

# Called to Speak for God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hosea chapter 1, beginning with verse 1 and going through verse 5.

! Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, And I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? So when we come to the book of Hosea, and especially we read those first few verses, we realize that there's an elephant in the room that we have to deal with.

Because this doesn't seem like something that God would call somebody to do, does it? This doesn't seem like something that God would ask one of his prophets to do.

It seems to be almost like a contradiction. We talk about all that we know about God and all that he commands of us, particularly the commands that he has for us in marriage, and in seeking a partner in marriage, that we should not be unequally yoked in marriage, and that we should take that command very seriously.

[ 2 : 01 ] But here he's given to Hosea a command to marry a prostitute. And those two things don't seem to come together.

They seem to contradict one another, don't they? So we've got to deal with this. Why would God ask Hosea to do such a thing? You know, think about it for yourself.

How many of you, if your son came home from college or wherever, he's an adult of the age to marry, and he says, Hey, Mom and Dad, I've met a girl, and I'm going to marry her.

There's a problem, though. She's what you would call a woman of the night. But it's okay, because God's told me, and he's going to work it all out, so don't be worried.

How many of you would be okay with that? Okay, that sounds good, son. I can't wait to meet her. I think a lot of you, let's be honest, would have a lot of questions. I don't think that God really told you to do that.

[ 3 : 03 ] And as a matter of fact, many of you would rebuke this marriage from taking place at all. So we've got to understand that this is a unique circumstance. A unique circumstance that God is calling Hosea to here.

In the latter half of verse 2, God explains why he calls Hosea to take Gomer for his wife. He says this. This is the explanation. This is why he wants him to marry her.

He says, So Hosea is a unique prophet in the fact that God called him to live the tragedy of Israel's unfaithfulness by marrying a harlot.

What follows is shocking. Because idolatry, worshiping other gods, the idolatry of Israel was shocking. God has been faithful to them throughout their history.

God had rescued them from slavery. God had delivered them into the promised land. He had given it to them. God had established them there as a mighty nation.

[ 4 : 12 ] And time after time, despite all that God had done to prove his faithfulness to his people, they continued to forsake him, chasing after other gods to worship.

Choosing instead to turn their attention, their affections, and their offerings to other gods. The people had become corrupt spiritually.

If you remember, we talked about this last Sunday. They had become corrupt spiritually as a people. Which led to their being corrupt morally as a society. And as a product of that, what culminated was that they were corrupt politically as well.

And soon, this nation would experience a downfall. Because they were corrupt in all these ways. The story of Hosea and Gomer is the story of God and Israel. And it's the story of Christ and his church.

[ 5 : 24 ] Hosea is a faithful husband to Gomer. And in this story, we see that as a husband, he gives to her all the things that a husband can supply.

But she keeps on cheating on him anyway. And that causes great heartache for Hosea. As he stays faithful to her.

Why does he do that? Because God was showing Hosea. And he shows us. What it's like. For God to love his chosen people. And what it's like. For Christ. To love his church. In the incarnation.

God sent his son to redeem his wayward people. Jesus Christ. The God man. Obeyed his father. He sacrificially pursued his people.

[ 6 : 37 ] Even to the point of having nails driven in his hands. And in his feet. By the very same people whom he came to save. In the garden of Gethsemane.

If you'll remember. He prayed to God the father. And he asked him in that prayer. If there was another way to redeem broken humanity.

But he concluded. That prayer by saying. Not my will. But yours be done. God would not allow a way out.

For Hosea. He told him to stay. He told him that he would have to endure the pain. Of sharing. A bed. Night.

After night. With a woman. Who is cheating on him. Day. After day. Jesus went to the cross. Bearing our sins.

[ 7 : 37 ] And enduring God's wrath towards them. In our place. He didn't walk away from that. He didn't acquiesce to Pilate. To try to save his own skin.

Because of his great love for his bride. The church. Ephesians 5. 25 through 27. Talks about how. Great of a husband the Lord is to his church.

There it says. Husbands. Love your wives. As Christ loved the church. And gave himself up for her. That he might sanctify her.

Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. So that he might present the church to himself in splendor. Without spot or wrinkle. Or any such thing. That she might be holy and without blemish.

So husbands. We are to love our wives. As Christ has loved the church. How did he love the church? He made the ultimate sacrifice. For the church. In giving his life.

[ 8 : 36 ] That we might have life. Throughout the book of Hosea. We see both the loving kindness. And the frustration of God with his people. Like Gomer.

They refuse his repeated attempts at reconciliation. And they continue to ignore his love. However we must remember that God did not leave Israel to continually wallow in their filth.

That it created. For itself. In their pursuit. Of other things. Besides God. At least he would not do that entirely. And he would not do it forever.

However. And we see in Christ's life. In Matthew 23. 37. That he echoes the same steadfast love for Israel. That the father has. There he says.

Oh Jerusalem. Oh Jerusalem. The city. That kills the prophets. And stones those who are sent to it. How often I would have gathered your children together.

[ 9 : 32 ] As a hen gathers her brood under her wings. And you were not willing. Jesus' life. His ministry. His death.

His resurrection. His ascension. And his second coming. Show that God wasn't commanding Hosea to do something that God himself was not willing to do.

He did not forsake his people. Despite their long history of disobedience. And their long history of indifference to him. The father sending of the son is the definition of grace.

Unmerited. Undeserved. Logic shattering favor. God called Hosea to deliver a message to the nation of Israel.

It was a message of heartache. Of judgment. But ultimately. In the end. It's a story of redemption. It's a story of grace.

[ 10 : 29 ] It's a story of amazing. Love. Love. Just as God called Hosea then to speak to a wayward people. So God calls Christians today.

To do the same thing. Like Hosea. We are called to deliver a message of judgment. But we do so in the hope. Of redemption.

Like Hosea's times. We live in a time and a place where a spiritual reformation in the church. Needs to happen. If God will bring revival to our nation which we pray for.

Then it must begin in his church. And I believe that that will begin when we as God's church. Take our calling from him seriously.

Our calling and our mission that he commanded us to undertake. If you remember in Matthew 28. Verses 18 through 20. There before Jesus ascends into heaven. He says all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[11:28] Go. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.

And behold. I am with you always. To the end of the age. So here's the main idea for this morning's message. God calls his people to speak for him.

And to communicate the gospel with their words and actions. Did it then? Is doing it now. God calls his people to speak for him.

And to communicate the gospel with their words and actions. And so the first thing we see here from verse 2. Is that God calls his people to speak for him.

God calls his people to speak for him. And in particular here he calls Hosea. To speak for him.

There it says in verse 2. When the Lord first spoke through Hosea.

[12:29] The Lord said to him. Go. Go. Go. Go. Though God doesn't need us. Right? Obviously to speak for him. The crazy thing is that God still chooses to use us to speak for him anyway.

You ever wonder why that is? Certainly God is creator of all things. All things are held together by him. He has control over everything.

He is not bound by anything. If he wanted to. He could take all the clouds. And he could spell out the gospel in the sky. He could do that. He has the ability to do that.

I think even if he did that. People still would not believe. Because you know. Apart from God revealing the gospel to them. They will not have anything to do with it. But you ever wonder why God still chooses to use us.

To reach people. In his infinite wisdom. In his infinite wisdom. God has chosen to use people like you and me. To carry his message of salvation to all people in the world.

[13:38] You ever wonder why? About a year ago. Before coming to Highland Park. Many of you guys remember. Me and Danny went on a mission trip with our church in Leavenworth.

And there we had taken one of our students. Who had been coming to church for about a year. And we were really praying for her. Because she had not become a Christian yet.

She was hanging out with some people. That we were concerned about. That her parents. That her grandparents who were raising her were concerned about. And so we brought her on this trip. And throughout that week.

You could see each day God working on her. More and more and more and more. As she's hearing the gospel. As she's seeing it lived out before her very eyes.

To the point where on the last day. The night before we left. She went and grabbed Danny. And she says Danny I need you to pray for me. And I'll tell you I was concerned. Because she became a believer.

[14:36] And we baptized her. And that was soon. And then we were packing up. And we were leaving. And I was concerned. I was like well who? We wanted to continue to disciple her. I'm afraid that she's going to get back into the same crowds.

I'm afraid that you know God. We're not going to be there to protect her. But man I'm amazed to see. Thankful for Facebook. To see her continuing to grow as a Christian.

And just as I was preparing this sermon. I don't know what was going on in her life. But she posted a Christian song. On her Facebook page. And it brought tears to my eyes. Because I realized you know what? God doesn't need me to do any of this.

He doesn't. But I got to be used by him to do it. You see the difference? We get to do this.

We get to be God's messengers. We get to speak for him. We get to be used by him to make disciples. And there are few if any greater joys in life than that.

[15:35] To know that you are being used by the almighty everlasting eternal God. To make a difference. Not just in this life.

But for all of eternity. What greater purpose in life is there than that? And so like 2 Corinthians 5. 17-20. We've got to agree with Paul.

Therefore. If anyone is in Christ. He is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold the new has come. All this is from God. All of this is from God.

It's not from us. All of this is from God. Who through Christ reconciled us to himself. And gave us. Gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is in Christ.

God was reconciling the world to himself. Not counting their trespasses against them. And entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore. We are ambassadors of Christ.

[16:33] God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ. Be reconciled for God. For our sake. He made him to be sin who knew no sin.

So that in him we might become the righteousness of God. You see we are ambassadors. Of Christ. We are God's spokesmen. As those.

Hosea had a message from God for his people. And his times. Guess what? God has a message for us. His people. For our day. And for our times. And just as ambassadors speak for the ruler of another kingdom.

Of another nation. To another people. Of another kingdom. Of another nation. So. We speak for the king of heaven. And we plead with people.

To be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ his son. This is our message. And we have the privilege of speaking it.

[17:32] For God. So now the question becomes. How should we best do that? Well we best do that by using our words and our actions. We communicate the gospel.

This message with our words and with our actions. You see actions without words is cowardice. It's cowardice. We're not called to turn a cold shoulder to the world.

We're not called to act as if they don't exist. We're not called to salvation so that we can keep Jesus to ourselves. So that we can isolate ourselves in some tiny little bubbles.

No. We are called to go. Actions without words is cowardice. In the same way words without actions is hypocrisy.

We're not called to give lip service to people. To say that we love the lost when we gather together in church but then do nothing about it. Now we're called to go.

[18:35] To speak. To go. And to display the love of God with our actions. After all what does the Bible say about Jesus? He was full of grace.

And truth. The best way that we communicate the gospel is by speaking the truth in love. And like Jesus we accompany that with gracious actions.

Like Jesus was full of grace and truth so we must be full of grace and truth in the way that we speak. In the way that we live our lives. Hosea was called to speak for God and he did so through words and he did so through his actions.

This was also a message that God once communicated with urgency. Wanted it communicated with urgency back then. Once it communicated with urgency still today. You see back then this nation was about 30 years away from ceasing to exist altogether.

However God did not want them to face total extermination without a warning. And so he gives Hosea this calling to warn them as well.

[19:40] Likewise we don't know when the Lord will return. But as we sing we hope that it's today. I wouldn't mind if it's right now. I don't mind being interrupted by kids when they pray. I certainly wouldn't mind being interrupted by God during the middle of a sermon.

Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Let's go. I'm ready. Aren't you? We don't know when he will return but we know that it's imminent. So we not only speak for God but we speak with our words and our actions and we do so with a sense of urgency.

Because we don't know. We don't know when he's back. We don't know when the person we're talking to will take their last breath. So you see now is the time for us to speak for God.

We have the message. We certainly have the people who need to hear it. If you'll recall. Jesus in his earthly ministry as he was about to send out his 72 to spread the message of the gospel for him before he would go those places himself.

He told them this. He said, So this is where we begin.

[20:56] We know we have a message. We know that we're called to speak it with our actions and our words. We know that we're supposed to do that now. We know that there's certainly a lot of people who are in need to hear this message. So what do we do?

Well, first of all, we pray. Pray for others to speak this message and pray for yourself to do the same. The apostle Paul had this request. He said in Ephesians 6, 18 and 20.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance. Make supplication for all the saints. We need to be praying for each other. We need to be praying for the church. We need to be praying for our church. We need to be praying for ourselves as well. We are called by God to speak for him. The next thing we see is that God calls for his people to speak for him against spiritual adultery.

Against spiritual adultery. The second half of verse 2. Or the rest of verse 2. He says, You see, through his marriage to Gomer, Hosea was able to feel for himself God's burden for Israel and their unfaithfulness to him.

[ 22 : 21 ] Those who are married know that marriage is the deepest union possible between two people in this life. It is the most intensely personal relationship that there is.

Everything about a marriage is intensely intimate. It is the joining together of two bodies physically. It is the joining together of interests.

It is the joining together of concerns. It is the joining together of emotions. That's why few things hurt worse than the betrayal of a spouse.

When you feel like your spouse has been disloyal to you, there are few pains more intense in this life than that pain.

And it doesn't have to be the fact that they're cheating on you. It could be something like they disagreed with you. Right? Maybe you were in a disagreement with somebody else. And they took that other person's side. And you felt like they broke your trust, that they broke your loyalty.

[ 23 : 37 ] Maybe they lied to you about an expense. Maybe they have a secret credit card or something like that that you found out about. And it broke your heart. It made you feel pain because you felt like your trust, that loyalty, had been violated.

And guess what happens, husbands and wives? When we feel like our spouse has been disloyal to us, guess what happens? Husbands, we spend the night on the couch, don't we?

Maybe more than one night. But you know what happens? Communication breaks down. Spiritual adultery results in broken conversation with God in the same way.

Just like you with your spouse. Just like you with the Lord. When we commit spiritual adultery against Him, conversation with God is broken.

This is what happens when God's people no longer speak or listen to God. It is characterized by prayerlessness. It is broken loyalty.

[ 24 : 39 ] As other things are pursued for fulfillment, meaning, and purpose in life, those things become idols that we worship and that we replace God with.

And so there's no pain like the pain of disloyalty within marriage. And in Hosea's day, this is the way that God felt towards His people, Israel. These people were marked by traits that did not reflect well upon who God actually was to the rest of the world.

They turned to other gods whom they treated with greater affection than the one true and living God. Their kings were corrupt. Their priests were corrupt. The people were corrupt.

The church faces the same temptations today that they faced back then. In the same way, we are tempted to create a God in our own image of our own making.

A God who we think will be more appealing to the rest of the world. A God who doesn't say controversial things. A God who doesn't want anything about you to change.

[ 25 : 49 ] But is happy with you just the way you are because that's just the way that He created you to be. A God who tolerates sin is what we want.

But here's the problem. That is not the God of the Bible. It's not. This is a God of man's own creation.

All those things. And gods created by men are powerless and ultimately they serve no use. They're useless. Back in Kansas City, sometimes we would go to the museum, the Nelson Art Museum in Kansas City.

And I used to love going to look at the old artifacts that they had. And there was a place that I just really liked to go where, in particular, they had a lot of old idols.

Old statues that people used to worship. And you could go and you could go see the tribes in Africa. And these wooden images that they created for themselves. These masks that they made.

[ 26 : 57 ] And you read about who those masks depicted. What God or what that idol served. What purpose it served. And then you'd go over and you'd look into Hinduism and Eastern religions.

And you would see Buddhas and you would see these big porcelain, beautiful statues. That once were objects of people's worship. And what I like about it is you go through and you see all these different things.

And you know what all they're useful now is? Just to pass through and look at. They collect dust. They're old things. They're fading. They're falling apart.

You know why? Because they're not God. They're not gods. They're falling apart. They're objects created by men.

And ultimately, they serve no use. These things that people used to bow down and pray to and worship are good for nothing but being things that people look at in museums.

[ 27 : 55 ] That's not who our God is. Could not be contained by such a place. As the Bible says, Our God does not dwell in houses made by the hands of men.

Heaven is His throne. The earth is His footstool. He dwells in unapproachable light. He was not created by man but is the creator of man. And not just of man but of all things.

And by His power, all things are being held together at this very second. Without Him, it's gone. So you see, in Hosea's day, politics were corrupt.

Society was unjust. Religion was idolatrous. Hosea was called to speak against their spiritual idolatry just as we are called to do the same thing in our day.

Well, what is needed for that? Well, it's this. The church needs the equivalent of men like Hosea today. Men and women with a message from God that they boldly proclaim to the world.

[ 29 : 02 ] So we see that God calls us to speak for Him. God calls us to speak for Him against spiritual idolatry. And then in verses 3 and 5, we see that God calls His people to give warning about His impending judgment of sin.

So it says there that Hosea went and took Gomer, the daughter of Deblame, and she conceived and bore him a son. And the Lord said to him, call his name Jezreel.

For in just a little while, I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel. And I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. And on that day, I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

So God here used Hosea to warn Israel that they were about to receive retribution for the brutality of their society.

The days of Hosea were marked by violence. One murder was speedily followed by another murder. The murderous situation originated with this man Jehu who was a king about 80 years before Hosea's time.

[ 30 : 11 ] He had been commissioned to remove the idolatry of the house of Ahab. However, when he did that, when he sought to fulfill that commissioning, he did so with hate.

And he exceeded the bounds with which the Lord had given him. Jehu lived between 841 and 814 B.C. He was one of the most violent and one of the most bloodthirsty men in all of human history. Again, he was to put an end to the house of Ahab in Jezebel, which he did so, but he did so with enjoyment. He did so in a way that did not honor God.

And he brought in this kind of attitude, this kind of environment into the nation. And so Jezreel, this name for this boy, was a place. This was the place where Jehu slaughtered the house of Ahab with frenzied brutality.

The hatred and violence which Jehu had harbored in his heart characterized the rest of his dynasty and the kings who would follow him in Israel. Jehu's line, which began in bloodshed, ended in the same way.

[ 31 : 22 ] Zechariah, who was Jehu's great-great-grandson, was murdered. And with his death came the end of the line of Jehu's dynasty. Then another regime, I should say, began.

And that would come to an end in murder and so on and so forth, and that characterized Hosea's time. As we've seen in our own nation, violence is easier to bring into a land than it is to eradicate. And have you ever noticed that a lot of our entertainment is violent in nature? You know, I remember watching old westerns with my dad.

And you'd kind of laugh when the guys would get shot. You know, they'd have an arrow sticking between their arms, and they'd pretend like it went through their heart. You know, or people would get shot, and I'd kind of look at my dad, and go, where's the blood?

He's not dead. He's not bleeding. How can he be dead? But you know, it was a different time back then. But now you think about it. You know, they show you all of it. The blunts, and the gore, and

body parts exploding.

[ 32 : 29 ] And you know, all this to say to you, I think we can agree that maybe we're a little bit too entertained with violence in our society.

And it is having an impact on our world. The name of Hosea's son gave warning of coming judgment upon the brutality of Israel's society.

Yet the point of the warning was to give opportunity for change. The warning gave them an opportunity to repent and to ask God for mercy.

But if unheeded, they would face God's judgment. So how do we do this? We speak for God, okay? We speak against spiritual adultery. I got that. Okay, we're to speak warning. I understand. How do we do that? One of the ways that I use is just using the Romans' road to salvation.

[ 33 : 29 ] Using these scriptures. Memorize them. Share them with people. This is how we do it.

Romans 3.23. The Bible says, Therefore all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

A-L-L-all. You and me. Every single one of us has fallen short of the glory of God, and it's not even close.

The Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy. He dwells in unapproachable light. He is the Holy One.

All of us, from the moment we are born, are born with the nature to sin.

You ever notice that we don't have to teach our kids how to be bad? We have to teach them how to be good. Because it comes to them instinctively. Just as it comes to us.

Because of Adam's sin, we've all sinned, and all of us fall way short of the glory of God. Romans 6.23 says the consequences of that. For the wages of sin is death.

[ 34 : 34 ] We've sinned. God is holy. There is this chasm between us. We cannot be with God because of our sin. And the wages for that is death, eternal, spiritual, death, forever, apart from our holy God in a place called hell.

But the rest of that first. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. God has done something about this. Romans 5.8. But God shows his love for us, and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

You see, while we were still sinners, while we wanted nothing to do with God. Nothing at all. God made a way for our sins to be atoned for.

That we might be forgiven and have eternal life. He has done something to bridge that chasm between us. Romans 10.9 says, If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

You see, God sent his son, Jesus Christ. The second person of the Trinity. He lived the perfect sinless life that we are incapable of living because we fall short of the glory of God.

[ 35 : 42 ] Jesus did not. He was fully God. He was fully man. He lived that life. He was obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. And there he died in our place for our sins. He endured the wrath of God, the just punishment that our sins deserved.

He took that upon himself for you. Why would he do that? Because he loves you. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you'll be saved.

You don't have to earn it. You can earn it. You can't work for it. You can't work to keep it. It's all of God and none of you. The only thing you bring to this is your sin.

But you get God's amazing grace in return. Romans 10.13 Have you called upon the name of the Lord?

Do you know that you're saved? You can't speak for God unless you know that you are his child.

[ 36 : 58 ] I'll see you next time.