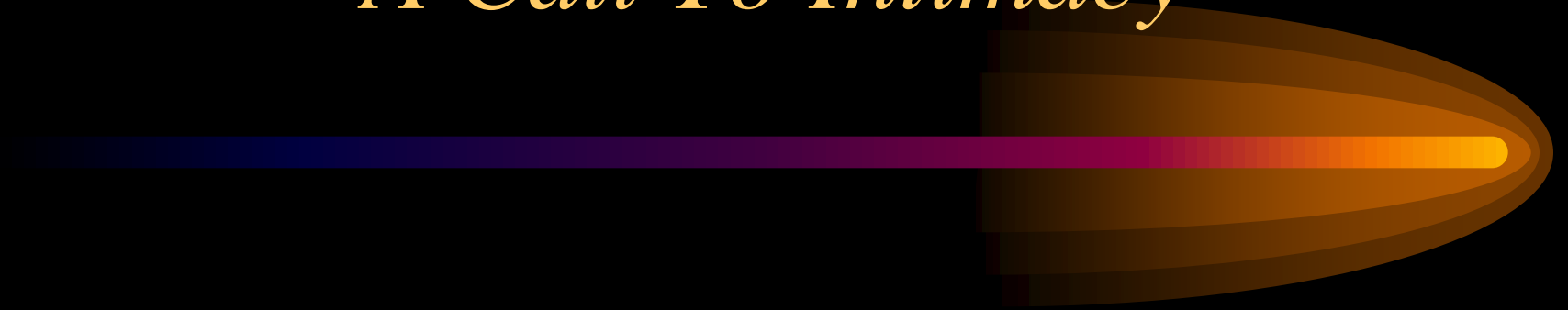


# *A Call To Intimacy*



# *Introduction*



- Life is full of challenges
- All of us face challenges of different intensities
- Japanese say Challenge = Opportunity
- I want to share some thoughts about “challenge” and “opportunity”

# *Types of Challenges*

## **Global, National and Local**

- Weather [tornadoes; flooding; fires; drought]
- Earth [earthquakes; tsunamis; volcanic eruptions]
- Politics [Middle East – Egypt; Tunisia; Libya; Yemen; Bahrain; Syria]
- Finance [Banking Crisis; National financial crises e.g. Greece; Ireland; Spain]
- UK austerity plan and cuts
- Local papers highlight local issues

# *Personal Challenges*



- Health
- Work
- Family
- Personal Relationship
- Mental pressures

## *Hosea 2:14-15 (NIV)*

*Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor (trouble) a door of hope. There she will respond (sing) as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.*

## Hosea 2:14-15 (Message)

*And now, here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to start all over again.*

*I'm taking her back out into the wilderness where we had our first date, and I'll court her.*

*I'll give her bouquets of roses. I'll turn Heartbreak Valley into Acres of Hope. She'll respond like she did as a young girl, those days when she was fresh out of Egypt.*

## *Why Challenges?*

- I believe challenges are about opportunities for a step-change in our growth both corporately and individually
- They are about getting to know Jesus in a far deeper way than we have done before

# Story of HOSEA

- Hosea
  - An OT prophet contemporary of Isaiah
  - Hosea saw Israel in a mess- moral & political decay, increased violence; desperation; politically confused people; people worshipping gods (those of the Canaanites e.g. Baal) rather than Jehovah – spiritual adultery
- God asked Hosea to marry a prostitute called GOMER to symbolise and convey a message to the people of Israel.
- During the marriage they have 3 children, these too are given symbolic names:-
  - Jezreel (son) – House scattered
  - Lo-ruhamah (girl) – I will no longer have compassion/ she did not know a father's love
  - Lo-ammi (girl)- Not my people, I am not your God
- God orders Hosea to keep on loving Gomer. At one point he even has to buy her back.
- To get the full story read the book



*The 4 W's.....*

THE  
WAY



# THE WHERE



THE  
WHAT



# THE WHY



Be still and know that He is God  
Be still and know that He is holy  
Be still, O restless soul of mine  
Bow before the Prince of Peace  
Let the noise and clamour cease

# *Song- Be Still and Know*



Be still and know that He is God  
Be still and know that He is faithful  
Consider all that He has done  
Stand in awe and be amazed  
And know that He will never change  
Be still

Be still, and know that He is God  
Be still, and know that He is God  
Be still, and know that He is God

Be still; Be speechless

Be still and know that He is God  
Be still and know He is our Father  
Come rest your head upon His breast  
Listen to the rhythm of His unfailing heart of love  
Beating for His little ones, calling each of us to come  
Be still, Be still