

CityLife Hosea Study

Hosea 1 & 3 (Not 2)

Hosea is both a powerful and shocking story. No matter how many times I read it, or how much I appreciate what God is sharing, I cannot get over the fact that this is not the type of story I would have included in God's Holy Scripture. I don't have words that match the depth we find in Hosea's mission. I can't explain how profoundly thankful I am that God included Hosea in the Bible because few corners of scripture make me contemplate God's nature while also making me feel such strong emotions at the same time. In Hosea, God uses perhaps the deepest human betrayal, the unfaithfulness of a spouse, to reveal us to ourselves.

Working in concert with our Sunday sermons here are additional things to consider from Hosea 1 & 3.

Hosea 1

- Hosea is largely a collection of Poetic, Prophetic language.
 - How does the use of this language shape the way we read it and take in the metaphors God is using?
 - How does the the metaphor of marriage explain humanity's relationship to God in the context of the Bible's overall narrative?
 - What does the use of poetry communicate to us about having a God who has communicable attributes?
 - How can we read these chapters and hear the depth of what God experiences?
 - Do we ever consider that God has feelings? What do we make of a God who feels things perfectly?
 - What are God's Communicable attributes and where are other areas of scripture that we see them?
- Hosea & Gomer
 - Hosea's name means "Salvation" and Gomer's name means "Complete." Hosea plays the role of God and Gomer represents humanity.
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 - How does this further our understanding of the story that is being told?
 - How do their names help us to get a more specific picture of what God is speaking to us through their difficult marriage?
 - When you look at your life do you tend to forget about God when your life is going well?
- The Family
 - Hosea and Gomer's first son is called Jezreel. Jezreel was a place synonymous with destruction and death. Hosea's first son was named after a place of violence

and so the question here for us is this... Can God destroy our covenant and walk away? Can God put an end to our wandering by leaving us?

- Hosea and Gomer's second child was a daughter and she was named No Mercy (alternate translation is Not Loved). In this name of judgment our question is this... What happens when God's mercy runs dry? What becomes of us when His mercy is no where to be found? Do we deserve his mercy and should we expect it?
- Hosea and Gomer's last child was another boy and he was called the most dire name yet, Not My People. One of the most principal things/truths that guided the Jewish worldview, among others, was that they were His special, chosen people. What happens when we look around and realize that we do not know where God is? What happens when we realize we've never known where he was and that we don't actually know what it's like to be near him? What happens when He gives us over to our other lovers?
- Why does God use such a broken family to tell us about his love for us?
- Promise of Hope (Hosea 1:10-11, Hosea 3)
 - What is the hope that Hosea is promising us?
 - How does God call his prophet Hosea to bring his wife back to him?
 - How can you see God being our long-suffering husband?
 - How has God's mercy and tender hearted love spoken to you? Has it?

Hosea 3

- Romans 8:5- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 - How does this passage describe what Hosea's told to do for Gomer?
 - Do you see yourself in Gomer?

For next week...

- Take a look at this quote from Tim Keller's Book Counterfeit Gods. What hits home when you read this?
 - In the 1830s, when Alexis de Tocqueville recorded his famous observations on America, he noted a “strange melancholy that haunts the inhabitants . . . in the midst of abundance.”² Americans believed that prosperity could quench their yearning for happiness, but such a hope was illusory, because, de Tocqueville added, “the incomplete joys of this world will never satisfy [the human] heart.”³ This strange melancholy manifests itself in many ways, but always leads to the same despair of not finding what is sought... What is the cause of this “strange melancholy” that permeates our society even during boom times of frenetic activity, and which turns to outright despair when prosperity diminishes? De Tocqueville says it comes from taking some “incomplete joy of this world” and building your entire life on it. That is the definition of idolatry.

Hosea 2

We preached three parts of a big idea at church this week. In Hosea 2 God teaches us three things...

- When God stands up in order to address our other lovers (idols) He...
 1. Knows how to free us from them,
 2. Teaches us what real love is,
 3. Promises us a real future.
- Read Hosea 2 and see what stands out to you.

- In the Wilderness
 - Read this quote and think about the questions below.
 - “The Bible sometimes speaks of idols using a marital metaphor. God should be our true Spouse, but when we desire and delight in other things more than God we commit spiritual adultery. Romance or success can become “false lovers” that promise to make us feel loved and valued. Idols capture our imagination, and we can locate them by looking at our daydreams. What do we enjoy imagining? What are our fondest dreams? We look to our idols to love us, to provide us with value and a sense of beauty, significance, and worth.” Tim Keller, Counterfeit Gods
 - What thoughts or things take up your daydreams?
 - Where do you have "false lovers" in your life that you turn to in order to receive love and value?

- Hedges & Walls
 - Have you gone through a season where it felt like God was the one who was taking things away from you?
 - If yes, does it sound like what Hosea 2 is speaking about and what was He taking from you in those seasons?
 - If no, is it because you live your life free of idols or are you not bringing those areas of your lives to God?
 - Hosea 2:13- "And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned offerings to them and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her loves and forgot me, declares the Lord."
 - It may not be normal for you to think about God as an emotional being. I don't think many of us are encouraged to think that He can feel emotions, even though He created them. What are your honest thoughts when you think of his heartache as he talks about being forgotten by the ones He loves?
 - Why is it great that God feels the emotions we read in Hosea so strongly? Why do we need Him to build Hedges and Walls and remove our lovers from us?

- A Real Future

- Hosea 2:14-23 lists what God does to give us hope for a future with him. In these verses He promises to ...
 - Allure us back to Him
 - Speak Tenderly to us
 - Give us what He initially took away from us at the right times
 - To be our Husbands forever
 - To remove Baal from our mouths
 - To give us a covenant with peace, righteousness, justice, mercy and faithfulness.
 - Which one of these promises do you need to connect with? Which one of them is speaking to where you are right now?

Hosea 4-10

Our introductory text this week was Hosea 4:10- They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the whore, but not multiply, because they have forsaken the LORD to cherish whoredom, wine, and new wine, which take away the understanding.

We read this first because it is effective in describing our relationship with to idols. Our idols, like other lovers, promise us that they will bring us real satisfaction but they never do. They promise us multiplication, growth in life, but in the end all they ever produce is a stripping of our understanding.

Though our lives look different than it would have if we were living in Hosea's day, the human heart and it's relationship to idols remains the same. Our hearts and pursuits have not changed and so this week allow the Holy Spirit to examine your life and your heart so that God can tell you where you are seeking idols instead of Him. You may know some of your idols, you may not. Allow the Holy Spirit's revelation to help you this week.

Hosea had three charges to give Israel...

1. Israel Doesn't Know ME
 - a. Hosea 4:1- Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land;...
 - b. The Old Testament understanding of knowing God had two elements to it. To know God meant that you learned about Him in Scripture and that you experienced Him in life. Knowing God is not an intellectual endeavor. Knowing God is fundamentally both cognitive and experiential.
 - c. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if you are learning more about Him.
 - d. Are you interested in experiencing God in your life? If yes, ask the Holy Spirit to help you in that. If you are not, you now know that He is not what you are pursuing in life.
2. Israel Loves Other Gods

- a. Hosea 9:15- Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal; there I began to hate them. Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels.
 - b. Israel had altars to Baal in Gilgal and in Bethel. The people would sacrifice to Baal in these cities and then they would go to Jerusalem and act as if nothing had happened. The picture here is that they did not trust God enough to be their sole provider. They honestly believed that God wasn't the only one who gave us good things.
 - i. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if you believe God to be your sole provider?
 - ii. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if you believe you've received good things apart from God.
 - c. A definition of an Idol- Any person or thing that consumes your thoughts, words, time, energy, or money other than God.
 - i. Ask the Holy Spirit to examine your life, your heart and your motivation and then ask questions like...
 - 1. Holy Spirit, am I pursuing anything that is evil and I'm blind to it? If He shows you something ask Him to help you know how.
 - 2. Holy Spirit, am I pursuing something that is good but not in your me? If He shows you something ask Him to help you know how to understand why that good thing is not good for you.
 - 3. Holy Spirit, are any of my pursuits replacing my love and dependency on you? Are any of my pursuits contrary to what you've told me to chase after?
3. Israel Finds Other Security
- a. Hosea 8:9-10- For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone; Ephraim has hired lovers. Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up.
 - b. Hosea 7:11- Ephraim is like a dove, silly and without sense, calling to Egypt, going to Assyria.
 - c. Hosea 5:13- When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, then Ephraim went to Assyria, and sent to the great king. But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound.
 - d. Israel's alliances with Assyria and Egypt were signs that they were done trusting in God for their security. They needed added protection and so they went out looking to pay for it. Their actions demonstrated that God wasn't good at protecting them.
 - i. Do you pursue idols out of self-protection?
 - ii. Are there things in your life, behaviors you keep up that are rooted in the fact that you don't trust God to protect you?
 - iii. Are you wounded and hoping that your idols can heal you or distract you from your pain?
 - iv. If you do, ask the Holy Spirit to speak into that pain and see what He says in response to your fear.

Hosea 12-13

Remember God in regards to your sin:

- Bethel, as mentioned in 12:4, was the place where Jacob was met by God with a blessing. God restored the covenant that he made with his ancestors, with Jacob. In the time of Hosea, Israel had now made altars to Baal in that very place.
 - Is there an area of your life that was once marked by the presence of the Lord, and is now inhabited by other gods or idols?
- Verse 13:6 says “As they had their pasture, they became satisfied,
 - And as they became satisfied, their heart became proud; Therefore they forgot Me.” God reminds Ephraim that as they had everything they needed, they became full and proud. As a result of this, they forgot about God.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to identify those things in your life that make you feel ‘satisfied’ to the point of forgetting God?

Remember God in your discipline:

- Verse 13:6 God warns Ephraim that their punishment will include the destruction of children and pregnant women. Interestingly enough, the name Ephraim means fruitful. They were known to be the most fruitful tribe of Israel.
 - Is there or has there been a sin in which you have been rooting your identity in and God wants to free you from ?
 - How has the Father & Child metaphor help you understand the heart behind God’s disciplining His children?

Remember God in the Restoration

- In verse 12:4-6 God reminds Ephraim that He had made a covenant with Jacob that He intended to keep, and despite his sin, He had been blessed. With that, in verse Genesis 35:10 Jacob was no longer called the deceiver, but Israel, God perseveres.
 - Can you recall a season in your life where God has renamed you, redeemed you from the chains of your sin and blessed you?

Interesting Note: Throughout Chapter 12 & 13, we see God through the prophet Hosea, mentioning the trinity in some way. Can you spot the verses where you see these references?

Links to Two Powerful Videos on Hosea

The Bible Project [LINK](#)

The Spoken Gospel [LINK](#)