



DESERT TIMES

DAILY MEDITATION: HOSEA 2:16-18, 21-22

JULY 6, 2020

I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart. (Hosea 2:16)

Do you feel like you're in a desert right now? Any number of circumstances might make you feel this way. Perhaps chronic pain is absorbing all your energy. Perhaps you have recently said farewell to a beloved friend. Perhaps you feel you're not connecting with Jesus despite how hard you are praying. Where is God in such "desert" moments? Hosea would tell you that God is right there with you.

The Israelites were living in relative peace and prosperity when Hosea began prophesying to them. But he knew the situation would get worse. Assyria was on the march, conquering one nation after another, and it had Israel in its sights. War and invasion were coming, and the nation hung in the balance.

But that didn't have to be the end of the story. Hosea told the people that the coming "desert experience" of military defeat could result in a deepened intimacy between them and God. It could be an opportunity for them to renew their covenant relationship with the Lord and to accept him as a bride welcomes her loving husband.

That might be hard to believe. Hardship usually makes us ask, *What did I do wrong to end up in this place?* But God always finds a way to use hardship to bring us closer to him. Our “desert” might be the direct result of our own sin—like a friendship wounded by our bad temper. It might be the result of the imperfect world we live in—like a terminal illness. Or it might be a little of both—like having your country overrun by an enemy. Either way, instead of asking, *What did I do to deserve this?* we can ask, *What does God want to do in me through this experience?*

So next time you feel like you’re in the desert, try to see the upside. Remember that God is with you even there. Take a deep breath and try to quiet your thoughts. Turn to God and let him speak to you tenderly. Settle into the silence and listen for his voice. God can bring his love to bear on whatever situation you face, even in the harshest of deserts.

“Lord, I believe that every situation is an opportunity to grow closer to you. So help me to trust in you during the desert times.”