will abandon them in his wrath towards their sin.

So we've got to understand that this is serious business. This is a warning that we must not only heed ourselves, but we must call others to do the same.

God will do this. When God abandons a people, he withdraws his grace from them, and their unbridled sin produces disastrous results.

This cycle has been seen all throughout history. When a person, or when a people, forsake God, time and time again, he eventually gives them over to pursue unhindered what they want.

And every time God allows them to do that, the results are always disastrous. They're always tragic. In Romans 1.18, and running through the rest of the chapter, we have the clearest presentation of God abandoning a nation.

[8 : 00] What it looks like, and what happens when he does it, and why he does it. This passage is the most comprehensive and detailed account of what it means for God to abandon a people.

It describes the moral chaos that took place in Hosea's day, and I think as we read it, you'll see that it describes the moral chaos that we are experiencing in our day and age.

Let's read these verses together. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made so that they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal men and birds and animals and creeping things.

[9 : 11] Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature.

And the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another. Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due

penalty for their error.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossip, slanders, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

[10:24] And so we read those verses and do we not see our nation when we read those?

Now this is not an impulsive outburst of anger carried out upon people who God doesn't like anymore. That's not what's happening here. This is the settled, determined response of a righteous God against sin.

This is what He will do. This is who He is. Now the United States of America is not Israel. But we are a nation whom I believe is experiencing the wrath of God's abandonment right now as we live and breathe.

There comes a time for a nation when God says I've had enough. and He literally lets those people go. And He turns them over to the sentence that they've passed on themselves as a result of their sinful choices, their sinful desires.

About three to five years ago I was at my seminary and John MacArthur came to preach. And I'll remember a statement that he made. He said, a question that I get a lot from people is when is the United States of America going to face the wrath of God for their sinfulness.

[11:42] And he said this, it's not a question of when, it's happening right now. And man, how can you not look at what's going on? How can you not watch the news at night and see that this is the consequences of what happens when a people turn their back from God and He withholds His grace to give them what they want?

And as we've experienced it, the results are not good. They are not pleasant. Like Hosea then, we as people of God now must speak as we talked about last week.

We speak for God against spiritual adultery. We warn others about the consequences of their sin. And we speak words to them of hope, the good news of Jesus Christ, the gospel, what God has done for us in sending Him to die in our place for our sins.

Like Hosea then, we are called to speak for God now. The better we understand Hosea then in his times, I believe, the better we will be able to serve the Lord in our times.

And so here's the main point for this morning's message. The Lord, as Israel's covenant husband, separates Himself from His people because of their continued and unrepentant sin.

[13:02] However, He will reverse the effects of His judgment and will rescue, restore, and resurrect His covenant people as a result of His mercy and His faithful love.

So in verses 6-9, we see, firstly, that the Lord will abandon people and nations as a result of their persistent, unrepentant sin. This is what had happened with the nation of Israel.

This had been decades of them doing this, rejecting God, serving and worshipping other gods, and despising Him as a result. And so God is going to punish them justly for their sin.

And if you remember, He calls Hosea to take a wife, a harlot, and He calls him to have children with her, and they have three children together. Each one in their name symbolizes the judgment of God against Israel's persistent and unrepentant sin.

And they're not good names. These aren't great names. Many people like to use Bible names.

Nobody's going to use these names to name their children. And as I was thinking about this, I was thinking about Danny's grandpa.

[14:14] His name, he's passed away, his name was Bud. And he went by Bud because his real name was Ernest Eugene Hall. And I remember talking to him about his real name and he said, you know what?

I wouldn't even name my dog that, Ernest Eugene Hall, right? We all have probably names like you, maybe you have a middle name that you're ashamed of, you don't want people to know. These are terrible names because of what they symbolize.

Jezreel, if you remember last week, this was to remind the people of the fury of Jehu, a king of Israel who was bloodthirsty, who was reckless in carrying out executions and who introduced the culture to violence in a way it hadn't been before.

And so God says, I'm going to break Israel's bow, meaning he was going to break their strength.

And so this first son symbolizes the great sin of Israel. Then we moved on to the next child,

Lo-Ruhamah, whose name means no mercy.

And it speaks of them being unloved and unpitied and it symbolizes God's coming judgment to them. And then there's a third child, Lo-Ami. And this means not my people.

[15:29] And it speaks of how God will disown Israel, symbolizing his rejection of them because of their sin. This is shocking. God is showing them that his mercy towards them has come to an end and he will abandon Israel as his people.

They are headed to the point of no return and God, just like a spouse who's been cheated on over and over again, is justified in deciding that he's going to put an end to this relationship. Think for a minute.

Think about yourself. Think about your own children if you have them. Think about what it would take for you as a loving father or as a loving mother to say to your adult children, guess what?

I disown you. I disinherit you. You are no longer a son or a daughter to me. I will no longer show you love. I will no longer show you mercy.

I have no pity on you. Could you imagine saying that to your children? It would probably take years and years of that child expressing their hate for you through rebellious actions and rebellious words.

[16:45] They'd have to do something really, really bad for a really, really long time in order to receive that kind of a harsh judgment from you. Here's the thing.

Every ounce of our being has been affected by sin. Every ounce of our being, not just our physical being, our spiritual being, our minds, every aspect of us has been affected by sin.

So often we come to a passage like this and we want to do like what Thomas Jefferson did where he took his penknife and he cut out portions of the Bible where he didn't like what God said or he didn't like what God was doing.

Strike through those things. Strike them from the record. We don't like it when God judges us, do we? Through Hosea and Gomer's relationship, God, though, enables us to see things from his perspective.

And as we've mentioned, seeing things from God's point of view puts us in a very uncomfortable place because we realize the depths of our sin that we've committed ultimately against him.

[17:57] All sin, the Bible says, is against God. We've betrayed him. And just like in a marriage when one partner violates and breaks the vows that they made to another by committing adultery, that gut-wrenching, heartbreaking feeling, this is what God is saying about us, his people.

Now, I once counseled a woman whose husband had been dead for years, had been dead for decades, but he had continually cheated on her. She stayed married to him, but here he was in the grave for decades and she was coming to me because she still couldn't forgive him.

She hated him for what he did. Her heart still broke over those things. So you see that God is trying to help us to see from his point of view what it's like to be betrayed over and over again by a people whom you have been good to, whom you have been merciful to, whom you have loved.

And so God uses this relationship between Hosea and Gomer to allow us to feel his heartache over that continual rejection of him by his people.

And so eventually, God will abandon people to pursue what they seek instead of him and the results, as we've said, those pursuits always end in tragedy.

[19:23] Always. Always. For a while, God's relationship with Israel would be dead. They would be taken over eventually by Assyria and all would be lost.

They would reap what they had sown. They would get what they deserved. So here's what we've got to understand again. God is never unjust in what he does.

Never. God is never the bad guy. It's only through our sinful eyes that one could ever perceive him in that way. I was watching TV last night, yesterday, a Dateline episode about this girl, a senior in high school at the time when she was attacked by somebody who broke into their house and beat her with a shovel.

Left her for dead. Amazingly, this girl survived. But she was a shell of herself the rest of her life. She didn't know that she'd ever get married.

She didn't know that she'd ever have kids. She was physically marred by his attacks. Mentally, she was affected by what had happened. And for nine years, they could not find her assailant.

[20:43] And finally, through one drop of blood, they found this guy. And I remember in the courtroom where they were talking about his sentence. And he could serve the minimum of nine or the maximum of 18 years.

And it was all in the judge's hands. 18 years. This guy had robbed this woman of her life and all he was going to get was 18 years and that's what he got. Here's the thing. And I bring that up to you for this because we don't like sometimes to hear about the judgment of God, but we know that judgment is right, don't we?

Could you imagine in that situation the judge says, you know what? It's been nine years. You know, it's taken a while. She's not dead. She's still here. So you know what we're going to say? No big deal.

You go free. Man, there would be an outcry, wouldn't there? What an injustice. So who are we to ever look at God and say to him, you're not just for what you do because again, ultimately, all sin is against him.

God's never the bad guy. Never. Secondly, we see that the Lord will restore his covenant people as a result of his mercy and faithful love and he will reverse the judgments that he has made against them in verses 10 through 12.

[21 : 59] And in those verses, it reveals that while the Lord's judgment would be carried out, he would one day take his people back and love them as he once had.

Look at what he promises to do. First, he promises to restore them. He restores his covenant people. There he says, yet the number of children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea which cannot be measured or numbered.

Remembering the promise that he had made to Abraham, he would restore them. Secondly, he promises that he will reunite them as a people. Remember, Judah and Israel were two separate kingdoms, divided.

And he says that the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be once again gathered together. He would restore them. He would reunite them. He also says that he would renew the glory of his people.

There it says, they shall appoint for themselves one head and they shall go up from the land for great shall be the day of Jezreel. He will restore. He will reunite. He will renew.

[23 : 02] And then he says he will reverse the effects of his judgment. Say to your brothers in chapter 2 verse 1, you are my people and to your sisters, you have received mercy.

Man, this is amazing. God will not abandon his people forever. He's chosen them. He's loved them. And though time after time they continually reject him, after a time he will not let them go. He will bring them back.

Those who were unloved, he will say they are my loved ones. They go from not being his people to being called again by him my people.

What a promise delivered to people who did not deserve such a promise. Could you imagine hearing this news that this curse would be reversed by God's grace?

[24 : 08] To know that you deserve to be left broken. You deserve to be left disowned. You deserve to be left unloved. And you deserve to be left feeling the crushing despair that comes with having to bear the judgment against your own sins.

Then to hear this promise that you will be restored, that you will be renewed, that God will reconcile you to himself. How could God do this?

It doesn't say that they did anything. This is God's choosing to do this. How could he do this? How can he remain just and righteous in his judgment yet at the same time show such mercy?

In our day and age, we are living in times of increased lack of mercy. These are times of mercilessness. We are part of a very self-righteous society.

A society that feeds itself off destroying other people. You've got the NFL draft and people who's living, they are making a living to dig into the past history of these kids to bring up things that they said on Twitter or Facebook 10 years ago or more so that they can ruin their lives.

[25 : 22] This is what people do. You get your five minutes of fame, somebody says something at a town hall or whatever and then you have people dig into their past to bring up all these things and say, no, they're discredited to ruin their lives, to cost them their jobs.

This is our society. Merciless. Unwilling to extend mercy to those who we disagree with but instead seeking to ruin their lives.

This is our society. See here, Israel is at odds with God and it's all their fault. There aren't two sides to this story and such is the case with all the rest of us.

We've sinned against God. We've made Him our enemy. Yet He's chosen to show mercy and extends it to us still today. The New Testament is a commentary of the Old Testament. And in Romans 9, 22 through 26, we see that these promises of renewal and reconciliation are not just for remnant Israel but they are for the church today.

[26 : 33] Let's look at those verses. Paul says there, what if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy which He has prepared beforehand for glory.

Even us whom He has called not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles as indeed He says in Hosea, those who were not My people, I will call My people.

And her who is not beloved, I will call beloved. And in the very place where it was said to them, you are not My people, they will be called sons of the living God.

You see, in its original context, Hosea was referring to the spiritual restoration of Israel. But Paul finds in them the principle that God is a saving, forgiving, restoring God who delights to take those who were not His people and to make them His people.

And so Paul applies this concept to the Gentiles, to us, whom God makes His people by sovereignly grafting them into the body of Christ.

[27 : 46] 1 Peter 2, 9-10, again, Peter also applies Hosea's prophecy to us. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. You see, the only thing that we deserve to receive from God is judgment.

yet He has chosen to extend mercy to His elect people. Before you and I were drawn to God by His electing love, we were slaves to sin.

We were pursuing idols of our own making. But through the gospel, as Hosea 1-10 says, we are called children of the living God as a result of God's great mercy.

mercy. We have a love from God that will not let us go. Does that news grip your heart? Does that mean anything to you today? Does this move you in any way to respond to God's mercy?

[29 : 05] Through the gospel, we are made new. We are set free from the bondage of sin and our willful pursuits of it. We have been given a new heart. We have been given a new mind and a new desire for the things of God.

You know what it cost? We've talked about the wrath of God's abandonment. You know what it cost? The abandonment of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins.

Matthew 27-46. Jesus says, as He's suspended between heaven and earth, nail-pierced hands and feet, whipped and scourged and bleeding and dying, enduring the wrath of God for our sins.

You remember He says this, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The Son of God is all alone on the cross for three final hours.

He experiences the full brunt of His Father's wrath and He can't remain silent so He speaks these words in utter anguish.

[30 : 26] My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Now His cry doesn't mean that He has some kind of diminished deity. That wasn't the case.

Jesus does not cease to be God at any point during or after this event. Jesus' cry does not divide His human nature from His divine person or destroy the Trinity in any way.

In His cry, He does not disavow His mission. Both the Father and the Son knew from all eternity that Jesus would be the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

Jesus here is expressing the agony of unbearable stress in unanswered supplication. It is the hellish cry uttered with the wrath of God overwhelming His soul.

Jesus is expressing the agony of unmitigated sin. All the sins of the elect, the hell that we deserve for all eternity was laid upon Him in that moment.

[31 : 31] in His hour of greatest need and greatest pain unlike anything He'd ever experienced before. His Father's abandonment.

No voice is crying out from heaven to Him this is my beloved Son. No angel is sent to strengthen Him in His distress. The disciples who were once with Him have left Him.

The women who served with Him are silent as they watch. Feeling disowned by all Jesus endures the way of suffering alone.

Deserted forsaken. Every detail of this horrific abandonment declares the heinous character of our sins.

This is what was required for us to be saved. Do we get this? Do we understand that we deserve nothing of this? Jesus bruised and crushed pierced for our transgressions and our iniquities abandoned to endure the wrath of God for our sins.

[32 : 48] Christ made sin for us acting on our behalf as our representative. He suffered for us.

He bled and He died for us. He did it so that He could save us. He endured God's wrath for our sins. For us He did this.

He died for our sins. He died in your place. Why would God bruise His beloved Son in such a way? He didn't do it so that we would gain His sympathy. He did it to secure our salvation. This is what our sin costs.

What a wonderful Savior we have. We are not abandoned in this life. And we never will be. Not because of who we are.

[33 : 49] Not because of any good that we've done. But all because of Christ. Man, that's good news to share, is it not? So let's share it.

Thank you.