

Valentine's Day – Hosea

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, February 13, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here in person or joining us via livestream, you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you desire. We have much to cover in a short space of time.

HOSEA PT. 1

Valentine's Day celebrates romantic love and the connection shared between men and women (i.e., husbands and wives). Men, you have less than twenty-four hours to make any-and-all necessary purchases! Thus said, I want to offer what may be the strangest Valentine's Day sermon I have ever shared—a sermon born of the OT Book of Hosea.

NOTE 1 – Please turn to that OT work as I work to set the stage. For those of you who may not know, the early portions of Hosea (ch. 1–3) focus upon the marital connection between Hosea and his wife, Gomer. Allow me you to walk you through the key points of their story...

NOTE 2 – In chapter 1 the prophet Hosea is commanded to go and “marry a **promiscuous** woman and have children with her” (v. 2a, NIV, Emphasis Mine). There is some debate as to whether Gomer was promiscuous at the time of their marriage (e.g., engaged in prostitution) OR if she became unfaithful sometime later. There is no definitive answer, but I believe the latter is the more likely interpretation. Moving on...

NOTE 3 – Gomer goes on to produce three children who are given rather strange names by the Lord...

- 1) Child #1 v. 4 – Jezreel (lit. “to scatter”)
- 2) Child #2 v. 6 – Lo-Ruhamah (“not loved”)
- 3) Child #3 v. 9 – Lo-Ammi (“not my people”)

FYI – Interestingly, it is entirely possible that Hosea was NOT the biological father of Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi. Rather, Gomer may have conceived these children through various lovers and not through her faithful husband, Hosea. However, we cannot know for certain. Thus said...

- Q1. Can you imagine being a prophet of the Lord and receiving such a call?**
- Q2. How many men want to serve the Lord by obeying this explicit command?**
- Q3. Can you imagine how Hosea felt as a dutiful husband (i.e., heart-wrenching)?**

KEY – Yet, the plot thickens in Hosea 3...

LET US CONTINUE...

HOSEA PT. 2

NOTE 1 – In Hosea 3, the prophet is commanded to pursue and take back his adulterous wife! Apparently, they had separated after the events of chapter 1, and she was given to further adultery (3:1): “The Lord said to me, ‘Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress.’”

Q. How might you respond in this moment of divine calling?

Q. Who would find it easy to say YES to the Lord at this order?

AMAZINGLY...

NOTE 2 – The prophet Hosea obeys and goes to Gomer. Herein, the text notes something extremely interesting (3:2, Emphasis Mine): “So I **bought** her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley.” Together, this totals app. 30 pieces of silver (i.e., the price typically paid for a slave)...

Q1. What exactly is going on in this text?

Q2. What does it mean Hosea “bought” Gomer?

Q3. Why did the price seem to be that of a slave-price?

A. Seemingly, Gomer had become the legal property of another man—a man who may have hired her out as a prostitute. Consider how far her sin had carried her from the safety and blessing of Hosea’s care! When Hosea purchased Gomer (i.e., buying her freedom from this abusive situation), he redeemed her from an existence of unceasing shame, objectification and degradation in a supreme act of mercy and unconditional love!

KEY 1 – This speaks volumes to the type of man and husband Hosea was! Moving along...

NOTE 3 – Following this transaction, Hosea shared the following with redeemed and restored Gomer...

Hosea 3:3

3 Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.”

KEY 2 – Thus reunited, there is every indication that they lived happily ever after...

WHAT AN ODD YET TREMENDOUS ACCOUNT...

TRANSITIONS

Of course, you may well be wondering why I am sharing such an account on Valentine’s Day. This is not exactly the type of story they necessarily make into romantic comedies or Hallmark movies! You may also be wondering what all of this means, and why God would order Hosea to marry such a woman or face such a heart-rending ordeal...

FYI – I would like to spend some time addressing these questions...

TO BEGIN...

UNDERSTANDING HOSEA PT. 1

We do well to consider the historical and spiritual context of the Book of Hosea...

NOTE 1 – Hosea lived in the Northern Kingdom of Israel some two-hundred-years after they had separated from Judah in the South. Specifically, Hosea was called upon to speak on God’s behalf during the reign of one of Israel’s worst kings, Jeroboam II, at a time when the nation was spiraling into chaos prior to its destruction by the Assyrian Empire in 722 B.C.

NOTE 2 – In the years leading up to this decimation and exile at the hands of the Assyrians, the Lord warned the Northern Israelites of their rampant spiritual promiscuity (i.e., idolatry), wickedness, and of the corresponding judgment to come. Interestingly, God chose to communicate these prophetic messages through the marital relationship of Hosea and Gomer. Thus...

KEY – Their marriage came to serve as a symbolic representation of the relationship between God and His people.

NOTE 3 – Keep all of this in mind as we explore portions of Hosea 1–3...

UNDERSTANDING HOSEA PT. 2

1) Hosea 1:1–3a

Hosea 1:1–3a (Emphasis Mine)

1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel: 2 When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, **for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.**” 3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim...”

NOTE – The marriage of Hosea to Gomer and her eventual unfaithfulness DEPICTED God’s taking of Israel to Himself at Sinai (cf. Exod. 24:3) and their eventual waywardness. In the eyes of the Lord, the idolatry of Israel was tantamount to spiritual promiscuity or adultery and the ultimate betrayal of His loving-kindness!

2) Hosea 1:3–5

Hosea 1:3–5 (Emphasis Mine)

3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call him **Jezreel**, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. 5 In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”

NOTE 1 – This child of Hosea and Gomer was to be called “Jezreel” (v. 4). Why? Firstly, Jezreel means “to scatter” (i.e., indicating what would soon take place by the Assyria Empire). Secondly, this name signifying judgment referred to the city of Jezreel, wherein Jehu slaughtered the house of King Ahab (cf. 2 Ki. 9:7–10:28), establishing his kingdom in violence (v. 4a). Such violence would be met with divine justice...

NOTE 2 – God would bring an end to Israel, as He would break their strength as in the “breaking of bow” (v. 5)...

NOTE 3 – Of course, this was completely fulfilled in 722 B.C.

3) Hosea 1:6–7

Hosea 1:6–7 (Emphasis Mine)

6 Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call her **Lo-Ruhamah** (which means “not loved”), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. 7 Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the Lord their God, will save them.”

NOTE – Gomer conceived again, potentially by a paramour, and this child was to be called “Lo-Ruhamah” (v. 6). Meaning “not loved,” God would no longer show favor to Israel after centuries of unrepentant evil and unrequited love. The wheels of justice were in motion with no force to slow and/or stop them! However, the Lord would show mercy to the Southern Kingdom of Judah...

FYI – Judah was spared when Jerusalem was besieged in the days of Hezekiah in 701 B.C. (cf. 2 Ki. 19; Isa, 37).

4) Hosea 1:8–9

Hosea 1:8–9 (Emphasis Mine)

8 After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. 9 Then the Lord said, “Call him **Lo-Ammi** (which means “not my people”), for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

NOTE – Gomer conceived again, potentially by another lover, and this third and final child was to be called “Lo-Ammi” (v. 9) (lit. “not my people”). This name SYMBOLIZED God’s final rejection of Israel due to sin. Because of the spiritual harlotry of this Northern Kingdom, they were to be put away and given over to both judgment and exile.

UNDERSTANDING HOSEA PT. 3

Clearly the word of the Lord through Hosea and his symbolic marriage to Gomer presented a chilling indictment!

KEY 1 – However, rejection would NOT be the end of the story! The redemption and restoration of Gomer to Hosea after a period of separation SYMBOLIZED the eventual redemption and restoration of Israel to the Lord after exile. Though Israel would face righteous punishment for their crimes, mercy would ultimately triumph over judgment...

Hosea 1:3–6, 8–11 (Emphasis Mine)

3 So he [i.e., Hosea] married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. 5 In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”

6 Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means “not loved”), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. . . . 8 After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. 9 Then the Lord said, “Call him Lo-Ammi (which means “not my people”), for you are not my people, and I am not your God. 10 **Yet** the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God.’ 11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel [lit. “to plant”].

KEY 2 – All that they had experienced due to sin would be REVERSED by the mercy and loving-kindness of God...

Hosea 2:16–23

16 “In that day,” declares the Lord,

“you will call me ‘my husband’;

you will no longer call me ‘my master’ [i.e., Heb. baal].

17 I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips;

no longer will their names be invoked.

18 In that day I will make a covenant for them

with the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky

and the creatures that move along the ground.

Bow and sword and battle

I will abolish from the land,

so that all may lie down in safety.

19 I will betroth you to me forever;

I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,

in love and compassion.

20 I will betroth you in faithfulness,

and you will acknowledge the Lord.

21 “In that day I will respond,”

declares the Lord—

“I will respond to the skies,

and they will respond to the earth;

22 and the earth will respond to the grain,

the new wine and the olive oil,

and they will respond to Jezreel [“God plants”]

23 I will plant her for myself in the land;

I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one [Lo-Ruhamah cf. 1:6].’

I will say to those called ‘Not my people, [Lo-Ammi cf. 1:9]’ ‘You are my people’;

and they will say, ‘You are my God.’”

Hosea 3:4b–5

4 . . . the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. 5 Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.

SUMMATIONS

We must remember that this oracle of judgment and subsequent restoration was a **TIMELY** word for Israel...

Q. Why was this oracle significant?

1) It Gave Insight into the Anguish of God Over Sin

NOTE 1 – The pain and heartache Hosea felt over his wayward wife was **REPRESENTATIVE** of the anguish God felt over wayward Israel. Both figures, Hosea and the Lord, desired to bless their partners, but they were spurned at every turn with the cruelest and most selfish of rejections.

NOTE 2 – The anguish of God over sin (i.e., as a jilted lover) pervades the prophetic literature of the Bible. When you read through their writings, expect to see this theme time-and-again. The prophets of God wanted Israel to understand what they had done to the heart of their first love!

2) It Revealed the Justice of God and the Penalty for Unrepentant Sin

NOTE 1 – The Lord may be slow to anger (cf. Ps. 103:8), but not impossible. Spurn Him over a long of period of time; reject every warning and resist every call to repent; oppose His faithful messengers time-after-time, etc., and judgment becomes an inevitability. A holy, righteous and good God cannot tolerate unchecked and unrestrained evil forever.

NOTE 2 – We do well to consider that God had warned His people from the very beginning re: the perils of sin. Consider the whole of Deuteronomy 28 as one example (i.e., a chapter that delineates the blessings associated with obedience **AND** the curses associated with evil). This singular selection promised judgment and even exile should Israel forget their God...

Deuteronomy 28 (Moses Speaking Centuries Earlier)

64 Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known. 65 Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. 66 You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. 67 In the morning you will say, “If only it were evening!” and in the evening, “If only it were morning!”—because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. 68 The Lord will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.

MOREOVER...

3) It Demonstrated the Mercy and Loving-Kindness of the Lord

NOTE – The merciful and gracious work of Hosea in redeeming Gomer foreshadowed the loving-kindness of God to His people. Though they would certainly pay the price for their sin, the day would come when He would reverse their misfortunes and regather His people to Himself.

SIMILARLY...

4) It Spoke to a Future Hope in the Lord

NOTE 1 – I can only wonder what those exile felt as they pondered the word given through Hosea. If the Lord was faithful to His promise in bringing about judgment, would He also be faithful to bring about corresponding deliverance and a future hope per His Word? If Hosea could take back Gomer, could God take them back after such vile behavior?

NOTE 2 – The story of Hosea and Gomer would encourage the people that death, misery and ruin would not be the end of their national story, for a wondrous future awaited the people of God, as they would rally to the Lord and His appointed Davidic King (cf. Hos. 1:11; 3:4) who would bring about unprecedented blessing and cosmic-level change!

KEY – You see, the Book of Hosea touches upon one of the greatest love stories ever told (i.e., perfect for V. D.)!

TRANSITIONS & APPLICATIONS

Of course, not only did the Book of Hosea present a timely word for Israel; it is TIMELESS and speaks to all ages...

KEY 1 – Though we are looking back upon messages given by God to a particular people at a particular time in history, we maintain that “16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

KEY 2 – Therefore, we do well to heed the lessons within...

1) We Do Well to Consider the Anguish God Feels Over Sin

NOTE 1 – Let us not think that the pain God feels over human sin is relegated to a previous era or dispensation. Rather, since the Lord is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb. 13:8), we should not be surprised to see ample New Testament texts that speak to His anguish over our waywardness...

Matthew 23:37–38 (Jesus Speaking re: Jerusalem)

37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate.”

Revelation 2:1, 4–5, 7 (Jesus Speaking to His Church)

1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write . . . 4 . . . I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. . . . 7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Q. Can you not hear the anguish and longing in His words?

2) We Do Well to Remember the Justice of God and the Penalty for Sin

NOTE 1 – The Lord may be slow to anger (cf. Ps. 103:8), but not impossible. Spurn Him over a long of period of time; reject every warning and resist every call to repent; oppose His faithful messengers time-after-time, etc., and judgment becomes an inevitability. A holy, righteous and good God cannot tolerate unchecked and unrestrained evil forever.

NOTE 2 – Do you think that payment for “unrepentant” sin (i.e., individually and collectively) is an OT concept?

Luke 13:5 (Jesus Speaking)

5 “. . . But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Revelation 2:18a, 20–23 (Jesus Speaking)

18 “To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: . . . 20 . . . have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

Revelation 3:14–17 (Jesus Speaking)

14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. 15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

NOTE 3 – Perhaps this is something we would do well to remember both individually and collectively.

3) We Do Well to Remember the Mercy and Loving-Kindness of God

NOTE – Despite universal human waywardness, God has made the way for reconciliation, restoration and redemption. We marvel at the mercy and grace of Hosea in taking Gomer back to himself, and rightly so! How can we not marvel at what this reveals about the Lord (i.e., for both Israel and for the whole of the world)?

John 3:16–17

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Romans 5:6–8

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4:10

10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

4) We Do Well to Remember the Glorious Hope in Store for His People

NOTE – The grand story of the Lord will not end with solely the death and destruction of the wicked. Rather, it will culminate with a glorious future reserved for the people of God—a people who will one day rally to the Lord and to His appointed Davidic King who shall bring about unprecedented blessing and truly cosmic-level change...

a) Hosea Foresaw this Day

Hosea 1:11

11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

Hosea 3:4–5

4 For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. 5 Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.

b) Isaiah Foresaw this Day

Isaiah 9:6–7

6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the greatness of his government and peace

there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

c) Daniel Foresaw this Day

Daniel 7:13–14

13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

d) The apostle Paul Foresaw this Day

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

e) John the Revelator Foresaw this Day

Revelation 19:11–16

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.

Revelation 21:1–7

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

KEY – Ultimately the love story of Hosea speaks to the grandest of all love stories and the finished work of Christ. When you think of love on this VD, think of the Lord, His love for and promise to you, and your response in kind.

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Those who wish to give online may do so at www.NewLifeBarre.org. Those who wish to give in person can utilize the offering boxes located throughout the church facility. Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting this local work of Christ.

NOTE 2 – Ministry schedule...

Prayer – Sunday at 8:45am

Sunday School – Sunday at 9:15am

CYC – Tuesday from 3–4pm and 4–5pm

Weekly Study – Thursday at 6:30–7:30pm

Women's Ministry – 2nd Tuesday at 6:30pm

Men's Breakfast – 2nd Saturday at 9am

Potluck – TODAY After this Service