

Some People's Children

Series: Holiness and the Heart of God (Hosea 1.2-10)

Intro

This morning I am excited as we begin a new series. We will spend the next several weeks in the prophetic book of Hosea. Hosea is a difficult message with a difficult story, that forces us to wrestle with the ugliness of our sin and brokenness.

If you have put your trust in Jesus Christ and accepted His sacrifice on the cross as yours, you will one day see Christ face to face. When you do, if we are able to recognize Hosea we owe him a huge hug and a deep response of gratitude.

Hosea was called to live a life that none of us would ever want to live. Hosea was called to marry a woman who most likely was promiscuous before their marriage and remained unfaithful during the marriage while taking some payment for her services. In Hosea's life we see a small glimpse of the bitterness and pain from God's perspective of His relationships with Israel (His chosen people).

In God's eyes the worship of Baal and other gods, participation in the fertility cult and practices of local culture was a direct abandonment of His holiness and rejection of the Lord's covenant faithfulness to His people. In Hosea we see the holiness and heart of God the Father. In God's eyes our desire for bigger, better,

religion without commitment, grace without discipleship, and fashioning a Jesus in our image is a direct abandonment of God's covenant relationship.

Some pictures are never fully grasped until seen. This is the story of Hosea: the Holiness and heart of God.

Read Hosea 1:2-2:1

Setting the stage: The offspring of unfaithfulness (1:2-3)

Did you know that most Olympic athletes train for years to compete in an event that can last seconds. The 100m event has a WR of only 9.63. The years of training sets the stage for the main event. Now Hosea's life sets the stage with vivid imagery for the prophetic word of God.

We are confronted here in God's Holy Word with our relationship from God's perspective.

God takes your sin personally. He took it so personal that He sent His only son that if you believe-repent-trust His sacrifice will cover you and make you whole.

This is the basis of our relationship with the Lord. You are not Hosea, certainly you are not God; you are not Jezreel, or Lo-Ruhammah ,or Lo-ammo (kids born into this relationship.) We are Gomer.

A person of **known unfaithfulness**. Scholarship is divided on whether she was a cult prostitute, a simple street prostitute, or a woman with the reputation of being unfaithful.

Gomer literally describes acts of infidelity and symbolically points Israel back to its infidelity, the abandoning of worship of the one true God.

Oh how jealous must Hosea have been. Faithfulness is the core of any marriage covenant. But Hosea shows us something of God's character:

He demands our singular worship, the Lord whose name is Jealous is a jealous God (Exod 34:14)

God offers and enters into a relationship with us **knowing that you are unfaithful**. The Lord doesn't wait for us to become faithful before he pursues you. He knows we have and will be unfaithful.

He knows we are Gomer. This is the power of the Gospel: For if we have died with Him, we will also live with Him; **12** if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; **13** if we are **faithless**, He remains **faithful**, for He cannot deny Himself.

God doesn't **pursue us because we are holy, perfect or faithful, God pursues you because He alone is faithful**. He shows us what true faithfulness is. The comfort is knowing that God didn't pursue you because you were faithful and **He will not quit** pursuing you because of your unfaithfulness.

Col. 1:21 Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds because of your evil actions. 22 But now He has **reconciled** you by His physical body

through His death, to present you holy, **faultless**, and **blameless** before Him

The stage is set: we fall short, we are unfaithful and yet Christ presents us as holy, faultless, and blameless. Gomer, have you trusted and accepted his offering of grace? Gomer, know that he loves you in spite of your previous reputation.

In Him you are holy, faultless, and blameless.

The offspring of unfaithfulness: Brokenness (1:3-5)

The first child we encounter in Hosea's marriage is Jezreel. Literally he named his child "scatter." For a prophet to name his son (first born might I add) Jezreel would be like an American naming his son Columbine, or Manson, or Bin Laden. Names that bring back memories of terror and shame.

Jezreel was a prominent battle field in the ANE. Close to the valley of Megiddo and one of the few places where chariotry, cavalry, and marching armies could be maneuvered. (TOTC)

Naboth was murdered at Jezreel in a cruel intrigue conceived by evil queen Jezebel. It was at Jezreel that Jehu's massacre of the rest of Ahab's followers, friends, and priests (2 Kgs 10:11). The valley of Jezreel was synonymous with bloodshed (2 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 9-10)

Jezreel was a constant reminder of judgement, shame, and hurt caused by neglecting the one true God. **This is the first offspring of our sin and unfaithfulness. Brokenness.**

Do you feel scattered today? Sin always leads to Jezreel. Sin always leads us into a valley. Sin always scatters. Make no mistake, God does not ignore our sin. God

will let us go to the valley of shame, neglect, scattering. The Lord will let you wonder in the valley that you may be brought to repentance.

Jezreel reminds us that God wants you to see with His eyes. In His eyes sin never makes sense. Why would we trade the beauty and majesty of the King for the slop of the hogs? Why would we trade good seed (of the tree of life) and instead be scattered? See with an eternal perspective

With our perspective Jezreel doesn't make sense. Why would Hosea go to such lengths? To show us that God's way is always best and good for our lives. To show that His will for you is right, his path is righteous, and there is great Joy in serving the Master.

If you are broken and scattered today: go to the only place of redemption. The cross of Calvary. When you are broken remember the picture of communion (His body broken for you) that you might have forgiveness of sins).

Do things not make sense in your life? Ask Hosea and he would say: See with the eyes of the Lord and Trust in Him

The offspring of unfaithfulness: Ruin (1:6-7)

As if having a first child named (scatter) wasn't bad enough, along comes Loruhamah or you might now hear her as no mercy. Now at this point you know Hosea and Gomer are not looking [online at the top 10 list of baby names](#).

Who names their kid no mercy? Not pitied – is even more terrifying than Jezreel, because the name is not at all ambiguous and needs much less explanation.

The second child of Hosea is also a second offspring of our unfaithfulness: No-Mercy or Ruin = the total destruction of something.

Lo-Ruhamah is a reminder that God will end his tender feelings of deep affection (like a mother's deep affection for the fruit of her womb) that are foundational to his covenant relationships with his people if they remain in their sin.

Sin (unfaithfulness towards God) causes us to forfeit God's favor and mercy on our lives. See I cannot seek God's favor and blessings on my life and in the same moment and with the same life be comfortable in sin.

This daughter reminds us that the love of God is not blind nor is it coerced.

It follows that since mercy without response is self-defeating and forgiveness without a healed relationship is empty, there may come a point at which the only thing left for even God to say is, "How often would I ... and you would not!"

Romans 2:5 But because of your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the **day of wrath**, when God's righteous judgment is revealed.

God's mercy is not an excuse to sin it is an opportunity to enter faithful covenant relationship with the One True God.

On that day of no mercy? What will you say? What will you do? This is the power of the Cross. This is where no mercy met the Son of God. When He took our wrath, He took Lo-Ruhamah.

For those who trust in Jesus Christ, the wrath of God is satisfied! Oh how rich is the mercy of God toward us.

The offspring of unfaithfulness: Isolation (1:8-9)

This third son is a son that signals divorce from the covenant. This is a third offspring of unfaithfulness: Isolation. God will ultimately look at those who live in rebellion and refuse repentance and say: You are not mine!

Here is Hosea's reality, he is called to raise and care for a child with Gomer (a wife who is unfaithful). This leaves a cloud of doubt around the paternity of this third child. And now He is called to name this child, who might not be his, Lo-Ammi or not my people!

Why? Because God the Father wants us to wake up to the reality of our sin. Because of Israel's sinful unfaithfulness: the language given by the Lord echoes the earlier promises to Moses in Exodus.:

It negates God's pledge to Moses not only to rescue Israel from bondage but to take them as their God.

It withdraws from them all the providential care carried in the name by which God first revealed himself to Moses (TOTC).

Here is the truth of unfaithfulness:

1. Not everyone is a child of the King. Only those who have trusted in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ can call God "Father".
 - a. Nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham (Romans 9:7)
 - b. Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 7:21)
2. Your faithfulness is displayed in whether you do the will of the father (Matthew 7:21). Do you exhibit greater patterns of faithfulness or unfaithfulness?
3. Living in rebellion against God will ultimately lead to isolation. The wages of sin is death (cut off) from the land of the living and a place for "wondering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

Isolation of Blanche Monnier

Sin leads us to isolate others and will ultimately lead to eternal isolation away from the Holiness and heart of God.

Here is the beauty of Grace and Gospel → Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord. Confessing him as the Way, the One and Only, is called a child. Remember your status.

But the offspring of your sin pales in comparison with the Offering of grace, love and mercy from the Father.

The offering of Grace and Redemption (1:10-2:1)

Compassion and Mercy is concern for the sufferings and misfortunes of others. It is the tender mercy and compassion of God rooted in His free gift of grace.

Sin births indifference. We are indifference toward the ways of the Lord. We then become indifference towards our sin, worship, and desire for righteousness and for others. Have you ever noticed when you are living in unfaithfulness you lack compassion for others?

This is the loving kindness of Christ. Even though our sin births isolation, ruin, and brokenness; God offers us **another way.**

In **verse 10 the tone and the voice** changes. Hosea's prophetic voice becomes prominent and the theme turns positive with salvation and not judgement. This is the beauty of redemption (payment for our sins)

What God had scattered in our lives will now be a valley where the seeds of the Gospel and will be Great.

Do you desire for Christ to sow seeds of redemption and mercy in your life? Trust in His sacrifice.

How will I respond to the Gospel?

John 3:16 “For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

For God so loved, He gave. For God so loved, He self-sacrificed. For God so loved, there was a bloody cross on behalf of guilty sinners.

The Bible describes the Son as the groom, and the church is described as His bride. The Son expresses His love for His bride in self-sacrifice—love that knows no end, love that goes to a cross and is resurrected. The church expresses her love to the One that gives everything for her.

Remember who you are. Even though the world calls you Gomer to remind you of Brokenness, Ruin, and isolation, Jesus Christ calls you Bride.

Will you take a stand for Christ? Do you need to confess your sins? Do you need to be faithful in baptism. Do you need restoration? Do you need to celebrate?

Notes

- To grasp the overall message of this first section, we must catch the significance of its literary structure. These three chapters are a two part story (1:2-9; 3:1-5) wrapped around a three part oracle (1:10-2:1; 2:2-13; 2:14-23). This structure produces a scheme A B' b B' A'. A is the story of judgment A' hope B announcement of judgement and B' the oracle of hope (TOTC).
- Guideline #1 Hosea's experiences are literal not allegorical. This is enacted prophecy. Hosea is to act in God's place as well as speak for Him (TOTC).
- Guideline #2 the autobiographical account in chapter 3 is the sequel to the biographical account in chapter 1.
- Guideline #3 when Gomer married Hosea she was an ordinary Israelite woman who later became an adulteress and a prostitute.
- Guideline #4 the oracles of chapter two are an essential comment and expansion of the two calls to prophetic action described in 1:2 and 3:1.

Hos. 1:2 When the LORD first spoke to Hosea, He said this to him:

Go and marry a promiscuous wife
and have children of promiscuity,
for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity
by abandoning the LORD.

- We can assume that Hosea may still have been an adolescent, based on what we know about patriarchal tribal societies (TOTC).
- Was she a cult-prostitute, simply a street prostitute, or a woman with the reputation of being unfaithful?
- The standard of morality in Hosea's day was the law. It prohibited marriage to a harlot only on the part of priests.
- Possible that two groups of children are represented in the structure of the prophecy. Those born to Gomer before her marriage to Hosea and the three born to her and Hosea in legal wedlock (See 2:3) (McComiskey).

Proleptic view – regards the children in 1:2 and 1:3-9 as the same (McComiskey)

- Go and Marry
 - A standard expression for marriage and the repetition of the verbs shows how promptly, staunchly, and totally Hosea followed the divine word (TOTC). Disobedience was unthinkable.
- The marriage and subsequent procreation of children were viewed as one even in action I. The wife and offspring were all part of one revelatory event: the public exposure of Israel's unfaithfulness to Yahweh her covenant Husband. (TOTC)
- Promiscuous/of promiscuity
 - In both cases the reference is not to past but future conduct.
 - Here we find a dual meaning of promiscuity
 - Literally it describes acts of illicit lust, often with financial or material gain

- Symbolically it points to the infidelity, the abandoning of worship of the one true God for the idols and myths of the day notably the worship of Baals (TOTC).
 - A prophet's call could be agonizing: he could know that almost anything might be asked of him. This is strong talk. And as if throwing the word "whore" at us three times in one sentence were not enough, the Hebrew has the root not a mere three times but four.
 - What Hosea had to do was, in miniature, what God had done in giving His love to to a partner with a history and with a roving eye. Hosea was not to leave the matter there, any more than God would (Kidner).
 - Wife and kids are illustrations of the whole land.
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Hos. 1:3 So he went and married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 Then the LORD said to him:

Name him Jezreel, for in a little while
I will bring the bloodshed of Jezreel
on the house of Jehu
and put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.

5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel
in the Valley of Jezreel.

- The contrast between Gomer/Diblaim and the names of the children is striking. Absence of any such explanation (to their meaning) suggests one thing alone: the story is real. The whole point of the babies names is to symbolize judgment (TOTC).
- Jezreel
 - It was the place where Jehu was spet to power over all Israel on a mighty tide of bloodshed (2 Kgs 9:21-28)
 - The town had experienced this bloodbath and would not have long forgotten the judgement.

- For a prophet to give his son this name would be like a politician naming his son Peterloo, or Katyn, or Soweto (Kidner).
 - Naboth was murdered at Jezreel in a cruel intrigue conceived by Jezebel. IT was at Jezreel that Jesu slew Joram, king of Israel, thus brining the Omride dynasty to an end. Jezreel was the site of Jehu's massacre of the rest of Ahab's followers, friend, and priests (2 Kgs 10:11). The valley of Jezreel was synonymous with bloodshed (2 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 9-10)
- Location chosen- by the principle of lex talionis (eye for eye) where the punishment is portioned out appropriately to crime for the execution of judgment. (TOTC)
- Jezreel was a prominent battle field in the ANE. Close to the valley of Megiddo and one of the few places where chariotry, cavalry, and marches armies could be maneuvered. (TOTC)
- JEzreel = literally scatter.
 - An appropriate name for judgment. Can mean that the Lord will scatter as chaff or undesirable litter
 - Also can refer to the scattering of seed in the ploughed furrows for planting (TOTC).
- Bow
 - The most accurate and wide-ranging weapon of antiquity
 - There is a double sting here:
 - Usually when God promises to 'break the bow' of some fighting force, it means that He is coming to His people's rescue. (2:18 and Psalm 46:9)
 - Though in this moment it is Israel He will break.

Hos. 1:6 She conceived again and gave birth to a daughter, and the LORD said to him:

Name her No Compassion,
for I will no longer have compassion
on the house of Israel.

I will certainly take them away.

7 But I will have compassion on the house of Judah,
and I will deliver them by the LORD their God.
I will not deliver them by bow, sword, or war,
or by horses and cavalry.

- Not pitied – is even more terrifying than Jezreel, because the name is not at all ambiguous and needs much less explanation.
- A reminder that God will end his tender feelings of deep affection (like a mother's deep affection for the fruit of her womb) that are foundational to his covenant relationships with his people (NIV).
 - This was a severe blow to their confidence in God's unfailing commitment to love his people. They will no longer be rescued when they are in trouble, for God's compassionate mercy will no longer be extended to them.
- Sin causes us to forfeit God's favor and mercy on our lives.
- Most likely the second and third child are not Hosea's. The Him is missing (of verse 1:3) so the joy of fatherhood was deeply clouded, and the children were living proofs of the invasion of the marriage (Kidner).
- This daughter reminds us that the love of God is not blind nor is it coerced. It follows that since mercy without response is self-defeating and forgiveness without a healed relationship is empty, there may come a point at which the only thing left for even God to say is, "How often would I ... and you would not!" (Kidner).
- Pity or lack does not mean a state of mind but a course of action, sparing or unsparing (Kidner).
- It needs to be said that oracles like these are shouts of warning, not irrevocable sentences (Kidner).

Hos. 1:8 After Gomer had weaned No Compassion, she conceived and gave birth to a son. 9 Then the LORD said:

Name him Not My People,
for you are not My people,
and I will not be your God.

- Weaned – two or three years.
- A Son that signals divorce
- Its language echoes the events of Exodus at two main points
 - It negates God’s pledge to Moses not only to rescue Israel from bondage but to take them as their God.
 - It withdraws from them all the providential care carried in the name by which God first revealed himself to Moses (TOTC).
- From one standpoint this oracle was simply factual: just as accurate as this child was not paternal to Hosea. Israel was the child of her times and of her pagan world. The presence of other gods flatly denied the relationship of the One True Jealous God (Kidner).
- Not my people
 - This statement reflects the ancient promise first given to Abraham (Gen. 17:7-8), where the Lord would become God to his people.
 - We must understand the words not my people apply only to the status of the people in Hosea’s day. The covenant is eternal (Gen. 13:15; 17:7-8; 48:4).

10 Yet the number of the Israelites
will be like the sand of the sea,
which cannot be measured or counted.
And in the place where they were told:
You are not My people,
they will be called: Sons of the living God.

- The shift in tone from 1:9 to 1:10 is abrupt and is a reminder that we are dealing, not with the events and messages of Hosea in the order of their historical occurrence, but with a beautiful edited

composition in which the thematic order of theology- the relationship between judgment and hope—takes priority over the sequence of events in history (TOTC).

- 11 And the Judeans and the Israelites
will be gathered together.
They will appoint for themselves a single ruler
and go up from the land.
For the day of Jezreel will be great.
- 1 Call your brothers: My People
and your sisters: Compassion.

- Here the tone and voice changes. Hosea's prophetic voice becomes prominent and the theme turns positive with salvation not judgment.
- The first sign of the covenant is "Sons of the Living God." The living God will work a miracle and the Baal's will be defeated.
- The second reminder of the covenant comes in verse 11 with the reuniting of the kingdoms.
- Now the name of each child is transformed from a sign of judgment to a sign of grace (TOTC).
 - God will both scatter in judgment and sow in restoration
 - The names with "not" meant that their negative force could be removed with the stroke of a pen (TOTC).
 - The giving of new names (by an act of pure grace) exactly cancels the existing alienation (Kidner).

Thoughts

- Grace has a way of interrupting oracles of doom.
- The people in the community must have shunned these kids as they were a constant reminder of God's impending judgment, doom, and clarion call to repentance.

Illustration

She spent 25 years locked in a completely dark room, half starved, naked, and lying on a mattress covered in lice and her own excrement. Her only companions were the rats she shared crusts of bread with. By that stage she had aged and understandably lost her wits. Her crime? Loving someone beneath her family's social status—or maybe sheer stubbornness, depending how you look at it. No matter the conclusion, it seems fair to say that Blanche Monnier was the victim of a terrible injustice, and that love, despite the popular aphorism, doesn't always conquer.

Discovered by French police in the well-to-do town of Poitiers after an anonymous tip-off, Mademoiselle Monnier was [rushed into care](#) in 1901. It was first thought that she wouldn't survive, and though she later recovered physically, her sanity was never fully restored. Meanwhile, the world was shocked to learn that the woman who later came to be known as "The Sequestered of Poitiers" had been locked in the room by members of her own family after refusing to renounce her love for an unsuccessful local lawyer.

Blanche Monnier had been an attractive, bright-eyed brunette, reportedly desired by several men in the town. But much to her upper-class family's dismay, her heart was set on the lawyer. The Monniers, believing their reputation would be ruined if the union were allowed to go ahead, decided to prevent the marriage by confining the young woman. It was her brother, a local government official, who trapped her—but the plan was hatched by their mother, who was convinced the girl would soon relent. But Blanche never did.

The lawyer died 16 years before Blanche was rescued. When the shocking crime was discovered, Blanche's mother was locked away in prison, dying of heart failure soon after realizing the true horror of her crime.

In an interesting postscript, the so-called life of "The Sequestered of Poitiers" is believed by some to have haunted the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who grew up in the same town and regularly passed the Monniers' home. A [BBC documentary](#) suggested that the philosopher's obsession with madness and confinement may well have been inspired, at least to some extent, by the horrifying story, which he must surely have heard as a child, and which he seems to have never forgotten.

