

Love is a Hard Choice

Hosea 1 & 3

The Surface of Hosea

The first 3 chapters of the book of Hosea are a stunning revelation about God.

On the surface, the drama is as simple as it is poignant.

Hosea is called to marry a faithless woman.

He is to name his children with names of judgement

Jezreel – the place of Israel’s defeat at the hands of the Philistines
the place of Jezebel’s judgement

Lo-Ruhamah – unloved.

Lo-Ammi – not my people.

We know Gomer leaves Hosea for another.

Yet in the end, Hosea is to take Gomer back.

He pays for her return and takes her back.

He takes her from a life of ruin to be his own, but not for his use.

Difficulties with Hosea

It is a difficult book to read for modern readers because we feel upset.

We jump to places like – God is unreasonable.

Or that this is really unpleasant story.

But remember, this is written for Israel – God’s people.

It is written for us.

So what is it getting at?

Hosea’s Broken Heart

You are meant to be upset.

You are to say – this is not fair!

We are not given any clues regarding his feelings – just what happens.

But we are meant to imagine how Hosea feels.

How would Hosea feel knowing his wife is unfaithful?

How does he feel naming his children Jezreel (Tianamin, Aushwitz),
Unloved and Not mine?

What does it feel like to see your wife walk away and become a prostitute?

What is it like to go after her and take care of her?

You are meant to feel pain and indignation.

You are to understand the full measure of grace and its cost.

Hosea’s broken heart is an analogy of God’s broken heart.

Hosea Represents God

Hosea chose to love someone unfaithful.

He names her sins and their consequences.

The fruit of their broken marriage, their children – is disastrous.

As in most broken marriages children struggle with love and belonging

Gomer loses Hosea's protection when she goes on her own.

He does not have to take her back – in fact, he can call judgement on her.

Real physical consequences – but he does not.

Incredibly, he lets her go her own way.

But then he not only forgives her, he goes after her.

He restores her to himself.

God let's Israel go.

Israel chose to follow idols.

God allows the consequences of leaving his blessing and protection.

But he also comes after Israel.

He seeks to restore it.

But in the end this isn't just about Israel either.

It is about all humanity.

We chose to turn our back on God but he will still come for us.

Hosea and Jesus

Jesus is God who comes to us

this is why we celebrate Christmas and Advent.

He comes to seek us.

Some believed and received him.

Others crucified him.

As it was in the beginning, so it is now.

Jesus came to save us, to restore us.

That is what love is – while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

Implications

1. The Good News for Us

We recognize that we are unfaithful and have reaped those consequences.

We are offered restoration and forgiveness.

This is the good news of the Kingdom.

We can choose to accept.

2. Love is always a Choice

It isn't a funny feeling – infatuation, chemistry, novelty.

God chose to love us despite the way we are.

Hosea chose to love Gomer.

We choose to love.

We choose to forgive.

It is an act of the will that is shaped by everything we are.

Our will, in turn, is shaped by our experience and understanding.

We can choose to love well

only because we have experienced and understand God's love for us.

3. We Reflect God to those Around Us

Like Hosea, we are to be living representations of God.

We can only do this by knowing him and his heart.

As Jesus says, "They will know that you are my disciples by your love."

By the choices you make both big and small.

Questions

Think of the person who has wronged you most.

What were the consequences?

Can you forgive them?

Think of a person you have wronged.

What were the consequences?

Can you ask forgiveness?

In what way does God's Love for you
change your relationships with others?