



God's Surprise Judgment for the Nation

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. And there I will give her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. "And in that day, declares YHWH, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Lord.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know YHWH. "And in that day I will answer, declares YHWH, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'"

ESV—Hosea 2:14-23

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The Message—Hosea 2:14-23

God's Instructions for Hosea's "Lifestyle Parable"

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And YHWH said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as YHWH loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you." For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek YHWH their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to YHWH and to his goodness in the latter days.

The Message—Hosea 3

ESV—Hosea3

Plotting the Sub-Plot

As we return again to the "God imposed parable" of Hosea's life it may be helpful to keep this rough accounting of what is happening in mind.

- Hosea is commanded to marry "prostitute" Gomer. (Gomer may have not have been a prostitute by profession, but she is one by lifestyle and inclination. She is someone that nobody in their right mind would marry.) The purpose is to provide a living symbol of God's relationship with his people. God, as the husband to his people, is in the same position as Hosea—married to a wife who is constantly wandering away from her "marriage" vow. Cf. 1:2-3
- A series of children (a boy, a girl, another boy) are born to Gomer. The text says that the first boy is Hosea's, but hints at the fact that 2nd and 3rd child are not. God instructs Hosea to name his children with descriptive names meaning roughly "Decisive Judgment," "No Mercy," and "Not My People." Cf. 1:3-9
- The reason why the text hints at the fact that not all of the children born to Gomer are Hosea's becomes clear—During this 6 year period she has been recklessly cheating on Hosea. In fact the situation has become so desperate that after the 3rd child, Gomer seems to have left Hosea and become entangled with another man, perhaps even now working professionally as a prostitute. However, God commands Hosea to go to Gomer and bring her home again, to make her his wife, just as YHWH himself will do for his bride, his people, who have been committing spiritual adultery.

Thus Hosea's life is playing out the spiritual realities that God wants communicated to the nation.

You're Going to Do What?!

As you read through chapter 2, what are some of the promises that God makes to his people, in spite of the way they have been unfaithful to him?

He is going to allure, seduce, win us over instead of force and command us; renew his provision for us—cause us to respond with the sort of affection that we had when we were first saved; take away our desire for idols; become engaged to us with—eternal steadfastness, righteousness, justices, steadfast love, mercy (all his); blot out all of our transgressions (e.g. of lizard becoming a steed from Great Divorce)

How would you describe the emotions Hosea must have been feeling when God instructed him to go and rescue Gomer to someone who had never heard the story of the prophet who married a prostitute?

Hosea must have been angry with Gomer for how she had treated him when he had been so good, embarrassed that everyone knew his scandal, perhaps concerned about what people would think of him taking her back, she had shamed and humiliated him. He probably wanted to kill her and forgive her; to divorce her and hurt her and be reconciled. She shamed him, and ultimately God still melted his heart for her.

Looking Back

Take a few minutes now to consider these questions so that we can discuss them as a group. If may also want to come back to them as you think about how you have journeyed with God in 2002.

What did God help you to identify as significant idols in your life?

Now that you have become aware of them and your need for ongoing repentance, and continual refocusing on God, how has your relationship with him changed?

How has the message of Hosea spoken most directly to you?
(including but not limited to your understanding of how God feels about you and loves you, how God addresses your specific issues of sin, your view of yourself, your view of God)

So How Does God Really Feel About Idolaters?

You may remember when we started our idolatry series that we pointed out that everyone, both Christians and non-Christians, worship something— we all have idols. And we also said the solution for all of us is exactly the same—the Gospel of Christ.

In light of what you have learned about yourself as an idolater and God as the husband of idolaters, the emotional dynamics of the story of Hosea's life, and God's love for us, take a few minutes this week to write a letter to someone who needs to hear this message. You do not have to send the letter unless God specifically insists that you must.

As you write consider trying to put into words the following:

- *Your own story of seeing and repenting of idols in your life*
- *How seeing your sin more clearly made you feel*
- *What God's response to your idolatry has been (maybe using Hosea's life as an example)*
- *The emotional dynamics of God's response to you (what he feels over your sin and then how that makes you feel in turn).*

The story of Hose's love for Gomer, God's love for us, should be emotionally stirring.

Can you tell this story from the perspective of your own life in such a way that it is emotionally persuasive to those who don't know God?