

The Gospel According to Hosea

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[0 : 00] And the Lord said to me, go again.

Love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress.! And the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.

So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a letic of barley. And I said to her, you must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore or belong to another man, so will I also be to you.

For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. Afterward, the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king.

And they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? Amen. Amen. Some of you might be familiar with James Montgomery Boyce.

[1 : 18] James Montgomery Boyce was a great theologian, a great Bible teacher. He's passed away. But he said of Hosea chapter 3, he said that Hosea chapter 3 was the greatest chapter in all of Scripture.

The Bible's a big book. There's a lot of chapters in the Bible. James Montgomery Boyce said that this is the greatest chapter in all of Scripture. Now we've just read it, haven't we?

Did you come away with that thought? That this is the greatest chapter in all of Scripture? Well, why would he consider it to be? Why is this passage considered by him, this great Bible teacher, to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, chapter in all of Scripture?

Well, because it portrays the depths of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ for his people. Now you might be wondering, well, Pastor Mike, we just read that passage and it didn't say anything about Jesus.

Right? Well, hold on a second. Because, again, all of Scripture is about Jesus Christ. And by the end of this message, I hope that you will see Christ clearly in this passage that we've read.

[2 : 36] There is more here than meets the eye. The gloriousness of the gospel and Christ himself is fully on display right here in these inspired and inerrant words that we've read.

These verses speak about salvation. They speak to the depths of our sinful depravity and the wretched condition we were in before Christ purchased us with his blood and then clothed us in his righteousness.

If you remember in chapters 1 and 2 of Hosea, the Lord had warned of his coming judgment against the northern kingdom of Israel.

He used the analogy from his own relationship with Israel and commanded Hosea, his prophet, to marry a wife of harlotry and to have children with her.

Interwoven in this prophecy is the comparison by analogy of Hosea and Gomer and their marriage relationship to God and his relationship with Israel.

[3 : 38] God declares that he will punish, that he will expose Israel's sin, revealing their spiritual idolatry, adultery that they've committed against him as they pursued other gods.

But that he will one day reverse the curse that sin has brought us all under. At the end of chapter 2, if you recall, he promises to reconcile them.

He promises to redeem them. He promises that he will restore them. He will have mercy on them. And he says that once again, they will be his people.

It is upon that foundation that chapter 3 begins with an optimistic note of redemption. Two simple words here, but very powerful when they're spoken by the Almighty God.

As he begins, he says to Hosea, Go again. Go again to that wife who took your love for granted. Go again to that woman who deserted you to pursue other lovers.

[4 : 48] Go again to that woman who rejected you and who's been used now, abused now, passed from one man to the next, and has sunk so low that now she is up for sale as a slave.

Go back to her. Go back to that detestable woman. And I want you to love her again. This, this is the story of our salvation.

We're Gilmer, as we will see. This is the story of us. And so the main point here that I want to make in this sermon is this, that according to the gospel, salvation is not in the hands of man to determine.

The decisive power in bringing man, bringing him to glory, is God's sovereign grace. God's sovereign grace. Let's look at chapter, or verse 1 again.

And there we see that God is the one who pursues us in salvation. Verse 1, And the Lord said to me, Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress.

[5 : 50] Even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, they turn to other gods in cakes of raisin. Through all that we've read, we've seen that Hosea is the one who pursues Gomer.

In this relationship, Hosea is the one who pursues. And as we go back to chapter 1, verse 2, we see that she was not the type of woman that you would want to marry.

But this was analogous to the relationship between God and His people. God is always, like Hosea, the pursuer of His people.

Now many, many Christians talk today about seekers in the church, and being a seeker-sensitive church. And I understand where they're coming from. Because church can be an intimidating place. You go in, you don't know anybody. You don't know where things are located in the building. And so church can be very intimidating for a person, especially if they've never been inside of a church before.

[6 : 59] And so we've got to understand that people have questions. And we've got to be able to answer their question and provide avenues by which they can ask their questions and have answers to those questions.

However, no unbeliever truly seeks the one true and living God. That's what the Bible says. Let's look at Romans 3, 9 through 12.

For we have already charged that all, all, both Jews and Gentiles are under sin, as it is written, none is righteous. No, not one. No one understands.

No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good. Not even one.

Case closed. All men are born sinful. And sinful man does not want to pursue a God who is holy.

[7 : 59] No one initiates a pursuit of God that would lead to salvation. Instead, the Bible says and reveals page after page that it is God. It is God who is the initiator.

It is God who is the pursuer. It is God who, like Hosea, is the one who truly seeks. R.C. Sproul said, From our vantage point, it seems to us that unregenerate people are in fact seeking after God.

But God is not hiding. He is in plain view. His creation clearly and manifestly displays His glory.

Fallen human beings are not by nature seekers after God.

He concludes, we are fugitives from God, fully intent upon escaping Him. We do not pursue. We flee.

And there is a sense in which we don't need to pursue at all because the evidence of God surrounds us all the time. We see. Reason to believe that there is a being much greater than ourselves.

[9 : 05] So, as you remember, Gomer fled from Hosea, her husband. What she pursued were the sinful desires of her heart, just like we did.

She, like unbelievers, like those of us before, we were pursued and saved by God. We pursue only the sinful desires of our hearts. The only thing unsaved people want from God is His benefits.

His common graces, happiness, peace, significance in life, relief from guilt, and many other types of things. We seek those benefits that God supplies, but we don't seek Him for Himself.

Instead, we flee. Unbelievers, unsaved people, just like we were, flee from God. In chapter 6, if you don't believe me, let's look at chapter 6 of John.

And there we see this very thing that Jesus, if you remember, had just fed the 5,000. Verse 2 says that a large crowd was following Him because they saw the benefits.

[10:15] They saw the signs that He was doing on the sick. So understand, at this point in Jesus' ministry, He was drawing large crowds to Himself. But they weren't really coming for Him.

They were coming to be entertained by Him. They were coming to see what He would do, the miracles that He might perform. They wanted to see miracles. And so they accepted the food that He supplied miraculously.

But when He started talking about things, about Himself, about their sin, they didn't like so much what they were hearing. And if you remember, the day after He fed them, He walked on the water and He crossed over to the other side.

And they knew that another miracle had happened. And so they went to see Him again. And this is the account of what happens, this exchange that Jesus has with them. In John 6, 25-30, let's read that together.

When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, Rabbi, when did you come here? Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

[11:24] Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on Him God the Father has set His seal. Then they said to Him, What must we do to be doing the works of God?

And Jesus answered them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. So they said to Him, Well then, what sign do you do that we may believe you?

What work do you perform? Right? Do something again. Do something to entertain us. We like it when you do those miraculous things. Do something like that.

Remember they said, You know, Moses, Moses, there was manna from heaven. That's impressive. Yeah, you fed us, but let's see something else. Keep entertaining us and we will keep following you. Was what they were saying.

They liked the benefits, but they weren't truly seeking Jesus for who He was. They weren't motivated by their superficial, they were, I should say, motivated by their superficial desire to have their stomachs filled.

[12:27] But they weren't really looking for what Jesus could provide for them, that spiritual fulfillment that they needed, forgiveness from sin, redemption, restoration. And so let's read, continuing on, what happens in verse 33 through 40.

Same account here. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven, Jesus says, and gives life to the world. They said to Him, Sir, give us this bread always.

Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet you do not believe.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life.

[13:30] And I will raise Him up on the last day. We flee from God until we are called by Him and saved by Him.

Then only do we ever become truly seekers of God. Sinful people will always exchange the truth of God for a lie. They will always seek to satisfy their own sinful appetites, choosing cakes of raisins instead of the almighty, everlasting, holy, eternal Creator God.

They wanted Jesus for the benefits, but they didn't accept what He had to say. And such is the case with unbelievers.

Such was the case for you and I before the Lord pursued us. God is always the pursuer in salvation. He has to be. He has to be.

Because we'd never pursue Him. We see that here illustrated in Hosea chapter 3. Gomer was never seeking after Hosea.

[14:41] Hosea was good to her. He was a good and loyal and faithful husband. But she never pursued Him. All she ever brought to that relationship was her own sin.

She had nothing else that she could offer. It's no different for us who believe. We didn't choose God. Because we're... We didn't choose God, I should say, because we're smarter than other

people or that we're better than other people.

Like Gomer and like Israel, God's love has been extended to us despite our idolatry, despite our pursuits to satisfy our sinful appetites.

We as believers only love God now because He first loved us. We only pursue God now because He first pursued us. Is this what we see here in chapter 3?

Is this what John 4.19 says? Jesus said, we love because He first loved us. 1 John 4.19. We love because He first loved us. Here's the thing about human love.

[15:51] Human love is typically conditional. conditional. We say things like, I'll love you if you do this, that, or the other thing.

I'll love... Or we say, I'll love you when based on that condition. Or we'll say, I love you because... But God's love says something different.

God's love says, I'll love you in spite. I'll love you in spite of the fact that you don't love me. John 3.16.

We all can quote that scripture from heart. And we see there from that verse that love is in fact the driving force of God sending His Son. He pursued us.

He came to save His people from their sins. And there's so much more that could be said about this if only time would permit. But we must understand here from Hosea 3.1 that it paints a picture of God as having an unconditional love for His people.

[16:55] We do not deserve to be pursued by God. We did not deserve to be loved by God. We've been pursued, loved, and saved by God purely as a result of His grace.

God is the only one who pursues in salvation. The next thing we see here is that God is the purchaser of our salvation. Verse 2. There it says that Hosea bought her for 15 shekels of silver and a homer and a latex of barley.

The depths of God's love for His people is most clearly portrayed on the cross of Jesus Christ. There our Lord shed His blood as the purchase price for our redemption.

So again, we see here in the Gospel according to Hosea, it's Hosea who pursues Gomer. It's Hosea who purchases her. This is essential to the Gospel.

And the events of verse 2 are analogous to Christ's having bought us out of slavery to sin. And He did so at the cost of His own life. He's the purchaser.

[18:05] We have to fill in the blanks a little bit here about what's going on in verse 2. We understand that Gomer has deserted her faithful husband, Hosea.

And she's deserted him because she wants to pursue other loves, other lovers. And we've got to understand that the result of those pursuits has landed her to a place where now she is on the auction block at the slave market.

She had a husband and He loved her. He took care of her. But she left him to pursue others who did not love her the same and did not take care of her in the same way.

She was no longer of any use to those lovers. And so now we see that Gomer has hit rock bottom. And she'd spend the rest of her life as someone's slave.

In those ancient times a person became a slave as a result of three things typically. First of all a person would become a slave in those times as a result of conquest.

[19:16] You'd live in a village, a city, and an enemy would come and attack and they would kill usually all the men and then they would take the women and the children as slaves.

And so that was the primary way how a person would become a slave in those times. And then secondly as a result of that the second way a person would become a slave is you were born a slave.

You were born to parents who were slaves so you were born into slavery. The third way was debt. Debt. That you'd fall into so deep of a debt that you were never able to pay it back and so all you could give to pay that debt was your own life.

You'd give yourself to pay your debt. So Gomer we see it wasn't a result of conquest we don't believe or by birth so it must have been we think I think we can safely presume because of debt.

And I think that that makes perfect sense in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ and his canceling out our debt for violating what the law required.

[20:26] Colossians 2 13 through 14 and you who were dead in your trespasses in the uncircumcision of your flesh God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses!

By canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross. We understand Gomer's profession profession and without needing to be graphic we understand that that's a profession that wears a person out physically mentally spiritually it's not a glamorous lifestyle she may have been a very beautiful woman at one point in time in her life very much desired but now not so much she wasn't able to pay her debts and so they mounted up and so this was the only choice that she had entering into slavery the other note I think we need to consider about slavery at this time in history was this that slaves were sold in the marketplace without any clothes on bear for all to see this is a this book is is graphic and it's uncomfortable to read it's uncomfortable to preach sometimes but this is the word of

God and I believe that it's graphic intentionally so that we can see the graphic nature of sin we see things from God's point of view and as I said before that's not a comfortable position to be in so God does this intentionally to help us see how graphic sin is and how graphic its consequences are so there's Hosea imagine you're there in the marketplace God calls him to go and there he's surrounded by other men whom maybe he knows they're in the marketplace to do business as well and he goes there surrounded by all of these men and then there's his wife this woman who left him this woman who he loved and there she is on the auction block completely unclothed for everyone to see and to behold and to take in think about that think if that was your wife think if that was your husband think if that was you how shameful and so there I think is

Gomer and she's thinking about all that she's done to sink to this point in life probably even fearing who it would be that would purchase her life could you imagine then the auctioneer starts the bidding and as you hear the bids being made she hears a familiar voice the voice of the husband whom she deserted and there he is bidding for her life now the price that they eventually came with the 15 shekels in addition I believe that it had to get to that point right so we can imagine the bidding starting at 13 shekels do I hear 13 14 back and forth Hosea is bidding but so is others and finally gets to 15 shekels do I hear 16 16 for this woman and so somebody says

I bid 15 shekels but they ran out of money so I will give as well a bushel of barley and then Hosea Hosea cries out 15 shekels and a bushel and a half the auctioneer looks around for a moment sees that there's no other bids and Gomer goes to Hosea the highest bidder now Hosea owned his wife you understand now he owned her now she was his possession and in that culture and in that time he could do with her whatever he pleased so let's remember what this woman has done to him the shame that she has brought to him what would he do and maybe if you're Gomer you're still thinking what's he going to do

[25 : 52] I've really hurt this man now I'm his possession and he could rightfully say to her you know what Gomer you made a fool of me you've disgraced my name you've rejected my love and now now you're going to pay for it for the rest of your life he could have skipped all of that he could have just killed her it was in his right to do that but instead instead we see Hosea's love for Gomer burn at its very brightest here he purchases her he claims her love for himself and he promises her that just as he loved her before all these things so he will love her the same as before this is scandalous could you imagine

Homer and Gosea going to your church do you know about them do you know that she she left him she committed adultery and she she was a slave and he bought her scandalous this is the scandalous love of God for his church now the question becomes for us the reader having read this the question for us becomes does God really love us like that does God really love us like that and all we've got to do is turn our attention to the cross of Jesus Christ and the resounding answer is yes yes he does this is precisely how much God loves us we tend to think that we're pretty good until God reveals to us the truth about the graphic nature of our sin so let's try a thought experiment we did this at the prison on Friday night when we were there and I think

I've done this before but just imagine the screen behind me that all the sins you've ever committed all the shameful things that you've ever done in secret all the other thoughts the thoughts that you've ever tamed in your mind say we had the ability to play those back for everybody to watch what would you do like I told them I would run for the screen to pull it down or I would make a beeline out the doors for shame couldn't imagine people seeing those things seeing those actions hearing those words how mortifying so in Hosea we see things from God's point of view and again it's not comfortable to see things from God's point of view because through Gomer we see how God sees us a slave to sin ruined physically and spiritually by the consequences of sin defiled and impure because of sin and then like Hosea

God comes to the world in the person of Jesus Christ the son of God the second person of the trinity to do for us on a much grander scale what Hosea did for Gomer we are the slave on the auction block the auction block of sin and one of those bidding for us is the world and the world bids for the things that appeal to our flesh success come our way do our things you'll be successful fame pleasure wealth all the types of things that people prostitute themselves out for on a daily basis in our world and God is the auctioneer and the Lord Jesus Christ comes like Hosea did to the marketplace and he bids for us and he bids the price of his own blood there is no greater price that could be given than that so of course the auctioneer says sold we are purchased then at the price of Christ's blood and we become forever his God is Corinthians 7 22 through 23 for he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freed man of the Lord likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ you were bought with a price do not become bondservants of men John MacArthur says in the ways that truly count no man is freer than a Christian no bondage is as terrible as that of sin from which Christ frees the believer so now we see having been saved by God pursuing us and having been purchased by him we now see in verses 3 and 4 that God is the purifier of those whom he saved he's the purifier of those whom he saved again this this is the hedging in period promised in chapter 2 verse 6 of

[31 : 24] Hosea Gomer and Israel will experience a time of purification when they would not share the marital bed as the Lord purges them of their past sinful desires and prepares them for a time where they once again will come together so what does this mean for us Christians well we understand that Christ has redeemed his bride the church and he did so at the cross by shedding his blood the church at that time was betrothed to him yet at its present time it is undergoing a time of purification until he returns and he consummates that relationship with us in the celebration of the marriage supper of the lamb described in revelations 19 the immediate context here deals with Israel Israel will be without a king or a prince!

They would be without sacrifice as they are still today but I don't read these verses and not come away with the understanding that God has plans for Israel in Romans 11 Paul predicts a great turning of the literal Israel to the Lord at the climax of the gospel era future Israel will repent of unbelief and accept the Messiah whom they rejected in the past at salvation believers are completely sanctified yet at the same time!

they are also being progressively sanctified let me explain that there is no more saving that needs to be done in your life once you have become a believer but now you are to be becoming more like Christ and so you ought to be able to look back on that day when God pursued you when God saved you when you became his you ought to be able to look back on that day and see that you have grown progressively more like him and less like the world that your desires for your desires now for the things of God more than it is for for sin and for those things that pull us away from him we seek instead to put sin to death as we give ourselves over to growing more like Christ so God is the pursuer of us in salvation God is the purchaser of!

God purifies now we see that God is the promise fulfiller in salvation verse 5 again it says there afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king and they shall come in fear of the Lord to his goodness in the latter days so we've touched on this already concerning Israel what we see here though is that the fruits of our salvation the results is that God chooses to save a people who rebelled against him he chooses to give his son to die in place of a people who rejected him and wanted their sin more he's done it for his own glory the Lord Jesus Christ will come again there will be a coronation there will be a final defeat of Satan sin and death he will draw his people to himself all these things that he's promised to us he will do it we have been purchased we have been set free from sin we've been given eternal life this is our reality this is our hope and this is a hope that will never fade and will never go away you can take this with you now and forever that if you are

Christ you are his forever and all these promises that he's made to you they will come to pass Thank you.