



November 17, 2019

“God Will Take You Back”

Hosea 1 - 14

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Have you ever felt so much shame and guilt about your past that you wondered whether God could love you or take you back? The story of Hosea is a love story between a husband and unfaithful wife. The greater story is the way the book of Hosea pictures God’s love for people who are unfaithful to him. In this message Pastor Gary reminds us of the unfailing love of God for unfaithful people.

Historical Background

1. Hosea is the first of the final twelve books of the Old Testament known as the Minor Prophets.
 - a. It’s not that these prophets weren’t as important as Jeremiah and Isaiah; it’s that these books are shorter and more succinct.
2. Hosea’s name in Hebrew is Hoshea, which means salvation.
3. Hosea’s years of ministry were approximately 755 B.C. to 715 B.C.
4. The book of Hosea is not in chronological order after the book of Daniel.
 - a. Daniel was born about 130 years after the time of Hosea.
5. Hosea’s ministry fits within the time frame of [2 Kings 14-20](#).
 - a. [Hosea 1:1](#) - *“The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.”*
6. Paul, Jesus, and Matthew quoted passages from the book of Hosea.

7. Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah.
 - a. Hosea prophesied to the northern tribes which we know as Israel.
 - b. Isaiah prophesied to the southern tribes which we know as Judah.

8. Hosea ministered at a time when there was great spiritual apostasy because of unholy priests, as well as great social disintegration because of unrighteous kings.

9. The verse that is most often quoted from this book is [Hosea 4:6](#), in which the Lord through Hosea said, *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children.”*

10. Pastor Gary said, “To awaken the conscience of a nation God [called] Hosea to do a very unusual thing in order to illustrate God’s relationship with the Jewish people.”
 - a. [Hosea 1:2](#) - *“When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: ‘Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry, for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the LORD.’ So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim...”*

11. Pastor Gary said, “Throughout the Bible, [in] both the Old Testament and New Testament, the covenant of marriage has always served to be an illustration of God’s relationship with us and, likewise, our relationship with him. In the Old Testament marriage primarily serves to illustrate God’s relationship with the Jewish people, [the nation of Israel]. There are many verses that speak in these allegorical terms of a marriage that God has with the people of Israel. ... In the New Testament God also uses marriage as an illustration to communicate the relationship of Christ with the Church. ... The marriage [between God and his people was] broken. And it [wasn’t] because God [had] done anything wrong... [it was because the people had committed spiritual adultery] against God.”
 - a. [Isaiah 54:5](#) - *“For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name...”*
 - b. [Isaiah 62:5](#) - *“For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”*
 - c. [Jeremiah 3:14a](#) - *“ ‘Return, O backsliding children, says the LORD; ‘for I am married to you.’ ”*
 - d. [Matthew 9:14-15](#) - *“Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.’ ”*
 - e. [Matthew 25:1-13](#) - *“[Jesus said,] ‘Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened*

to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: "Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!" Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise answered, saying, "No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves." And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But he answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you." Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

- f. **Ephesians 5:31-32** - *" 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*
- g. **Revelation 19:7** - *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

12. God instructed Hosea to take Gomer as his wife in spite of the fact that Hosea was a righteous man of God, not to mention the fact that everyone would have been talking about the righteous man of God taking a prostitute for a wife!

13. God was communicating the message that the way Hosea loved Gomer, God loved the Jewish people, even though they had been spiritually unfaithful to him.

14. Hosea and Gomer's Offspring

a. Jezreel

i. **Hosea 1:3-5** - *"[Gomer] conceived and bore him a son. Then the LORD said to him: 'Call his name Jezreel, for in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. It shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.' "*

ii. In Hebrew, the name Jezreel means God scatters.

iii. Because the people were unfaithful to God, he did in fact scatter the Jewish people in 721 B.C. when he sent the Assyrians to besiege the northern kingdom of Israel.

b. Lo-Ruhamah

i. **Hosea 1:6-7** - *"And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: 'Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer have*

mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away. Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen.’ ” (Emphasis added)

ii. In Hebrew the name Lo-Ruhamah means no mercy.

c. Lo-Ammi

i. **Hosea 1:8-9** - *“Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. Then God said: ‘Call his name Lo-Ammi, for **you are not My people**, and I will not be your God.’ ” (Emphasis added)*

ii. In Hebrew the name Lo-Ammi means not my people.

Like Gomer, We Are Guilty Of Unfaithfulness To God

15. In spite of the love Hosea had for Gomer, she left Hosea and their children and returned to a life of prostitution!

a. **Hosea 2:5-7** - *“For their mother has played the harlot; she who conceived them has behaved shamefully. For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water. My wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.’ Therefore, behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths. She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.’ ”*

b. **Hosea 3:1-3** - *“Then the LORD said to me, ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.’ So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. And I said to her, ‘You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man - so, too, will I be toward you.’ ”*

16. Pastor Gary said, “Every one of us has been unfaithful to God at some point. [I] don’t mean at some point in our lives, I mean at some point in our day! ... Sometimes we love ourselves more than we love God. Sometimes we serve ourselves more than we serve God. Sometimes we value ourselves and other people and our stuff more than we value God. We commit spiritual adultery all the time. That’s why the hymn of our [Christian] faith *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*,¹ ... there is a [verse that says,] ‘Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.’ There is a little bit in all of us, like Gomer, that wants to please self and ... our own desires and wishes and aspirations and not really value God and esteem [and adore God the] way we should. But in the same hymn, we are also reminded of these words, ‘Jesus sought me when a stranger, wand’ring from the fold of God; He, to

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Come_Thou_Fount_of_Every_Blessing

rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood; how His kindness yet pursues me mortal tongue can never tell.’ ”

God Never Stops Loving Us And He Takes An Active Role In Pursuing Us

17. **Hosea 3:1** - *“Then the LORD said to me, ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.’ ”*
18. **Hosea 2:14** - *“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her.”*
19. Pastor Gary said, “Let me make it clear, God never condones our sin, [and] in fact, he hates our sin, but he never stops loving us! ... His love for us is not conditional [regarding] how we behave. ... [Loving parents never stop loving their children even though their children make decisions and do things that grieve them.] ... Loving parents give loving discipline to [their children]. But they never stop loving [their children]. ... God is brokenhearted and grieved when we make bad decisions. He’s grieved over our rebellion against him [and] our unfaithfulness. ... There may be, of course, natural consequences for our sins, things that will happen as a result of our poor choices and sinful decisions. God [may even impose discipline on us. ... God is a disciplinarian, a loving Father, correcting us [and] admonishing us because he loves us too much to allow us to remain as we are. And, if we oppose God, he will oppose us just as he did with Gomer [in **Hosea 2:6**]... Gomer got to the place where she was at the bottom of herself, and she ended up admitting that she needed to return to her husband, to her first love.”
 - a. **Jeremiah 31:3** - *“The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: ‘Yes; I have loved you with an everlasting love...”*
 - b. **Hebrews 12:6** - *“For whom the LORD loves He chastens...”*
 - c. **Hosea 2:6** - *“Therefore, behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths.”*
 - d. **Hosea 2:7b** - *“Then she will say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.’ ”*

Sometimes The “Wilderness” Is the Only Place We Can Hear God

20. **Hosea 2:14** - *“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her.”*
 - i. In Hebrew, the word allure means to persuade, and we read that God went after Gomer.
21. Pastor Gary said, “Sometimes we have to be in a mess before we realize our need for God and come full circle and surrender to God. When Gomer left her husband

and kids to return to a life of prostitution it was miserable for her. ... She finally realized [that she needed to get back to her husband and family].”

Conclusion

22. Pastor Gary said, “[Some] of you just need to hear loudly and clearly because you have been weighed down by a load of shame and guilt, because of your unfaithfulness and sin against God. ... God loves you and he will take you back in a minute! ... We are all like Gomer [in that] we are unfaithful to our first love. [God] says, ‘In spite of your unfaithfulness I’m going to love you, and I’m going to pursue you, and I’m going to send my Son to die for you because [of the love I have for you].’ ”
23. **Hosea 1:10b** - *“And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there it shall be said to them, ‘You are sons of the living God.’ ”*
24. **1 John 3:1** - *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Hosea 1:1-11** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Spend time talking about spiritual apostasy ² and social disintegration. (See #8 and #9 above)
3. What are the differences and similarities between Hosea’s culture and our culture?
4. What is your reaction when you heard that God directed Hosea to marry a prostitute? (See #10 above)
5. Read the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared and spend time talking about his comments about marriage being a picture of God’s relationship with the Jewish people and Christ’s relationship with the Church. (See #11 through #13 above)
6. Read and discuss the Scriptures and the meaning of each of Hosea and Gomer’s children’s names. (See #14 above)
7. Read and discuss **Hosea 2:5-7; 3:1-3**. (See #15 above)

² <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/apostasy> - “An abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion, or departure from one’s faith or religion.” American Dictionary of the English Language

8. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning the ways we have been unfaithful to the Lord, yet the Lord has a faithful love for us. (See #16 above)
9. Read and discuss the Scriptures and Pastor Gary's comments concerning the fact that God doesn't condone our sin, his grieving over our sin, and his pursuing love for us. (See #17 through #19 above)
10. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks about Hosea 2:14, and how it is often the case that we don't recognize the Lord's pursuing love until we are in a mess in the "wilderness." (See #20 and #21 above)
11. Read and discuss Hosea 1:10b and 1 John 3:1. (See #22 through #24 above)
12. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)