

HOSEA

Text: Hosea 10:12

I bring to your attention two truths: (1) God loves Israel. (2) God desires Israel to serve Him. The queen of Sheba said, "...thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever..." (II Chronicles 9:8b). And God's goal for His people is seen in Exodus 9:1: "Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me." The same could be said of the church and each and every individual who makes up the bride of Christ. God loves you; God desires you to serve Him.

Hosea was a prophet to the northern tribes of Israel, sometimes referred to as Ephraim. Hosea begins his prophecy just before the nation is carried away into captivity in Assyria. Israel is prosperous, but wicked. The land is full of deceits, adulteries and all manner of evil. So, God wanted to get the message over to Israel in a most graphic portrayal. Hosea 1:2, 3: "The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son." In a marriage, nothing is probably more painful and difficult to recover from than infidelity. In God's command to Hosea, He is telling us that through sin we betray Him, we cheat and we are unfaithful. James 4:4: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

I. THE MESSAGE IN THE NAMES

In Hosea 1:4 and 6 we find these names given to Hosea's children: "Jezreel" (God will sow); "Lo-ruhamah" (not pitied); "Lo-ammi" (not my people). The messages through the children's names are saying, Israel, you are sowing wickedness, therefore God will sow the seed of destruction in your midst. Hosea 8:7a: "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind...."

The nature of God is to continually love His people and to ultimately forgive their sins and bring them back into perpetual fellowship with Him. Psalm 40:11: "Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me." Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

God says in Hosea 2:1, 2, I want you to be "Ammi" (My people) and I want to provide "Ruhamah" (obtainers of pity). And then God pleads for His adulterous people to cease, desist and be faithful to Him. Psalm 130:3, 4: "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Hosea 2:23: "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say

to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.”

II. THE MEANING OF THE PHRASEOLOGY

A. Hosea 6:4: You lack the power to go the distance with God. Proverbs 26:11: “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.”

B. Hosea 7:8: You are half-baked in your attempts to do right. Proverbs 11:1: “A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.”

C. Hosea 7:11, 10:2: Your actions have become insane. Philippians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” James 1:8: “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” James 4:8: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”

D. Hosea 7:14: You have missed the mark. Sin has been defined as missing the mark. This definition is realized in Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Sin is coming short. Also, it is going beyond the prescribed boundaries. I John 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” The word transgression means a disregarding or violating. James 4:17: “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.”

III. THE MERCIES OF THE PAST

Hosea 6:1; Hosea 8:14; Hosea 12:3-6; Hosea 2:8

Revelation 2:4, 5: “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works....”

IV. THE MAGNIFICENT AND EVERLASTING LOVE OF GOD

Hosea 2:14-17; Hosea 4:17; Hosea 11:8

Jeremiah 31:3: “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Hosea 11:4: “I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.”

V. THE MAGNANIMOUS REDEMPTION

Hosea 3:1-3; Hosea 2:14-17

Hebrews 8:12: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

I love the story of the very plain young lady of the South Sea Islands, who, when she discovered the high dowry her husband paid for her, rose to a new appearance and a new level of living. II Corinthians 5:14, 15: “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were

all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

Conclusion:

As we see God comparing the home to His relationship with Him and his people, a beautiful story comes to mind:

Many years ago in the settling of the west, people would build their homes in the wilderness surrounded by great trees and tall grasses. There were few things more dangerous to a pioneering family than a prairie fire. One thing that made the prairie fires so dangerous was that there was no way to communicate to the farmers and ranchers of the impending danger once a wild fire was underway. In one of those massive fires, the husband and dad realized his home was surrounded by an inferno of tall flames, moving at a rapid pace. Fortunately, the mother and the older kids had gone into town. But papa and little brother were stranded alone and surrounded by flames. The father had to act quickly. He took a flaming torch and ran to the middle of the great pasture in front of their modest wooden cabin. He began to burn a wide swath in the great couple of acres. When finished, he grabbed his little son, doused himself and the little guy in water and went to the very center of the property he had just burned and crouched down with a wet quilt over their heads. The frightened little boy began to cry and said, “Papa, I’m afraid. Are we going to be burned? Are we going to die?” The father said to his son, “Don’t you be afraid, Son; this is why I burned our property.” The father continued, “As long as we are here, you will not perish, because, you see, son, this area of the land has already been burned!”

Christ paid the price for our sin. He took our punishment of Hell for us, so that we might not perish, but have everlasting life! (John 3:16).

-Pastor Pope-