

An invitation

- *(Israel unrepentant/title page)*
- Invitation back to God by faithful prophet
 - warm, gentle, gracious
 - majors on the Lord's restoration
 - something of this is our call...
 - all made in the image of God, even if no history of living faith

An invitation frustrated

- *(image: healthy/unhealthy lifestyles)*
- Change of speaker in 6:4 - now God
 - his frustration at their lack of deep, heartfelt, real turning back to him
 - mist, morning dew...
 - like NHS giving out a healthy eating message that is ignored...
 - or exercise, or similar
 - or parent of a drug user who has tried everything to get them off their dependency...
- God's desire is for reality of relationship, not merely the outward form - (6:6), mercy not sacrifice
 - for faithfulness, in the language of marriage relationship
- Israel dragging Judah with it into evil - and into judgement (6:11)
 - Judah is not to get smug!

An invitation rejected

- *(image: oven/burning)*
- Contrast attitude of repentance they should have, hatred for sin, with attitude they do have, where sin burns within them
 - whole baker's oven stuff of 7:3-7
- Easy to see the "easily deceived and senseless" (7:11) in some of the behaviours of drug users, sucked back into bad relationships, unwise places to hang out...
 - and very easy to feel superior and smug!
 - but Hosea's point/God's point is that that is us... calling (7:11) to other sources of help and comfort when life turns tough
 - food, success, control, all the false idols of our day - what we spend our time thinking of, dreaming about, where we turn in times of stress...

Wrapping up

- Child on a cliff edge? *(image: cliff)*
 - want it to be safe, don't want to run towards it and scare it over the edge...
- Are we, like Israel, unrepentant?
 - there's *(image)* carrot (relationship, forgiveness, heaven, life in all its fullness) and there's stick (judgement)
 - work of the Spirit to bring repentance... *(horse to water image)*
- Prayer, humility, repentance...