# Hosea: Show Your Love

Today is a discussion Sunday, so after this introduction, we will split up into small groups of about 6 people at tables and discuss this passage. Remember, this is your opportunity to worship God with your mind and voice, but just don’t monopolize the conversation. There are no designated leaders, so someone just get the ball rolling with one of the questions provided. Or share from your heart if you feel God speaking to you through something you’ve heard this morning. It’s a little less structured service, but we pray that the Holy Spirit will keep order.

Well, last week, we talked about Amos who was a prophet from Judah, but he had a message to the Northern Kingdom Israel. And today, we are going to be introduced to another prophet named Hosea who also spoke to Israel at the same time. And if you were paying attention during the reading, then you already realize that Hosea didn’t have a normal home life. Verse 2 **<Arrow>**

*When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.” So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.*

The first thing that God tells Hosea is to go find and marry a promiscuous woman. Now, just think about this for a moment. Hosea is a godly young man, who follows God’s laws and commands. He is likely from a good family and has God-fearing parents. Everyone in the town knows that Hosea is righteous. He doesn’t go down to the high places where they worshiped other gods like Baal by having sex with temple prostitutes. He stays away from all that.

So, now, God is telling him to go find a promiscuous or a loose woman who has had many lovers already and marry her. Where does he start? Does he take a walk down to the other side of town and ask around, “*Do you know of any promiscuous women?*” “*Well, what did you have in mind Hosea*? *How much money did you bring with you?*” Do you realize how this may have looked? And what about his parents? “*Hej Beeri, we heard your son was looking for a promiscuous woman, did he find one*?” Hee,hee,hee. Scandolous! This was the juicy gossip in town for quite a while.

And somehow, somewhere, he finds her: Gomer. Not the most attractive name. Maybe she is not so physically attractive and perhaps that is why she is promiscuous. Maybe she thinks that is only way that she is going to find ‘love’ if she offers herself to some guy. In any case, she is damaged goods in that society and no self-respecting man is going to marry her. What do you think his parents say when Hosea brings her home to meet them? “*This is the girl that I have not been telling you all about?*” How did that conversation do? And when Hosea asks Diblaim, Gomer’s father, for her hand in marriage, he’s ecstatic. He knows that his is her only chance for some sort of normal life. This is not the fairy tale romance that we like to think about like with movies like Pretty Woman. Shame, scandal, embarrassment, ridicule. It was not pretty and Hosea knows this is going to end badly.

Now, if I can take a moment to mention something here for all you young people who are not married. Look for spouse that has a good name and I mean a good character. I saw this on Facebook a few weeks ago. A mother was talking to her daughter about this young man whom she was head over heals in love with. And her mother wasn’t so sure about this guy, so she suggested to her daughter to look at this passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 that describes what true love looks like. **<Arrow>** And she told her daughter to replace ‘love’ with the ‘name’ of this guy and to read it. And her daughter did that and afterwards, she realized that this guy maybe wasn’t so loving or lovable after all. Now, I have to admit that this is a high bar to reach and perhaps too high. But remember, your future life on earth will be permanently inter-twined with this person, so choose carefully, very carefully. Besides choosing Christ as your Lord and Savior, this choice will impact your life more than any other.

And moms and dads, it is up to us to raise our children to become loving spouses. And more than anything, they will see that love in your own life and marriage.

Now, back to Hosea. Well, they get married and things go well for a while. Gomer gives birth to a son. Hosea even thinks that it’s his. But God breaks in again and He name the son Jezreel and it’s a name from one of the worst massacres in recent history. There are no good connotations with this name. No one names there kid this.

Then comes a daughter, Lo-Ruhamah which means not loved. And finally another son, Lo-Ammi which means not my people. No one uses these names and it adds to the already strange beginning for Hosea’s family. Think about it for a minute. It impacts their lives every day. ‘*Not my people*’ go set the table for dinner. ‘*Not loved*’ come and kiss your father goodnight. There is this cloud over the family and finally after several years, the rain falls as Gomar leaves again to her lovers and this time, she does not return to her family. She abandons them all. **<Arrow>**

Some time occurs and then God tells Hosea again to Go and show your love to your adulterous wife again. I think at this point, if I were Hosea I might have told God that this was too much. He knew the day was coming where his wife would leave him for someone else, but God didn’t tell him that he would have to once again put his love on the line and go after her. After all that she has done, she should be the one going and coming back to me. What will all the neighbors say when I bring that adulterous woman back home? It’s too much, Lord.

But Hosea obeys and he once again goes down to that side of town looking for his wife. And he finds her, but somewhere along the line she has gotten into debt and has sold herself into the sex slavery business. So, Hosea not only has to find her, he learns that he has to pay for her as well. His own wife; he has to pay for wife. And he doesn’t have all the cash, so he has to go back and get some of their food, 10 large bushels of barley, and bring it back with him in a cart.

And everyone sees Hosea going down to the red light district with his pockets jingling and carrying all the barley. It’s scandalous. Where’s he going now? And then he comes back with an empty cart and who’s that sitting next to Hosea? It’s Gomer. He went and paid to get that tramp of a wife back. Everyone was talking about it. Did you hear what Hosea the Prophet of God did?

But I wonder how Gomer saw it. She was obviously in a bad situation and was more or less a prostitute. I wonder if she ever regretted leaving Hosea or if she missed her children. I guess she thought that there was no possible way back. And then one day, a man shows up and she knows what that means. They come to buy her and use her for their own pleasure, but this is different, it’s Hosea and she learns that he is going to buy her to heal her and bring her home. The impossible journey home is actually happening. She can’t believe it.

But verse 3 Hosea tells her this is it. Don’t think you can have it both ways again. You can only love me and me alone and I will do the same. And Gomar is not mentioned again. The last 10 chapters are all about God’s judgment of the nation of Israel, but even here you see some hope. And I think that Hosea’s act of love for Gomar changed her life and I believe and hope they spent a lifetime together and found some good nicknames for their kids. **<Arrow>**

Actually at the end of Chapter 2 God gives the children new names. Jezreel now means God plants. And ‘not loved’ becomes ‘my loved’. And ‘not my people’ becomes ‘my people’. There is hope for this family and Hosea’s unconditional love for his wife is at the center of it.

This is a remarkable testimony to the power of love. **<Arrow>** And Peter reminds us that love has this healing power to cover a multitude of sins, even the sins of adultery. **<Arrow>**And Paul reminds husbands to love their wives by giving of themselves to their wives just as Christ loved and gave himself up for the church. And in the book of Genesis, we are told that man and woman are joined to become 1 flesh. A new entity is formed that cannot be broken.

And Christian psychologists can testify that of course, bad marriages and mean partners can destroy, but nothing heals like true and pure love expressed in a marriage. People find healing and are able to deal with difficult life experiences when they have a marriage grounded in this kind of deep and sustaining love. Have you ever considered that perhaps God wants to use you and your acts of love for your spouse to heal them? It may not be fun or even fair for some time, but perhaps in the long run, healing will come and it might even be a blessing back to you as God uses your spouse to heal you.

People have also experienced this kind of love in church communities as they are loved and accepted in close relationships with other believers. Love covers a multitude of sins

But this story is more than just about Hosea; God is the real hero of this story. He is the jilted lover who has lost his first love Israel to other false gods. So, when Hosea told the nation of all their sins and how God wants them to repent and turn from their evil ways and return to Him; they all knew Hosea’s story and the great love he showed to Gomer. If God’s love is like that, then maybe they can come to Him and He will still love them, but this story isn’t only about Israel. **<Arrow>**

*I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot,” declares the Lord.*

*“Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. “In that day,” declares the Lord,“you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’*

You see, we have seen this day, when God came to earth as a humble man who spoke tenderly to us. You see, we are like Gomer. We have all gone after less wild lovers and have left God at some point in our lives. We have gone our own way and we were slaves to the sin that had a hold on us. Perhaps it was sex, or drugs or alcohol, but maybe it was something more accepted in our society like money or our career or education or pride or control. We all have had that thing in our lives that we worshiped more than God; it was our idol.

And God finds us and although we are His, He still has to buy us. How much? It will cost Your son’s blood. And God pays. Jesus is crucified on the Cross to pay for us. This is the Gospel; the good news of God’s great unconditional love for us. Gomar did nothing to deserve Hosea’s love. And we do cannot do anything to earn God’s love for us. And like Gomar, we need to accept that love and commit to never return to our false lovers. God doesn’t ask us to respond to His love with devotion like to a Master; He says here that we are to respond as a wife to a loving husband. You may not like being compared to Gomar, but if you don’t have a sense of your own sinfulness, you will also not a have sense for God’s amazing and healing love for you. You have to understand the bad news before you get the Good News. It’s a scandalous love that God has for us.

Hosea 1:1-3

1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel:

2 When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.” 3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Hosea 3:1-5

1 The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. 3 Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.”

4 For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. 5 Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.

# Hosea: Show Your Love Questions

1. Would you be willing like Hosea to do something difficult for God knowing that obedience would be painful to you, but that it would benefit someone else?
2. Discuss the *Facebook* post that showed true love using 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Do you think this standard is too high? Why or why not?
3. Have you seen love, expressed in a close personal relationship, bring healing to someone’s life? If not, what might this look like in someone’s life?
4. The Creator of the Universe has a scandalous love for us; like a husband has for an adulterous wife. Discuss the image we get to love God as our husband and not to just serve Him as our Lord? What does this tell you about God? About ourselves?

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