

God's Love for Israel (and the Backslider)

Hosea 3:1-5; 11:7; 14:4

A couple of weeks ago I preached on the “The Prodigal Son.” Hosea is about a “prodigal wife.” As the parable of “the prodigal son” is about the Father’s love for his wayward son, Hosea is about God’s love for His unfaithful “wife”—Israel. It is a love story—A tragic love story.

➡ The _____ of Hosea concerns Israel’s returning unto the Lord “*in the latter days*” (3:5).

BAC G **D:** God made a covenant with Israel that took the form of a

- 1:3-5: Jezreel ("scattered by God"). The goal of marriage is "oneness." Israel would be "scattered."
- 1:6-7: Loruhamah ("unpityed"). God would no longer have pity on Israel.
- 1:8-9: Loammi ("not my people,"/"no kin of mine"). Illegitimate

One day, Gomer deserted her husband, Hosea and her children to go back to being a "hooker" (2:5).

Hosea must have wept every time he looked into the faces of those three little children who reminded him of the woman he loved. Much like Jesus wept over Jerusalem when said, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*" (Mt. 23:37).

II. God's love is PUZZLING in it's purpose .

➡ Who can explain God's love?

- A. The thing God commanded Hosea to do did not make sense. But, God's love for Israel did not make sense either.
 1. The question is not why God would ask Hosea to marry Gomer, but why God would marry Israel? Why would God commit Himself to a stiff-necked people He knew would be unfaithful to Him?
 2. According our way of thinking, God is irrational. We would choose to love someone who would love us in return.
 - ➡ How many of you would marry someone you knew would be unfaithful and cheat on you, *repeatedly*?
 3. God's love does not depend on your faithfulness to Him, but on the faithfulness of God Himself. "*If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself*" (2 Tim. 2:13).
- B. Some think God only loves good people. But God loves sinners. He pursues them like as Hosea to sought Gomer. When He is be-

trayed, He still loves them. When they become enslaved in sin, He buys them back.

1. Our predicament: *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one”* (Rom. 3:10-12).
2. But in spite of that, God did something completely irrational — he loved us and paid the price for our sins—*“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8). **“And Can It Be!”**

III. God’s love is **PERSISTENT** in it’s pursuit (3:1-3).

- ➔ We often give up on people. Some write people off when their love has been betrayed. But, not God—God is different.
- A. God’s **E E E** love (3:1—*“Go YET...”*). “Hosea, don’t give up on Gomer, even though she’s cheating on you with her lover, or with her latest boyfriend.” The Lord is saying to Hosea, “Hosea, I want you to seek her out in spite of her adultery.”
 1. Gomer ends up as on the block of a slave auction.
 - ➔ That’s the way sin is—It promises freedom, but makes you it’s slave.
 2. As was the custom of auctioning female slaves, Gomer stood in the marketplace before the bidders stripped naked.
 - ➔ The name Gomer means “perfect,” possibly a reference to her appearance. In the beginning she was a beautiful woman. But now her beauty is gone—“damaged goods.”
- B. God’s **EDEE G** love (v. 2).
 - ➔ Hosea gets a babysitter for the kids to make a trip into town. His children ask, “Where are you going Daddy?” Hosea smiled with a tear in his eye, “I’m going to bring your mother home!”
 - 1. Hosea does the unthinkable—He buys back his own wife.
 - ➔ To the world, she wasn’t worth much—approx. \$12.50.

2. Remember, Hosea is an object lesson about the love of God. Where in all of the universe do you get the clearest picture of the love of God? You will never see a clearer picture of the love that sought us and bought us, than at a place called Calvary. There the Lord Jesus Christ went to the slave market of sin and shed His blood to buy us back for Himself (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

C. God's **E** **G** love (v. 3).

1. Hosea will make her his wife again—a living picture of God's unconditional love for faithless Israel.
2. Hosea clothed her, brought her back home, and kept right on loving her.

IV. **God's love is POWERFUL in it's perseverance** (11:1-8).

➡ The power of God's love is the over arching theme of Hosea. Just as God's love would not give up on Israel, Hosea's love for his adulterous wife would not give up.

A. God's **CA** (vs. 1-2).

B. God's **CA E** (vs. 3).

C. God's **C A** (v. 4). Jeremiah 31:3, "*Yea, I have loved thee with an **everlasting love**: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*"

D. God's **C E** (vs. 7-9).

➡ Admah and Zeboim were two cities that were annihilated with Sodom and Gomorrah because of it's sin (Dt. 29:22-23). Though Israel deserved the judgment of Admah and Zeboim, God turned from His anger to show Israel love and mercy.

➡ God's love is a committed love. Hosea demonstrates a love that "*suffereth long and is kind... beareth all things... hopeth all things... endureth all things*" and "*never faileth.*" Hosea reveals a love that never lets go, and never gives up!

Homer's mythological poem, *The Odyssey*, gives a beautiful illustration of a love that endures. Odysseus is married to Penelope.

He is gone for twenty years fighting the Trojan War and overcoming all kinds of obstacles trying to get home to his beautiful wife. During his absence Penelope faithfully waited his return. Most of his subjects gave up on him, thinking he was dead. Several men sought to persuade Penelope to marry one of them. She refused because still loved her husband and believed he would return. Eventually she was forced to make a promise to those who desired to marry her—When she finished weaving a burial shroud for Odysseus’s father, she would choose a new husband. However, every night she unraveled part of the shroud so it was never finished. Finally, what she was doing was discovered and she was forced to choose a new husband. But Odysseus returned. just in time, to his faithful wife whose love was tested over 20 years.

➡A love like this is not found only in mythology. There are examples of this kind of commitment in real life. For example, the story of Chris Spielman’s love for his wife Stefanie. Chris Spielman was a NFL linebacker who played in four Pro-Bowls. In 1998, he sat out the season to care for his wife Stefanie in her battle against breast cancer. When Stefanie’s hair fell out due to the chemotherapy, Chris shaved his own head as a gesture of solidarity. He ran the household, prepared the meals, took care of the children, and supported his wife. Stefanie battled her cancer for more than a decade before she finally died in 2009. Her husband faithfully stood with her the whole time.

V. **God’s love is PERFECT in it’s pardon.**

➡It forgives completely (14:1-2, 4, 8-9). There is coming a day when Israel will turn from her false gods and return unto the Lord.

A : Hosea means “God is salvation” (Joshua / Jesus).

- God loves you, no matter what you’ve done, or how sinful you are.
- He paid the price to buy your soul out of the slave market of sin.
- God is seeking you out.