

Redeeming Love: The Holiness and Heart of God [Hosea 3:1-5]

Intro

Video = 3 Minutes

IF people fall into sin and turn their backs on God, will he still love them? This is the story of Hosea. This is the story of the Gospel

This is your story

At the end of our time together we will have a moment of response.

Every time we encounter the living Word of God we are called to grow deeper in faith and move way from your sin. How will you respond today? How will the Holy Spirit move you?

Hosea 3:1-5 and Pray

The Mark of Love (3:1)

The prophet Hosea's answer to the Holiness of God and His response to our unfaithfulness is one word: LOVE.

We find imbedded in this heart wrenching and beautiful story of love and heartbreak, a magnifying glass on the nature of our Heavenly Father.

The first mark of God's love: it is available to all. This is a dominant theme that emerges from Hosea, we should never question the availability of His love.

His redeeming love is available to **all persons**. There is not a person on the planet, past or present that is beyond the reach of the father's love for them.

This is the Gospel in a nutshell. **You are not un-worthy of His love.** Make no mistake, this is not to say that something you do makes you worthy of God's grace. Rather, there is not enough sin in your life, no behavior so reprehensible that you are now unqualified, unfit for the redeeming love of Christ.

“Free grace can go into the gutter, and bring up a jewel!”
– CH Spurgeon

In the opposite vein you are not too-worthy of His love. See here is the truth offered by the tragic life of Gomer (Israel/You/ME). We are all unfaithful and loved by another. We have given ourselves to the world and selfish ways. Its as if we have said: Lord they love me more.

This is the beauty of God's redeeming love: It is available to all and available to you!

His redeeming love is **embraced not earned.**

Gomer knew this truth. She did nothing to earn the love of her husband. In fact, her behavior and lifestyle earned the opposite: hate and derision.

Oh the glorious grace of our Savior who often takes the wisdom of the world and makes it foolish. When we deserve hate He offers love.

Hosea did not ask Gomer to prove herself before he offered forgiveness and love. Hosea did not publically humiliate Gomer to prove a point. He simply was commanded to go and love again.

Are you trying to earn the love of Christ? Love that is earned or coerced is not love. [Eph. 2:4](#) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Are you willing today to embrace the love of Christ for you?

His redeeming love is also **constant in all circumstances.**

God's love is present even when people are enmeshed in their idolatry. Where was Gomer? She was still committing adultery. See, Hosea's love did not depend on Gomer's circumstance or situation.

The redeeming love of Yahweh does not rise and fall based upon your situation. His love is constant. This is the power of redeeming love.

His redeeming **love contrasts the pettiness of human affections.**

Put in other terms: God's love does not depend on your emotions or emotional response. Redeeming love is not an emotion.

We often fall in and out of love but this is not God. Our human love needs three legs to stand Commitment—Affection – Attraction. The foundation that most mirrors eternal heavenly love is commitment.

If you are basing the father's love for you on how you feel: STOP! One minute we can praise God and the **next we will chase raisin cakes**. God loves Israel to the uttermost, while Israel gives her heart to cakes of raisins (Kidner).

Four times this opening verse has spoken in terms of love, each pair of its occurrences placing a noble use of the word in grating proximity to a base one—pure devotion next to gross infatuation.

His love does not depend on our emotive response. Rather, our affections should be shaped by this redemptive love.

So how do we live considering His redeeming love?

- Does my life model the redemptive love found at the throne of Christ? Is my love conditional or is it available to all?
 - a. **John 13:34** “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- Am I loving the one who loves me? **Worship** is a reflection of my love. **Community** is a reflection. **Service** is a reflection
- Am I marked?
 - a. Love not law

- b. Faith not fear
 - c. Redemption not religion
 - Do others see the love of Christ in me? Am I most known for love or for my political stance? Sport affection? Career choice? Love or the church I attend? Love or accomplishment of my kids? Love or work ethic? Love or reputation?
-

The Mark of Redemption (3:2)

We see in the life of this prophet, a man going down to the local jail, market, or even slums and purchasing his bride back. We are not told why she must be purchased. Most scholarship believes she either voluntarily sold herself into slavery or ended up in one of the local temples as a cultic prostitute.

Silver was the customary shekels used in trade, which may have weighed approximately 11.5 grams. To this was added almost seventeen bushels of grain. The entire price for the woman thus amounted to about 30 shekels. That would equal the price of a slave according to Exod. 21:32 (Wolff).

No matter the where and the why, Hosea's response shows both how costly love can be and how degraded Gomer's condition had become.

The amount comprising the purchase price indicates not only the events historicity, but also suggests that Hosea was not particularly wealthy (Wolff).

Here is Gospel reality:

You have a price. Our sin puts us in debtor's prison. This is a debt that will not go away, and it will not decrease. It can not be forgiven through bankruptcy. Our sin debt grows daily and it will never shrink.

I don't know how much our redemption price is. But God does.

1 Corinthians 6:20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's

We should rest assured knowing that ¹⁴ He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. If you accept his love and sacrifice on your behalf. If you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ your debt is paid. Celebrate that your spiritual debts are **Paid in Full**.

Your price is not cheap

That the payment is both in money and in kind is curious; it suggests that Hosea had difficulty in coming up with enough money to purchase her.

God did not have an easy time purchasing and redeeming you from your sin because he is God. He sent his ONLY Son. He turned his back on his son and laid your wrath upon him.

“We all carry about in our pockets His very nails” – Martin Luther

Because of this redemptive love. Because Jesus has purchased you back we now live as Free!

We are no longer under the law and under the curse of human striving and endeavors.

Live as a Free man! I am sure everyone has experienced buying an article of clothing at a store and the security sensors were left on. Even though you purchased the product, it wasn't entirely yours because you heard the beep.

I believe often we live our spiritual lives this way. We know Jesus paid for us in full. But we go around waiting on the heavenly beep every time we make a misstep. We have been paid for but are still living our lives on credit. **Live Free!**

A lasting mark of redemption is that God did not only set you free but called you home.

This is the picture of eternal life. Jesus said that all who trust in Him will have life and life more abundant.

What a beautiful picture. Hosea did not only pay to "bail out" Gomer but he brought her home.

Because of the redemption in Christ Jesus we can hear "you stay with me."

How will I respond?

Are you living free in His grace or under the law?

Are you modeling the marks of love and redemption?

. Have you accepted the love of Christ for you?

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
Calling for you and for me;
See, on the portals He's waiting and watching,
Watching for you and for me.

Refrain:

Come home, come home,
You who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home!

Notes

IF people fall into sin and turn their back on God, will he still love them? Hosea's answer is that no one has ever deserved or earned God's love; it is always a free gift to those who are unworthy (NIV).

Hosea reminds us that we should never question the availability of God's love (NIV).

This section constitutes what scholars term the memorabile, a historical event is condensed to one point. Thus no autobiographical interests directs Hosea's account; rather, the passage is presented simply in order to set forth the primary fact of God's command to perform the symbolic action (Wolff).

The text itself indicates neither the period of Hosea's ministry in which it was written, nor the concrete circumstances within which it is to be interpreted (Wolff).

Chapter three is the resumption of the relationship in chapter 1 (NAC).

Few places in scripture tell us more about divine love:

1. It is constant in all circumstances, present even when people are enmeshed in their idolatry
2. It contrast utterly with the triviality of human affections
3. It can be illustrated through human love when that human love has grasped something of the power and pathos of the divine (TOTC).

We are left to surmise what happened to Hosea and Gomer. As dramatically as they appear, they are dropped from the concerns of the prophecy (TOTC).

The three steps of Gomer's restoration are (NIV):

1. Having won Gomer's release from a former creditor's control, Hosea gives here a positive message of his commitment to care for her for many days
2. Hosea sets down the condition so f this new relationship
3. Hosea will again be her husband

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.*"

Love

Is it possible to order love? The word love (*ahav*) neither connotes fall in love, sexual intercourse, nor is it the legal act of marriage. Rather, as elsewhere in Hosea (11:1; 14:5; and 9:15) love means a spontaneous helping, healing, that is the opposite of anger and hatred (Wolff).

Hosea's act of love toward his unfaithful wife mirrors Yahweh's own love. The love of God is undeserved, for those loved by him are characterized immediately in a concessive nominal clause as in love with someone else (Wolff).

Four times this opening verse has spoken in terms of love, each pair of its occurrences placing a noble use of the word in grating proximity to a base one—pure devotion next to gross infatuation.

God loves Israel to the uttermost, while Israel gives her heart to cakes of raisins (Kidner).

Hos. 3:2 So I bought her for myself for fifteen *shekels* of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. ³ 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.”

Bought

The infrequent “bought” signifies not only that he pays a price but further that he must also bargain for her. Accordingly, the woman became his legal possession (Wolff).

Hosea's response shows both how costly love can be and how degraded Gomer's condition had become (TOTC).

Price

Silver was the customary shekels used in trade, which may have weighed approximately 11.5 grams. To this was added almost seventeen bushels of grain. The entire price for the woman thus amounted to about 30 shekels. That would equal the price of a slave according to Exod. 21:32 (Wolff).

Hosea does not say to whom he paid the price, nor where the woman lived. She could have been either someone's personal slave or a temple prostitute (Wolff).

The amount comprising the purchase price indicates not only the events historicity, but also suggests that Hosea was not particularly wealthy (Wolff).

That the payment is both in money and in kind is curious; it suggests that Hosea had difficulty in coming up with enough money to purchase her. This possibility receives further support from the fact that the Hebrew word translated "bought" includes the idea of haggling (NAC).

It is better to suppose that Hosea is simply paying off Gomer's debts. As a result of this gracious act of freeing the woman from her bondage (NIV).

Raisin

The eating of raisin cakes was not of itself evil, even when eaten as part of a religious ceremony (2 Sam 6:19). Raisins were for the Israelites a form of high energy food and were consumed by those who were faint with hunger (1 Sam 30:12).

The cakes Hosea describes were used in pagan worship, may have been part of ecstatic or wild celebrations, and may have played a role in the promiscuity of the fertility (Baal) cult).

3 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."

Many days you shall remain with me, and you shall neither prostitute yourself nor be with any man, and then I shall be yours (NAC).

The woman, who could no longer resist temptation, was saved from it. Thus love dominates these severe measures (Wolff).

Hosea's charge to Gomer is distressingly terse.

The best interpretation is that Hosea means that she should live with him in total abstinence of sexual relations for many days until at last the two of them could resume the normal life of husband and wife.

If Gomer only lives in the home of Hosea as something of a guest (or prisoner) and never enjoys the full status of wife (which includes relations), then the covenant between Hosea and Gomer is never truly mended (NAC).

The disciplinary period in the marriage is a prophetic action designed to symbolize a time of chastening and deprivation through which Israel is to pass (TOTC).

Stay

Means to “remain at home.” Hosea’s wife experiences nothing more (or less) than Hosea’s words and his presence, just as in the desert the wife Israel (Wolff).

Hos. 3:4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.

King

Israel will first lose its political existence, in which she believed herself capable of securing her life independent of Yahweh (Wolff).

Sacrifice

Sacrificial worship will cease, together with the sanctuaries situated at the holy pillars around which Israel assembled for its festivals. The most famous ones stood in Shechem and Bethel (Wolff).

Sacrifice can be good or evil depending on to whom and with what attitude the sacrifice is made. Sacrifice to Yahweh with a broken heart is good but sacrifice to Baal is always evil (NAC).

Pillar

Ancient peoples often raised these in honor of pagan gods, and the term carried pagan implications (Exod 23:24).

Ephod/Teraphim

Finally, the customary ways of inquiring into the will of God are removed. The ephod, although difficult to define in detail, served this purpose as well as the teraphim, which may be envisioned as a divine image or a face mask (Wolff).

Ephod refers to the sacred garment of the priests (Exod 28:28) and by extension implies absence of priests and temple worship.

5 *Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.*

The significance and objective of such harsh words is new life. Since Yahweh removes from Israel the possibility of self reliance, they again recognize who had led them out of bondage (Wolff).

Return and Seek

Where return and seek occur together, they reinforce each other – to return with the full desire for fellowship with God on his terms (7:19).

In this text Israel plays the part of the prodigal son. She returns in fear and yet is received in love (NAC).

Goodness is not only a recovery of fellowship with Yahweh but the restoration of all his generosity (TOTC).

Fear—nothing less than such reverent awe is appropriate for Israel, who has learned in deprivation both who Yahweh is and who Baal is not (TOTC).

Thoughts

The theme is stated unequivocally by the fourfold love in v.1. even a lawfully divorced and remarried wife must not return to her first husband (Deut 24:1). Now, the love which represents Yahweh's love is to bring home an adulteress who had legally come into another's possession. **God does what is impossible according to the law** (Wolff).

Illustration