**Hosea 13:14 “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes.”**

Hosea continues the thoughts we’ve studied the last few Sunday evenings. He is again speaking to the rebellious and stiff-necked people of Israel, who find themselves led away into captivity. His prophecies surround the coming punishment, the diaspora – the scattering of the Jews. He brings the word of God to the people – it’s a word that they don’t want to hear, it’s not welcome news, and they, like all others we’ve studied, turn their backs and cluck their tongues to the warning that Hosea gives.

In studying this verse, I read commentary after commentary. There’s a great disagreement among even the most learned theologians. Some claim that God is refusing to redeem and ransom the Jews – that He is giving them over to their sin.

The other half believe that this is God giving a preview of what Christ will do for the children of Israel. The apostle Paul, in **1 Corinthians 15:55,** says this - O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Referencing Hosea 13:14, Paul points out to the ages that Christ is the redemption from death… Christ is the ransom fully paid for those who believe on Him. Because of the work of Jesus on the Cross, believers need no longer fear death. It will have no sting. The grave will not be able to contain our spirits. We will rise to be with God and leave this world behind.

Through Hosea, God says to His people **“I will ransom them from the power of the grave”.** In their captivity they are dead and buried – this is a similar view of the Jews that we see in the Babylonian captivity by the prophet Ezekiel when God showed him the vision of the valley of dry bones. In their sin and rebelliousness, in their current state, the Jews are lost to the purpose that God intended when He made His oath with Abraham and Jacob. The word translated power in this verse has the idea of a hand gripping something. God is literally saying that He will deliver those who love Him from the grip, the hand of the grave.

The word translated ransom is a word that means to rescue them by the payment of a price. Christ paid our price with His blood. He gave something more precious than silver or gold. He laid down His life – greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for another. Hosea was foretelling that Jesus would become the ransom to rescue us from the power of eternal death.

Continuing in the verse**, I will redeem them from death.** The word translated redeem is a concept that the Children of Israel would have related very readily to. Redemption was a part of the Jewish laws and customs. This word relates to someone who is closest of kin. Remember in the book of Ruth, chapter 4, Boaz went up to the gate and pulled aside the closest relative of Naomi to “redeem” a piece of land - as the nearest of kin, the man had right of first refusal to redeem the land.

1 Peter 1:18-19 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Jesus paid the price to redeem us. He acquired us by paying that price. Hebrews 2:11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. In the truest sense, both ransomed and redeemed describes what Jesus did - buying us with a price and once purchased we are now His near kinsman, giving Him all right to redeem us.

**O Death, I will be your plagues!** The one certainty in life is death. We can say death and taxes, but the only real certainty is death. Those who are born will die. No one cheats death. In Hosea, we see that the coming Messiah will not only overcome death, but He will also be death’s plague. The one thing that has plagued man through the ages will now be plagued. We are saved from the second death, our souls ascend to be with Him because He died and we believed. Christ was the death of death!

**O Grave, I will be your destruction!** Much debate through the years has centered around whether these words should have been rendered as a question - “O death, where are thy plagues? O grave, where is thy destruction?” Paul renders it this way in his God inspired use in 1 Corinthians 15:55 - O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

God asks death and the grave where their power is after His Son’s victory. Christ overcame the tomb, and in doing this, destroyed the power of the tomb over all who believe. Death holds no victory over the believer. It has become a beautiful door to our eternal reward. We are not to fear it. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

There’s a story told of a doctor standing with a patient who was dying. The patient asked what the doctor thought death was like. The doctor was slow to answer. About that time, there was a scratching noise at the door. He opened it and in ran a young puppy. It was so happy to see the doctor. The doctor turned to the patient and said, “I believe that, when death comes calling, I will be much like my young puppy here. I’ve been standing at death’s door, scratching for many years, knowing that my Master stands on the other side. I know nothing of what is beyond the door. I know nothing of what I will see when, at last the door opens, and I step through. I only know that my Master waits on the other side. I only know that I long to be with Him, wherever that happens to be. That is what I believe death is like. There is nothing to fear, as long as I know my Master waits and will welcome me on the other side.”

**Pity is hidden from My eyes.** Most of the scholars agree that Pity in this case means repentance. God is saying that repentance is hidden from His eyes. He will not repent of His plan to make the Jews a blessing to all people. Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. From the earliest times, God promised redemption for the curse of death. Through Abraham, God promised in Genesis 12:3 And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. God will not ever break His promises. He is God and He changes not. The sin of a nation is not going to alter God’s sovereign plans – His Will will be accomplished. His word will not return void.

Hosea gave us a prophecy of the coming Savior. Hosea gave hope in times of hopelessness. We live in that hope tonight. We trust in that hope this moment. In the coming weeks, we’ll celebrate that Hope being born in Bethlehem. Death has no power over us – through Jesus it has troubles of its own. The grave cannot hold us – Jesus broke that grip when He came forth. He paid the ransom and He has redeemed His children – through that redemption we have the promise of John 14:1-3 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

God always keeps His promises. We must not be troubled. We must be expectant! Like a puppy waiting on the other side of the door, waiting for the knob to turn and the latch to click so we might run through and be with our Master in the mansion He has prepared.