

REDEEMING LOVE

Key Verse: Hosea 3:1-3

Key Thought: Forgiveness equals Redemption.

To understand the book of Hosea, one must understand the background against which it was written. The book was written by the prophet named Hosea, a name which means “salvation.” This book is literally a message of salvation to a spiritually bankrupt people.

During the days of Hosea’s ministry, Israel was a very prosperous nation materially. They enjoyed peace politically and militarily, but they were morally bankrupt. Their spiritual condition was described as a nation to, “look to other gods, and love wine.” Among the “other gods” they looked to there was the Canaanite God, Baal. The worship of Baal, and his consort Ashtoreth, involved acts of sexual immorality along with child sacrifice, safe to say that Israel was guilty of great spiritual evil.

While the people of Israel had no real love for God, for His Word, or for His worship, when a prophet showed up, they were very interested in his actions. That is why God often used the personal lives of the prophets to illustrate His relationship with Israel. That is the case in the book of Hosea.

God uses Hosea, his wife Gomer, and the children born into their relationship, as a picture of His relationship with Israel. Through this family, God will reveal His love for His wayward people. In Hosea’s relationship with Gomer, we are allowed to see a wonderful portrait of the redemption we have in Christ Jesus. I want to take the verses we read today and preach about The Redeeming Love.

I. A LOVING PURSUIT

(a) Gomer’s Lifestyle - To understand the depth of Hosea’s love we must first understand Gomer’s life. When Gomer first appears in Hosea 1:2, she is called “the wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms.” This does not mean that God commanded Hosea to marry a prostitute. Most likely, Gomer was a chaste woman when Hosea married her. The phrase “a wife of whoredoms” simply means that she was an Israelite. It means that she was a product of her society; meaning that she had been raised in idolatry and rebellion.

At first, Hosea’s marriage to Gomer must have been a happy time for them both. God blessed their union by giving him a son whom they named Jezreel. (Hosea 1:4) By the time we come to our text, however, Gomer is called an “adulteress.” *Hosea 2:5* says,

“Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.’”

In other words, Gomer is a prostitute. She committed adultery while she was with Hosea, then she left him for another man. Now it appears, that her new lover is finished with her and has put her up for sale.

This glimpse into Gomer's lifestyle is a clear picture of what sin produces in every life it touches. A lifestyle of unrepentant sin may bring pleasure at the time, but eventually it leads to ruin, devastation, destruction, and death. Sin always leaves its mark, and eventually it leads to Hell. And, by the way, no one ever gets away with sin. There is always a price to pay.

(b) Gomer's Lusts - According to Hosea 1:6-9, Gomer was guilty of committing adultery against Hosea. The child born in verse 6 was named "Lo-Ruhamah." This name means, "no mercy." The child born in verse 9 is called "Lo-ammi." This name means, "not my people." What's striking about the three references to Gomer's pregnancies is the contrast between verse 3, 6 and 9.

In verse 3 the Bible says, "which conceived, and bare him a son." Verses 6 and 9 simply say, "she conceived." The implication is clear: the first child was Hosea while the next two were not. So, Gomer was guilty of violating her marriage vows and eventually, Gomer abandoned the family to pursue her lust for sin.

Of course, Gomer's actions are a picture of the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel. They lusted after the gods of the Canaanites, and they abandoned the God of their fathers.

Again, Gomer is a picture of the lost sinner. Just like Gomer, those who are lost in their sins pursue their own lusts and care nothing about the God who loves them. Left to themselves, the lost sinner will never seek God.

(c) Gomer's Lover - Despite how she has hurt him; despite how she has treated her children; despite how she has lived her life; Hosea still loves her. He is told in **verse 1**, "*go yet, love a woman.*" This phrase means, "*show her again how much you love her.*" Then the Bible says that she is, "*beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress.*" This phrase means, "*she is a woman who loves another man and is still guilty of adultery.*"

When Hosea receives the command to go after Gomer, he does not hesitate. Why? He goes after her because he loves her. He loved her before she fell into sin, and he still loved her despite her sin. His love is so great that he is willing to do whatever it takes to bring her back to himself.

What a picture this is of the awesome love of God for sinners! ***Did you know that no one had to tell God to love you?*** He loved you before you were born. He loved you when you were an innocent child. He loved you when you chose sin over righteousness. And He loves you today. In fact, He has always loved you.

The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

Jeremiah 31:3

Nothing can make Him stop pursuing you! In *Ephesians 2:4* Paul says that God's love is a "**great love**." This means it is a surpassing love. It is a love that knows no boundaries. It is unconditional. It is timeless. It is self-sacrificing. It is wonderful beyond words!

My friends, God loves you. His love never ends. You may reject His love, yet He continues to love you. You may not have time for Him, but He continues to love you. You may ignore Him, but His heart is still set on you. You may turn a deaf ear to His pleas, but He does not stop calling you to come to Him.

He loves you regardless of who you are, where you are, or what you've done. His has an overcoming, overwhelming, awe-inspiring love.

The Bible teaches us that God loves sinners. I find that truth amazing! That God should love us who cannot love Him first, is an amazing thing. The only reason we love Him is because, He first loved us. The wonder of a loving pursuit! Thank God for a love that never quits but pursues the sinner to the very end.

II. A LAVISHING PURCHASE

When Hosea finds Gomer, it appears that she has been sold into slavery. She has probably been sold as a prostitute. She is a far cry from the woman she was when he fell in love with her and married her all those years before.

Imagine the scene! Hosea searches the country for Gomer, eventually finding her in a slave market; for sale to the highest bidder. When he sees her, he does not hate her. He does not turn away and abandon her to a life of sin and wickedness. Though it must have broken his heart to see Gomer in such a condition, Hosea did what he had to do.

Notice some particulars about Hosea's lavish purchase.

(a) Hosea's Price - We're told that Hosea bought her, "***for fifteen pieces of silver, and for a homer of barley, and a half homer of barley.***" The standard price of a slave was 30 shekels of silver, (*Exodus 21:32*) Evidently, Hosea does not possess that much money. So he pays half her price in cash, and the rest in the cheapest of all grains, barley. Barley was a grain used by the very poor as food, and by others to make feed for animals.

This purchase cost Hosea more than his money; it also cost him his pride. He had to go into a public forum, and before a crowd of witnesses, he had to purchase unto himself a woman who had betrayed him many times. Yet, that is exactly what he does. He willingly paid the whole price to redeem Gomer from a life of slavery.

Hosea's actions here are a picture of what God has done for the lost. Like Gomer, the lost are slaves to their sin. But God, in His great grace, came into this world and gave Himself a sacrifice for their seasons.

He gave more than 30 pieces of silver; He gave His very life, setting His blood on the cross of Calvary to purchase a people unto Himself.

He willingly suffered the pain, the shame, the public humiliation, and even spiritual separation from God to redeem His people from their sins.

Jesus was mistreated by Roman soldiers, ridiculed by the Jewish leaders, and was even ridiculed by the two thieves who were crucified with Him. He endured all of this so that He might make a lavish purchase and redeem His people from the slavery of their sins.

(b) Hosea's Possession - Notice that the Bible says, "so I bought her to me." Gomer already belongs to Hosea by virtue of their marriage, now she is his completely because he has purchased her. He has sacrificed everything to make her exclusively his. The name "Gomer" means "completely." She was completely lost in her sins, now she is completely loved, forgiven, and redeemed by grace!

The same is true when God redeems a people. When God saves a sinner, that sinner becomes His possession.

"..who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Titus 2:14

Not only does God redeem the sinner, but the relationship is also far more intimate. God becomes that person's Father. And by the way, this is an eternal transaction,

*"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;
no one will snatch them out of my hand."*

John 10:28

If you stop and think about the price God paid to redeem you, how can you turn a deaf ear to His call? When you consider how much He loves you, what keeps you from coming to Him for salvation? When you consider the price Jesus paid, the shame he bore, and the lengths God has gone to, to make salvation possible, how can you not bow before Him in love, obedience, and in gratitude?

Illustration: There is a story of a little boy who built a sailboat. He built the sail and had it all fixed up, tarred, and painted. He took it to the lake and pushed it in hoping it would sail. Sure enough a wisp of breeze filled the little sail and it billowed and went rippling along the waves. Suddenly before the little boy knew it, the boat was out of his reach, even though he waded in fast and tried to grab it. As he watched it float away, he hoped maybe the breeze would shift and it would come sailing back to him. Instead, he watched it go farther and farther until it was gone.

Sometime later, the little boy was downtown and walked past a secondhand store. There in the window he saw the boat. It was unmistakably his, so he went in and said to the proprietor, "*That's my boat.*"

He walked to the window, picked it up and started to leave with it.

The owner of the shop said, “*Wait a minute, Son. That’s my boat. I bought it from someone.*”

The boy said, “*No, it’s my boat. I made it. See.*” And he showed him the little scratches and the marks where he hammered and filed.

The man said, “*I’m sorry, Son. If you want it, you have to buy it.*”

The poor little guy didn’t have any money, but he worked hard and saved his pennies. Finally, one day he had enough money. He went in and bought the little boat.

As he left the store holding the boat close to him, he was heard saying, “*You’re my boat. You’re twice my boat. First, you’re my boat ‘cause I made you and second you’re my boat ‘cause I bought you!*”

If you ever think that you aren’t worth much, just remember what God thinks of you. You are His. Twice His. First, you’re His because He made you. You are His by right of creation. And second, you’re His because He bought you on the cross. He paid a price to redeem you. You are His by right of redemption.

III. A LASTING PURPOSE

Why did Hosea do this? One reason he did this was to obey the clear command of God. Another reason was simply that he loved Gomer. I think another reason has to do with Hosea wanting to make a difference in Gomer’s life. And when he redeemed her that is exactly what he did.

It is the same with those who come to Jesus for salvation. When God saves a soul, He does it because He loves us. He also does it because He has a desire to deliver us from the bondage of our sins so that we are delivered to live a new life in Jesus Christ. Notice how this is made clear in the story of Hosea and Gomer

(a) There Is A New Character - Hosea tells Gomer, “*Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot.*” This implies that Hosea expects Gomer to be different. The woman Hosea is taking home is not to live like the woman he bought off the slave block. Hosea tells her that her life will be different from this point forward.

This is just what Jesus does for every soul He saves. He transforms them into a “*new creature,*” **2 Corinthians 5:17**. Those who come to Jesus are “*born-again,*” **John 3:3, 7**. You cannot meet Jesus and stay like you were. He is a life-changing Savior!

(b) There Is A New Commitment - Hosea tells 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.*” This verse is full of meaning, so allow me to break it down into a couple of parts.

First, Hosea is telling Gomer that he expects her to live a new life of chastity. For long-time, Gomer has been the object of lust. She has been a sexual tool. Men have used Gomer to gratify their wicked lusts. Now that she has been redeemed, Hosea is bringing her home to heal. He is telling her that he is not bringing her home so that he can gratify his sexual lusts with her, but that he is bringing her home so that she can heal. He is telling her that he will not force himself upon her or demand the rights of a husband. He is telling her that she is going to be on probation for a period of time, and during that time, they will not come together physically.

He is again showing Gomer that he loves her. Hosea is giving her time to heal. He is going to create a safe environment in which she feels loved, cherished, and honored.

Second, Hosea wants Gomer to know that her days of loose living have forever ended. She is not to be “*for another man.*” Her redemption and the love of her husband are not to be taken lightly. He has paid a high price to redeem her, and she is to respect that! She belongs to Hosea, and to no other man.

This is a picture of what we have in our salvation. God does not save us so that He might gratify some personal passion. He saves us to deliver us from our sins, and to give us a new life in Jesus. But He expects that we will be His alone until He calls us home to heaven.

There is, within the heart of every child of God, a desire to live for the Lord Who saved them. When it dawns on us where we were because of our sins, where we were headed, and what God has done for us in saving us, there will be a pulling His direction. We will love Him because He first loved us.

(c) There Is A New Companion - I would imagine that when Hosea sacrificed his money, his time, and his dignity, to purchase Gomer, she began to see him through different eyes. Evidently, she had grown tired of their relationship, and she abandoned their home. Now, he has proven his love for her and no doubt she has a new love for him.

There is no record after this moment of any discord in Hosea and Gomer’s home. Their marriage has been restored and their family has been reunited. What we see here then, is a picture of absolute commitment on the part of both the husband and the wife.

The same is for those who know Jesus. They love Him because He first loved them, thus they have a desire to live for him. But, they also know that He is dependable, and can be trusted to keep His Word, and to never leave them, nor forsake them. (*Matthew 28:10; Hebrews 13:5*) When God saves us, He forever joins Himself to us in a relationship that will never end. That’s why He saves us to begin with; He desires a relationship with us. Isn’t that amazing!

In closing, I want to share a story with you.

Years ago, when A.J. Gordon was pastor of a church in BC , he met a young boy in front of the sanctuary carrying a rusty cage in which several birds fluttered nervously.

Gordon inquired, ***“Son, where did you get those birds?”***

The boy replied, ***“I trapped them out in the field.”***

“What are you going to do with them?”

“I’m going to play with them, and then I guess I’ll just feed them to an old cat we have at home.”

When Gordon offered to buy them, the lad exclaimed, ***“Mister, you don’t want them, they’re just little old wild birds and can’t sing very well.”***

Gordon replied, ***“I’ll give you \$2 for the cage and the birds.”***

“Okay, it’s a deal, but you’re making a bad bargain.”

The exchange was made, and the boy went away whistling, happy with his shiny coins. Gordon walked around to the back of the church property, opened the door of the small wire coop, and let the struggling creatures soar into the blue. The next Sunday he took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon about Christ’s coming to seek and to save the lost -- paying for them with His own precious blood.

“That boy told me the birds were not songbirds,” said Gordon, ***“but when I released them and they began to fly, it seemed to me they were singing, ‘Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!’”***

You and I have been held captive to sin, but Christ has purchased our pardon and set us free. And you have more value than many sparrows. When a person has this life-changing experience, he will want to sing, ***“Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!”***

I wonder, have you experienced the wonder of God redeeming love? If you have, you know what I’m talking about. You should praise Him for His grace. If you have never experienced that redeeming love, I invite you to come to Jesus Christ today. If you come to Him, He will save you, and you will change your life.

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Place: FCA

Date: March 12, 2023

Time: 10:30am

After Service Song: Amazing Love