

The Prophet & the Prostitute - Hosea 1-3

Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

The book of Hosea leans into marriage in a way not many of us would expect. Hosea is a prophet called by God to preach to Israel and communicate the unceasing love of God for His people. But it's the way God calls Hosea to do so that's bizarre. He commands Hosea to take an adulterous woman as his wife. The one person Hosea is called to form the closest relationship with, the one person he is called to trust the most, the one person he is called to know in the most intimate fashion - this person will destroy their relationship with her unfaithfulness. The marriage of Hosea and Gomer is a metaphor for God's relationship with Israel. Time and time again, Israel has left The Lord to pursue worship of idols, forgetting who He is and what He has done for them, and The Lord wants to present to them through this message of Hosea a picture from His perspective that is intended to draw them to repentance and restore their relationship.

So Hosea takes Gomer as his wife, and 3 children are born, each one named by God reflecting judgment for Gomer's and Israel's unfaithfulness: Jezreel, No Mercy, and Not My People. Only the first child is known to belong to Hosea; the last two are suspected to be a result of Gomer's unfaithfulness, "children of whoredom" (Hosea 1:2). Chapters 1 and 2 lay out a repeated pattern of The Lord proclaiming progressively difficult judgment. In chapter 1, each child's name is increasingly darkening the tone of God's relationship with Israel. But after the pronouncement of the third child's name, The Lord relents in mercy, recalling the covenant made with Abraham that Israel's children would be as numerous as the sand of the sea, and the previous statement "You are not my people" will be transformed to calling them "Children of the living God" (or "Sons of the living God" as Paul phrases it when quoting this passage in Romans 9:25-26).

The pattern of three judgments in the next chapter can be seen by Hosea's use of the word "therefore", which occurs in verses 6, 9, and 14, with each section describing Gomer's and Israel's unfaithfulness and the subsequent judgment proclaimed. But similarly, after the third proclamation, where we would expect the final nail in the coffin to be hammered, God relents and shows His unchanging character again by giving grace and mercy. Throughout this chapter and the next, we see God crush the head of the serpent, destroying his lies in how God protects, provides, pursues, and purchases His people. As the bride runs after the serpent, God puts a hedge of protection around her such that she seeks but does not find her idols. While she believes she receives provision from the serpent, it is only God who provides what she truly needs. Even though she runs to the serpent, God pursues her, speaking tenderly to her heart, trying to restore their relationship to its former beauty. No longer is she to conflate the tyrannous, serpent-like overlord husband she's pursuing with the giving, sacrificial, lovingly merciful husband she has in The Lord Yahweh.

The third chapter of Hosea has been called one of the greatest passages in all of scripture, pointing to the relentless love of The Lord for His people. Not only has Gomer run away, but she has sunk so far that she finds herself for sale. She could have fallen so deeply into debt that she had to sell herself into slavery, or her lover could have been a pimp who had decided he no longer had need of her and tried to sell her - we simply don't know from the text. Regardless, Gomer is now left standing on the auction block with no future, no friends, nowhere to go - even her lovers have left her. She stands naked, ashamed, and yet: Hosea comes to purchase her, seeking to restore their relationship. That's what The Lord does for Israel; that's what He does for you. He knows your past, all the decisions that have wrought separation between you and Him - and still He shows up

to purchase you. That's what Christ did on the cross. He paid the price to redeem you from your enslavement to sin. He pursues you when you have gone astray. He provides the greatest gift of grace you could ever imagine. He protects you by laying down His life for you. He seeks to restore the greatest marital relationship you could ever fathom. Hosea even points to Christ, the descendant of David who would come in the latter days to restore the covenant between Yahweh and the children of Israel (Hosea 3:4-5), as well as to the future consummation of the marriage between Yahweh and His bride, when the final crushing of the serpent's head would yield a covenant between man and nature and the abolishment of the bow, the sword, and war, forever allowing Israel to dwell with her husband in the purest betrothal, experiencing complete joy and peace for all eternity (Hosea 2:18-20).

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Ezekiel 6	Ezekiel 7	Ezekiel 8	Ezekiel 9	Ezekiel 10	Ezekiel 11	Ezekiel 12

Reading from this past week's sermon: Hosea 1-3

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Psalm 22

Family Worship

Song - *Everlasting God*

<https://youtu.be/JSHRThrP1O0?si=GaZ5qPtuHho5QzKw>

Gospel Project

Unit: Jesus the Teacher

Story: The Lord of the Sabbath

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?

Answer: Jesus taught about God and His Kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

Scripture: Matthew 12

New City Catechism

Question 28: What happens after death to those not united to Christ by faith?

Answer: They will be cast out from the presence of God, into hell, to be justly punished, forever.

Verse: John 3:16-18, 36

Hosea 1-3

- What is your relationship with The Lord currently like?
- How can you relate to Gomer in this story? In what ways have you sought your provision by running to idols outside of The Lord?
- Have you experienced a time of God pursuing you? Can you describe what it felt like for the relentless love of God to speak tenderly to your heart and offer you mercy?
- How do you see Jesus in the text of Hosea crush the head of the serpent?

Prayer

*Pray that you would continue to experience the pursuing love of God through Jesus, even when you stray from Him.

*Pray for the Emerald Forest neighborhood in Eureka, our people who live there, and for God's mission in the city.