

Sermon for 27 July 2025 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Scriptures: Hosea 1:2-10; Psalter: Page 806 (Psalm 85) ; Colossians 2 :6-19 ; Luke 11 :1-13

Sermon :

Last week's rugged reading from Amos , in its Bible way, set us up for today's heartbreaking lesson from Hosea.

Life doesn't always wait between shocks. Reeling from clear-cut rage. and terror, and shame over the injustice all around our times, now here we are confronted with the terrible call to marry such a case of ---what? We aren't even told how or why the bride's past life ran its course.

It takes courage to look at God in this way. As we said earlier, these are not ordinary times. When there's no festival among believers, and special relief is a long way up ahead in our regular schedule, the grieving, desperate side of divinity can get pretty stark.

Remember what they taught us in Sunday School was the Bible's shortest verse? "Jesus wept."

To believe that God weeps with our pain sometimes opens up reality to us. Take that personally ... or take it when we hear the daily news of suffering from our bombs and drones in Gaza. Or what about the headline that 8500 jobs were lost in Maryland this month ... the highest number in any state. What is God telling us in our politics?

Much less somebody's medical news we in this gathering know about.

Does God see that? Hear that?

In its weird way, our little routine this Sunday together its breaking our hearts for Jesus ...with Jesus...

How many times have I ... and you, I know you ... gone along with me because nothing seemed more real than what Jesus taught .. simply, "Our Father, who art in heaven..." That's it. Breaking our hearts and healing them at the same time...

This Sunday, with a slew of examples of our national failure to do something healing ... because yes, it's not possible to read Hosea without connecting government failings and their inevitable bad consequences up ahead .. that's what he was living out in his personal life as Israel got closer and closer to captivity, after all the evidence of rescue from Egypt in their past and the promise of new life up ahead again and again ... This is our witness this Sunday.

Take God's loving anguish seriously this hour together. Meditate on our part of the new creation that God wants to bring about, even as this heat, this summer, illustrates how far we have to go to get back to a just use of nature and a better handling of all these blessings we have compared to our ancestors and our international neighbors ... much less all those we are so hideously abusing because they are not full citizens among us.

Pray to understand the healing that the Lord is mercifully and beautifully giving us.

Thank you for Hosea. Bless his children, and lead us in guiding them to make better use of our natural gifts.

Let us see, and believe, and act upon, the witness of scripture this Sunday of God yearning and yes, still promising, to heal what we have damaged.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.