

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: [Hosea 3:1-5](#).
- B. This is my favorite sermon, from the late bro. Richard Rogers.
- C. I have a story to tell, and I'll preach a little too. I believe this is the greatest love story in the Bible except Jesus/Calvary.

I. THE STORY OF A PROPHET AND HIS BROKEN HEART.

- A. This is the story of Hosea and Gomer, illustrating God's love.
- B. This is the tragedy of the parsonage, the autobiographical account of the prophet's broken home and the prophet's broken heart.
- C. The time is the 8th century B.C., a time of gross immorality in Israel. Amos says that a man and his father use the same woman to satisfy their sexual lust (2:7); the women cry out "bring let us drink, bring let us drink" (4:1).
- D. Everyone goes to the Baal worship again, and for that worship to be completed there must be the fertilization of the gods by sexual intercourse. Even the religious people are fornicators.
- E. Maybe it was for that reason that Hosea decided not to marry.

II. HOSEA, GOMER, AND THEIR CHILDREN.

A. Hosea and Gomer.

- 1. As the story opens Hosea is full-grown, single, and a prophet. God comes to him and says, "Take thee a wife of whoredom, and have children of whoredom." In one way I am thankful for the children of whoredom because I know they were not whores at the time they were born, but would later become them. Therefore, I don't believe, that Gomer was a prostitute when Hosea married her. But Hosea married her knowing full well she would later become guilty of whoredom!
- 2. I'm sure Hosea loved Gomer (he wouldn't have married her), and I'm sure that Gomer loved Hosea. Fact is, she was probably swept off her feet by the love of such a man. Here is the only man in all of Israel who could bring the treasure of an unsquandered purity to the marriage altar.
- 3. He had the zeal of a poet, the order of a patriot, and the heart of a prophet.
- 4. For a while their home was filled with his love for her, and her love for him... but she did not share his number one concern. He was a prophet and had to preach doom and damnation to Israel.
- 5. He would not, because he could not, take her to the parties, and revelries, and the worship of Baal. Even though not written in the text I can hear her say such things as:
 - a. "Preach, preach, preach. You love your work more than you love me."
 - b. "I'm losing my friends, those I have don't come around anymore."
 - c. "All they hear is doom, damnation, and destruction."
- 6. He would answer, "Don't you see, that it is these things that are leading our beloved nation into eternal destruction? We must avert this, and God has given me the opportunity!"
- 7. She would say, "I don't care what God has done. Why He's not the only god anyway. We can go to the Baal worship, enjoy ourselves and have a good time. I'm tired of following this old, tacky Jehovah."
- 8. Now Hosea lives in a house you house you can no longer call a home. For years he may have done this. But he went on preaching and loving while Gomer began fornicating.

B. The children.

- 1. But then something happened that gave the prophet renewed hope. The sweet angel of suffering visited their home and a son was to be born. The Lord said, call his name, "Jezreel." Jezreel is a valley that runs from Mt. Carmel to Mts. Tabor and Gilboa in the south. It is known as Esdraelon,

Meggido, or Armageddon. It is the place where God's army, although outnumbered, always won its victories. Hosea thought God named him Jezreel for the **victory** he would win in saving their marriage. But "Jezreel" also means "**scattered**" because instead of pulling them together, Jezreel drove Hosea and Gomer apart.

2. Years swept by with him still preaching and her still fornicating. A daughter is born, and the Lord said call her "Lo-Ruhamah" which means "**unloved**;" for that is how Hosea feels in his own house.
3. Years passed again, and another son is born, and the Lord said call his name "Lo-ammi" which means "**not mine**." And that which had been a perplexing doubt became a damning certainty, for Hosea now knows that a child born in his own home is not his; but is the result of one of her acts with one of her lovers.
4. And he DOESN'T divorce her! That must have been consternation to his friends and scorn full of amazement to his enemies. Here is a man preaching against immorality and living with a whore! They laughed at him and said, "the man is a spiritual fool, the prophet's mad" (9:7). But he loved her, and he kept on preaching.

C. A family no more.

1. (A little imagination here.) One night Hosea comes home and doesn't hear the sound of wifely duties being performed, no smell of supper being cooked and from another room he can hear the whimper from where his three children are. He goes in and on the table there is a note (now the text doesn't say there is a note, but no woman ever left a man w/o leaving a note). The note reads like this:
 - a. "Hosea, I no longer love you, haven't loved you for years."
 - b. "I don't love the children, I care nothing for them."
 - c. "I'm going after my lovers, I'm not coming back; don't come looking for me. Sincerely, but no longer yours, Gomer."
2. Hosea feeds and puts his children to bed, and goes to the window, looking and waiting for Gomer to come home. He waited that night and the next day, and the next night; days w/o sunshine and nights, w/o stars, until it finally dawns on his heart that she WAS GONE.
3. Then looking back, through the telescope of his tears, he saw deeper into the heart of God than any man ever had seen before or would see again until Jesus died on Calvary. And he saw three things.

III. **WHAT HOSEA SAW.**

A. First, Hosea saw the real, true, magnitude of sin.

So much so that uses a word 16 times in his book to describe it--WHOREDOM.

1. Have you ever seen a whore? When in Las Vegas in the summer of '81 Bonnie and I saw one sitting on bus bench, ugly, trying with mega make-up to paint some kind of beauty back on her face. I have since decided that when we walk into sin with both eyes wide open that is exactly what we are in God's sight--WHORES.
2. I know that term is offensive, it needs to be! Sin needs to be offensive to us. Wouldn't it be tragic to have to marry someone like that. I'm glad God didn't ask me to marry a woman like that. But God married that kind of person when He married me; and God married that kind of person when He married you (in becoming Xians).
3. Even today if we decide to do just one little sin, that's one act of whoredom against God. Then we do another little sin, that's two acts of whoredom against God. Now let me ask you; how many acts of whoredom does it take to make a whore?
4. Hosea is learning that sin is NOT a trifle, it's a TRAGEDY. He knows that sin is not something you toy around with. It is because of sin he no longer has a wife. Hosea has learned the real, true, magnitude of sin. We need to learn that lesson too.

B. Second, **Hosea learned that God is a suffering God.**

No pagan god suffers, but Hosea learned that because of Israel's sin that God was suffering.

1. Use your imagination here. Hosea out preaching and he sees Gomer w/another man headed to his house. The next day, the same thing but w/a man of lesser degree. On the third day he sees her w/the town drunk. On the fourth day she stands on the corner, yet looking for another man. IF HOSEA WILL STOP LOVING HER, HE WILL STOP HURTING.
2. Then Hosea got to thinking... if I'm suffering for the unfaithfulness of my wife, think how much God is suffering because of the unfaithfulness of His! If a finite creature like me can suffer this much, how much greater must be the suffering of an infinite God!
3. It is biological fact that you can grade the level of an animal's existence by its ability to feel pain. Crabs are so low on the life scale that one crab can enjoy eating another while it's being devoured by a third. Parents have you ever suffered because of the sins of your children?...sure you have. Now remember that when you sin you make your heavenly Father suffer.
4. And sin doesn't simply mean to go out and commit immorality. Sin means to "miss the mark," to fail to live up to your capabilities. If you are not living up to your capabilities as a Xian, you're living in sin, guilty of spiritual whoredom against God.

C. Third, **Hosea saw that God was eager to forgive.**

1. How did he learn that?... the same way. Out on the street preaching, and there is Gomer standing on the corner. He goes up to her, asks her to come home. Gomer says, "Didn't you read the note. I don't love you anymore. I go to this house, and that house loving this man and that man; having a good time... now leave me alone." Hosea cups his hands and says, "You can come home anytime, I miss you, the kids really miss you. I love you. The door is always open."
2. Hosea knew that God loved Israel, because He loved Gomer. Hosea knew that God was willing and eager to forgive: Rebellious, ungodly, adulterous, fornicating, sinful Israel. Because Hosea was willing and eager to forgive: Rebellious, ungodly, adulterous, fornicating, sinful Gomer.
3. Hosea knew that Israel could not sink so low as for God not to forgive them, because, Gomer could not sink so low as for him not to forgive her.

IV. **HOSEA BUYS GOMER BACK.**

- A. My story is not over. Word comes to Hosea that Gomer is selling herself on the slave market. HOW SHE HATES HOSEA! All she has to do is go home. She can be wife again, even play the hypocrite and be housed, fed, and loved. But she hates Hosea so much that she is selling herself on the slave market when no one else will have her.
- B. I don't know what Hosea was doing when he finds out, but he drops everything, collects his life savings and runs to that auction. (Here goes my imagination again.) I can hear that auctioneer; "What do I hear for this woman... she's not pretty, old beyond her years and been w/every man in town. But she'll clean your house, cook your meals and baby sit your kids... what do I hear? GOING, GOING,..." Hosea barges in, and says, "I'll give 1 homer of barley, a half a homer of barley, and 15 shekels of silver." "...SOLD!"
- C. The scholars tell me that is the price of a wounded slave, I know it was all the man had.
- D. Hosea took Gomer home, sat her down in the corner and said, "You will sit here and be no man's wife, neither will I be a husband to you until you return to me in faithfulness and purity." What happened?... I don't know. I would like to think that she came back, but I can't, because that would break my parallel... Israel never did.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. I don't want to end on that note. Let me tell you another story about a man with a heart like that of Hosea. (Story of rich man during depression and his wife took the fever. He was waiting for her to come home).

- B. Hosea... A Love Story, teaches four things:
 1. The real, true, magnitude of sin.
 2. Jehovah is a suffering God.
 3. God is willing and eager to forgive.
 4. God is waiting for you to come home (to Him).
- C. Plan of salvation for non Xians, erring Xians.