

Hosea 1:2-3; 3:1-3

Introduction: If it happened in today's modern church, it would be the most scandalous scandal ever heard of. It would be front page of the News Journal: "Local Preacher Seen With Prostitute." Hosea was the first of the "minor" prophets. His name, translated in English, means "Joe," which even adds more insult to injury in these modern times for the headline would read "A Prostitute and Her Joe." But if you research the name Hosea, you will also discover that Hosea's name is also related to the name Joshua, which means "salvation." People were "living it up," as we might say, and didn't have much time for God. They wouldn't have said that, of course, because nobody ever says that when it's true! The people ignored Hosea and even made fun of him because of who he married. What the people didn't realize is that the story of Hosea and Gomer was God telling the story of Him and Israel, specifically God's crazy love for Israel.

The Story of This Crazy Love:

✠ **God came to the unlovely** (v. 2). In the book of Hosea, Hosea portrays God and Gomer portrays the nation of Israel. Hosea was a godly man who was a prophet in the days of other prophets such as Isaiah and Amos. Gomer was a prostitute. The symbolism is that Israel had slept with other gods, they were guilty of the sin of idolatry. Other things were more important to the people of Israel than God was. I want us to notice there in verse two that God told Hosea to go to Gomer. God didn't say wait for Gomer to come to you. This is important because it demonstrates that God comes to us rather than waiting on us to come to Him. The name given to Jesus was Immanuel which translated in Isaiah as well as in Matthew means "God with us." John 1:14 says, "And the Word (a title for Jesus given by John) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Dr. Blackaby in his study called "Experiencing God" stated that God pursues a love relationship with us. He did so by removing all barriers between us by sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. God did this even before we thought to love Him. Romans 3:10-12 tells us that no one is righteous, no one does good, no one seeks God, and we are all unprofitable to God. Yet despite that God still took the initiative as

we see in Romans 5:8 which says, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Isn’t it wonderful to know that when we were at our worst, God gave us His best?

✠ **The reason God came to the unlovely.** Back in Hosea 1 we see that Hosea and Gomer had three children. Each of them reflected Gomer’s relationship with Hosea as well as Israel’s relationship with God. One note we need to make here is that biblical names have significance. Each of the names of Hosea and Gomer’s children reflected Israel’s sin and their coming consequences because of their rebellion. The first born was a son who was named Jezreel as we seen in verse 4. The name Jezreel means “cast away.” If Israel didn’t repent of her sin, she would be taken into captivity. This was fulfilled by the nation of Assyria in 722 B.C. However, if we do not repent of our sin today we won’t be kicked out of a particular land, rather we will be kicked out of God’s presence for all of eternity and suffer in an everlasting fire. The second child of Hosea and Gomer was a girl name Lo-ruhamah (lo-roo-khaw-maw) which means “no mercy.” God warned the nation of Israel that if they continued in their rebellion he would show them no mercy. Again this was fulfilled by the Assyrians who came in and killed many Israelites during the invasion and those who survived were not treated much better. In fact if we read Amos 4:2 we see how they were lead back to Assyria. Amos 4:2 says, “The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks.” Literally they had hooks through their noses and there was a string attached to each hook to hold the Israelites together. James 2:13 tells us today that when Christ judges the world that His judgment will be without mercy. The final child of Hosea and Gomer was another boy named Lo-ammi (lo-am-mee) which means “You are not my people and I will not be your God.” This signified that Israel had broken the covenant between them and God as given in Deuteronomy 28. Deuteronomy 28:1 promised blessings for their obedience. However, Deuteronomy 28:15 says, “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.” Israel had gone after idols and turned their back on God and they were going to pay a high price for that. Before we

blame God as we have a tendency to do, let us remember that at the ratification of the covenant spoken of in Deuteronomy 28, the people sprinkled blood on themselves signifying that they agreed to live by these terms. They left God no choice. But let us remember that God does not discipline based on anger or revenge, but rather God's discipline is to remind them of His standard and to draw them back to His love. The book of Hosea in chapter two records that when the people repent, God will restore them. Paul reminds us today in Romans 3:12, "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The phrase "gone out of the way" is a reference to people leaving the teachings of Jesus. In the first century followers of Christ were not called Christians, rather they were known as "people of the way" because Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life" in John 14:6. Therefore Paul was saying that people have turned their backs on God and because of that they are useless to God. That verse as well as the book of Hosea reminds me of our country. Although our money and many of our monuments contain the sentiment "One nation under God," we are anything but a godly nation. We have left the One that founded and established us and we have chased other gods, and while we want to blame the lost, I would challenge us by saying they are only doing what come natural to them. I believe much of the blame lies with the people of God who have "gone out of the way." God cannot and will not use people who say they love Jesus but then deny Him by their lifestyle. If this country is to come back to God it must begin in the house of God with the people of God, humbling themselves and saying "against you God have I sinned and done this evil in your sight" as David did in Psalm 51. Therefore, God came to us so that we could come back into the way.

† **The results of God coming (3:1-3).** In the book of Hosea we read where Gomer left Hosea and went back to being a prostitute until she was with a man who couldn't take care of her and he put her up on the slave market. This is where the story gets even more interesting. It is one thing to marry a prostitute, because we always think we can change a person. But notice what happens in Hosea 3:1-2, "Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of *her* friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of

wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and *for* an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley.” Did you catch that, God told Hosea to go buy Gomer back! This is symbolic of what God did for the nation of Israel when they repented. But it carries further significance especially at this time of year because it foreshadows what Christ did on the cross of Calvary. By paying the price demanded by God to satisfy His wrath against sin, God demonstrated His love for us and our worth to Him. He didn’t ask us to pay the price or to perform a service for him. When no one else wanted us, God came and bought us. That is why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” Notice what Hosea 3:3 says, “And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also *be* for thee.” Hosea told Gomer he bought her back so she wouldn’t have to be a prostitute anymore. He wasn’t ordering her or making her, he was simply saying “I did this so you don’t have to do that anymore.” For those who call on the name of Christ, He died so that we wouldn’t have to suffer. He doesn’t make us love Him or even obey Him, but He died so that if we wanted to love Him, have a relationship with Him, and obey Him we could. The result of this love relationship are given in Hosea 2:23 where it says, “And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God.” We will obtain mercy and we will be God’s people.