

Sunday, December 20, 2015

“Jesus and Our Longing for Connection”

Fourth in the Series, “Light in the Darkness: Jesus and our Deepest Longings”

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What the prophets teach us at Christmastime:

1. God sees and feels and responds to our longings and our needs.
2. God is both smaller and bigger than we’d tend to assume.
3. God sees our half-baked coping mechanisms and tells us we’re full of it.
4. God calls us to return to the healthy, sound, integrated lives that make everyone happy.
5. We want a God who’s fed-up angry but also patient and good; apparently, we have both.
6. God can’t stop connecting and pursuing the people God loves.

How Can I let Myself Be Connected and Loved this Christmas?

1. Take in a full version of the Jesus story. Try it with a friend.
2. Respond whole-heartedly to whatever way Jesus is wooing you.
3. When love seems too weak or foolish, press still into that love.
4. Ask Jesus – what does it mean to be “your people” and “the one you love”?

Hosea 1:2-2:1 (NLT)

² When the LORD first began speaking to Israel through Hosea, he said to him, “Go and marry a prostitute, so that some of her children will be conceived in prostitution. This will illustrate how Israel has acted like a prostitute by turning against the LORD and worshipping other gods.”

³ So Hosea married Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she became pregnant and gave Hosea a son. ⁴ And the LORD said, “Name the child Jezreel, for I am about to punish King Jehu’s dynasty to avenge the murders he committed at Jezreel. In fact, I will bring an end to Israel’s independence. ⁵ I will break its military power in the Jezreel Valley.”

⁶ Soon Gomer became pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. And the LORD said to Hosea, “Name your daughter Lo-ruhamah—‘Not loved’—for I will no longer show love to the people of Israel or forgive them. ⁷ But I will show love to the people of Judah. I will free them from their enemies—not with weapons and armies or horses and charioteers, but by my power as the LORD their God.”

⁸ After Gomer had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she again became pregnant and gave birth to a second son. ⁹ And the LORD said, “Name him Lo-ammi—‘Not my people’—for Israel is not my people, and I am not their God.

¹⁰ “Yet the time will come when Israel’s people will be like the sands of the seashore—too many to count! Then, at the place where they were told, ‘You are not my people,’ it will be said, ‘You are children of the living God.’ ¹¹ Then the people of Judah and Israel will unite together. They will choose one leader for themselves, and they will return from exile together. What a day that will be—the day of Jezreel—when God will again plant his people in his land.

¹ “In that day you will call your brothers Ammi—‘My people.’ And you will call your sisters Ruhamah—‘The ones I love.’

Isaiah 11:1-2 (NLT)

¹ Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot—yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root. ² And the

Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

I Corinthians 1:24-25 (NLT)

²⁴ But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

²⁵ This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.