

Sermon Discussion Questions & Follow-up Notes

April 19, 2026 // Pastor Andrew Keuer (andrew@firstprotestant.com)

Sermon Texts: Hosea 4:1-6
Sermon Title: "Hope in God's Refusals"

Series: Anchored in Hope, part 2 (Easter Season 2026)
(a series on the prophet Hosea)

Link to Easter 3 sermon: <https://youtu.be/FFzOsUIBQ7w?t=1717>

Key Points & Observations of the Text

It is suggested to read the passage aloud as a group.

Opening discussion: Which words in this text caused you to feel uncomfortable when hearing/reading it? Why does God's Word include "tough" passages that speak of judgment and the need for repentance?

The big idea: Being a people of HOPE means "leaning forward and picking up the scent" of God's movement in our lives. Without HOPE, we break God's commands and accuse others (especially God's appointed servants). God calls us to regular self-assessment and consideration of His commitment to us as revealed in the death & resurrection of Jesus Christ. These stir in us faithfulness, loving kindness, and knowledge of God.

A few words about four dimensions of this text:

1. God assesses the relationship and sees a huge change is needed – This was God's DTR moment ("define the relationship") with the people of Israel, the 10 northern tribes. In 4:3, God speaks of a reset of the relationship that will be on the scale of the worldwide flood. Notice the terms "bloodshed" and the mention of all creatures of earth. Why is a reset needed? 4:2 clarifies: they were using God's Name to accomplish selfish ends ("cursing" – cf. 3rd of the 10th commandments), and regularly breaking commands #6-9. The last one mentioned is #7 (adultery), because adultery is Hosea's paradigmatic sinful act – it depicts a willingness to destroy the precious relationships of others for one's own satisfaction. But in 4:1 Hosea goes even deeper and says that commands are broken because they have lost touch with the heart of their relationship with God. I call these Hosea's "Big Three": faithfulness, loving-kindness, knowledge of God. **Discussion:** Of Hosea's "Big Three" (faithfulness, loving-kindness, knowledge of God), which is least emphasized in contemporary Christianity? What are the consequences of losing a grip on these Big Three?

2. A relationship with God involves HOPE – The German word for "hope" is "hoffen" – and one dictionary says it means: "leaning forward, looking further into what is ahead with greater precision and clarity". Germans use the word "verhoffen" to describe "hunting", and it carries the idea of 'picking up the scent'. Hosea is calling God's people to lean forward and "catch the scent" of God's movement in their lives. The great spiritual teacher Ignatius of Loyola wrote beautifully about how Christians, some time near the end of their day before their eyes begin to close, should take a few minutes to assess "where did I sense the faithfulness, loving-kindness and knowledge of God today in my life?" And secondly, one should ask, "in those moments, what came alive in me? How can I put those desires and projects that God caused to arise in my soul at the forefront of my next day?" **Discussion:** What patterns of spiritual self-assessment have you found helpful? What time of day is best for you to take stock of where you've "picked up the scent" of God?

3. God stills accusations – Hosea highlights the breaking of God's social commandments. He warns that after lawlessness comes finger-pointing and a culture of BLAME. Accusations only breed more accusations, and soon Israel is even willing to accuse and harm priests in their midst. Only one power can stop the echo-chamber of human accusation: divine accusation. Because God's accusation applies to everyone, all are brought to silence, though God's word applies in different ways. **Discussion:** Why do people with a strong sense of God ("knowledge of God") not engage in back-and-forth accusation of others?

4. God's commitment – God promises to do away with their "mother" (= their current religious system), and their children's connection to it. What Hosea was beginning to see was the change in eras that God would bring about with the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus promised the temple would be destroyed and that worship would happen through Jesus (see John 4). The death and resurrection of Jesus is the new flood event (cf 4:3), which does away with the world of guilt & blame. **Discussion:** How can you embody the Easter hope this week?