

Meditation May 3rd

Recently in my bible study group we have been studying Hosea. He prophesied between 750 and 722 BC, at a time when Israel had rebelled against God and were worshipping false gods. God told Hosea to take an adulterous woman, Gomer, to be his wife. Gomer bore him several children, and then left him. Hosea is told by God to buy back his wife, as an illustration of how God desires to restore his relationship with Israel. Hosea goes on to prophesy about the devastation that will fall upon Israel because of her rebellion. But despite all this there is in the book of Hosea much about God's love for Israel and how he wants to woo her back.

Ch 2 vs 16 says this: "I am going to allure her; I will lead her to the desert and speak **tenderly** to her."

Matthew Henry says the following about the verse:

'God's thoughts and ways of mercy are infinitely above ours; his reasons are all fetched from within himself, and not from any thing in us.....God will try whether she (Israel) will be wrought upon by the offers of mercy.the design is plainly to magnify free grace to those on whom God will have mercy purely for mercy's sake.'

This prompted me to look at further verses which express God's tenderness. Psalm 103 is full of ways in which God is kind and tender

'He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and **tender** mercies. vs 4(NLT) .

'The Lord is like a father to his children, **tender** and compassionate to those who fear him. For he know how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust' vs 13-14 (NLT)

One commentator says this of verse 4 :

'it (ie that with which we are crowned) is a wonderful diadem for those who were once the loveless and guilty. We are loved with everlasting love and showered day by day with His mercy.'

Another verse recently brought to my attention

'Your **tender** care and kindness leave no one forgotten, not a man or even a mouse. O God, how extravagant is your cherishing love! All mankind can find a hiding place under the shadow of your wings. Psalm 36: 6-7 (Passion translation)

As I think about tenderness I realise that there is much to ponder in this one word. As we understand more about the tenderness of God, this will help us to develop the quality in ourselves. I have just discovered that Brennan Manning wrote a book called 'The Wisdom of Tenderness' I haven't read it as yet, but here are some quotes from it.

"Jesus is the human face of God, and at the moment (and at every moment), you and I are being seen with the same gaze of infinite tenderness."

"The heart enveloped in the tenderness of God passes that tenderness around indiscriminately, making no distinction between the worthy and the unworthy."

"To live in the wisdom of accepted tenderness is to humbly acknowledge the limitations of the rational, scientific, finite mind and to freely embrace mystery."

To finish I wanted to share a meditation from 'Christian Mindfulness' that you might like to try on the subject of God's tenderness: you can find it [Here](#)