

## Message #5

## Hosea 3:1-5

When the Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians, he included some prayers of some things he was praying about for the Ephesians. One of the things he prayed was that believers would be able to comprehend the breadth, length, height and depth of having a deep grasp of “the love of God” (Eph. 3:18-19).

It is very clear from **verse 1** of this chapter that this is a chapter about unconditional love. The love that God has for Israel and for us is an unconditional love. There is nothing in this chapter that would indicate that Gomer did one thing that would even remotely merit this love.

In order to have some perspective of the magnitude of God’s love for His people, we must go through a book like Hosea and we must crawl through Hosea 3.

**IN THE END, GOD WILL GO GET HIS IDOLATROUS, IMMORAL AND WAYWARD FAMILY AND BRING THEM BACK TO A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM BECAUSE HE LOVES THEM.**

All of us love happy endings and it is specifically true when it comes to our own lives. The problem is sometimes we do and say things that don’t lead to us having happy endings. Yet if you are in a covenantal relationship with God, you are destined for a happy ending.

The structure of this chapter is straight forward. There are three parts to this chapter:

**PART #1** – God commands Hosea to go get his harlot wife. **3:1**

Now carefully observe how **verse 1** begins, “then the LORD said to me.” Hosea is a prophet who is obviously getting direct verbal messages from God. None of this is being imagined by Hosea. He is not sitting at home dreaming this up in his own delusional mind. This is the will of God and it is directly revealed to him.

Now the first command God gives Hosea is “Go again.” Now some have suggested that Hosea is supposed to go and find a different woman, but this command “go again” seems to suggest otherwise. **The adverb “again” suggests sequence of events, which would include a sequence involving the same woman.**

Furthermore, in this verse she is identified as an adulteress and this would indicate that she was or had been a married woman. Hosea had married Gomer and they had at least three children that we know of and at some point after that, Gomer left Hosea and went back to her ways of prostitution.

We may recall that Hosea did not typically hang out in prostitute areas. He did not typically associate with seedy people in the seedy part of town.

He did not live where prostitutes were known to ply their trade. So when God said, “go again” he had to once again go back to where Gomer was involved in her immoral behavior. She was either working in a brothel or perhaps was at one of the places where they have immoral worship services.

Now it is clear from **verse 1** that Gomer is the woman God has in mind and God’s command to Hosea is go get her and love her again as her husband. One possibility as to why Gomer is called a “woman” and not his “wife” is because, as we already saw in chapter 2, there is a good chance that Hosea had divorced himself from her, just as God had divorced himself from Israel. God makes it very clear that she is an adulteress. So what God is commanding Hosea to do is to go show love to this adulteress woman who is or used to be your own wife. **Love is the key word of the verse because it is used four times.**

That word “love” (ahab) is one that means to love something, breath after something and delight in something (*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16). This is an unbelievable command. God is commanding that Hosea go get his adulteress prostitute former wife and not only bring her back, but love her and delight in her. **So not only was Hosea to bring her back to his home, but also bring her back into his heart.**

Now you have to admit, Gomer does not deserve to be loved like this. Truth is according to the O.T. Law, Gomer deserved to be stoned, not loved (Lev. 20:10). Gomer deserves to die. What she does not deserve is for Hosea to go get her while she is deep in her sin and bring her back and love her again.

May I speak to married men for just a moment? We aren’t perfect and neither are our wives. Sometimes they can say and do some things that don’t make us too happy. They can do things that irritate you. If a husband like Hosea can again love his wife who has done this rotten stuff, don’t you think we owe it to our wives to love them and forgive them as Christ does for the Church (Eph. 5:25)? Also we have the responsibility to love those who have been mangled by sin. We have the responsibility to tell them about the grace of God found in Jesus Christ.

Isn’t it true that we have all been like Gomer? Haven’t there been moments in our lives as a believer when we have been unfaithful to God and have failed Him? Cannot we all testify of things we have thought about, looked at or even done that have not pleased God? Haven’t we all said something or lost our temper or perhaps been jealous or envious or covetous? Really, haven’t there been moments when we really don’t deserve to be loved by God and, in fact, would deserve to be punished by God? Truth is we are all a lot like Gomer.

**Now at the end of verse 1, God says to Hosea the reason why I want you to do this is because this is an illustration of how I have loved Israel.** Israel has turned to other gods and raisin cakes, but I’ll go get her because I love her.

There is nothing wrong with eating raisin cakes. In fact, when David was celebrating the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, raisin cakes were eaten as part of the celebration (II Sam. 6:19).

Apparently what was happening to Israel was that she got involved in some idolatrous Baal religious festival that featured the eating of raisin cakes. According to Jeremiah 7:18 and Jeremiah 44:19, Israel was involved in a false, idolatrous religious worship that included the offering of some form of cake. Probably it was raisin cake.

How many times have we sold out our commitment to God for raisin cakes? Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said there is “hardly any one of us who could not look at our lives right now and find a half a dozen things which would classify as raisin cakes” (*Hosea 3:1-5*, p. 10).

We sell out for trivial and frivolous things that in eternity will mean nothing. Some people go after money, fame, pleasure or sports. Many will sell out worship for a birthday party. We don't get too many to even come to Sunday night services. What is the reason, or what is the raisin cake?

Scripture asks the question, what shall a man exchange for his soul? Suppose you literally went after the world and got it. What actually would you have? Absolutely nothing! Because when a soul leaves this world it will immediately realize I sold out my life for raisin cakes.

Now I want us to think about this context for a moment. This context says no matter how far you have fallen from God, He wants you back. No matter how twisted and tangled your life has become, He wants you back. You may have fallen deep into immorality. You may have worshipped false things. You may have been associating with low life people. God wants you back. He loves you and He wants you back. The proof is God says to Hosea, go get Gomer, bring her back and love her.

**PART #2** – Hosea obeys God and goes and gets his harlot wife. **3:2-3**

Hosea is a prophet and once he knows God's Word and will, He applies it. Once he knows the specific Word of God, He is obedient to it. So obviously he went to get Gomer. There were three specific steps Hosea took in regard to Gomer:

**Step #1** - He paid for his own prostitute wife. **3:2**

One commentator said the fact that Hosea had to do this proves that “Gomer had degraded herself below human dignity” (Ronald Vandermeij, *Hosea*, p. 32).

Can you imagine the humiliation of this moment for Gomer? She is a prostitute and she comes into a room and there is her former husband who has paid full price for her. I heard a story told by a great Bible expositor of a man who was traveling and he had to do business in Las Vegas. He had never been unfaithful to his wife, but he decided that one time wouldn't hurt, so he contacted an escort service and asked for a call girl to come to his motel room. There was a knock at the door and when he opened the door, there was his own daughter. He did not know his daughter was even in Las Vegas and he sure didn't know she was a prostitute. Now this ruined everything in this family.

Just imagine the initial thought when the two looked each other in the eyes. Think of what must have been going through Gomer's mind when she sees her client is Hosea. **Verse 2** says that he paid 15 shekels of silver; he paid a homer and a half of barley. Now a homer of barley has been calculated to be about 6 bushels. So a homer and a half is 9 bushels of barley. Now 15 shekels of silver was half the amount one would pay for a slave (Ex. 21:32). It was also half the amount that one would pay to redeem a woman from some vow (Lev. 27:4). We may assume that the 15 shekels plus the barley equaled the total 30 shekel sum in order to buy back Gomer.

From this slave price we may assume that Gomer was working as a prostitute for either a brothel or a temple or a pimp. In order for Hosea to be able to take her, he had to buy her and this was the price.

I don't know what you have slopped around with in life, I don't need to know and don't care if I ever know. I don't know how pathetic you have been in your secret world; I know how pathetic I have been. The truth is in some ways we have all been slaves to ugly sin. But here is what I can tell you—**God loves you and God has paid the full redemptive price for you to get back into a healthy, holy relationship with Him. That blood of Jesus Christ is able to cleanse you from "ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS."**

Maybe you have drifted far away from God. Maybe you have been involved in perverted things; gross things. May be you are enslaved to something. God wants you back and has paid the full price for you to return to Him.

**Step #2** - He admonished her to be faithful. **3:3a**

Now Hosea admonishes Gomer and says stop the sin. Stop the immorality. Stop the harlotry and immoral sex. Immediately after he had purchased her and taken her away from her sin, he gives her a test, namely, "stay with me many days" and "stay away from immoral behavior."

The verb "stay" (yashab) is one that portrays the idea of patient waiting. He gives her a time period to prove she is faithful to him and this would rebuild a wonderful relationship again. He was giving her a time period to prove that she was serious about not returning to her sex sin.

This is how it works with God. When you come back to God, He will put you to the test to see whether or not you are serious about your relationship with Him. If you prove that you are, His blessings will abundantly be poured out to you.

**Step #3** - He encouraged her that she would again have a wonderful relationship with him. **3:3b**

This is intimate language. Hosea is assuring Gomer that if she will stay away from her immoral behavior, he will again be intimate with her.

If you will purpose to walk away from evil sin as a child of God and if you will purpose to pursue the Word and will of God for a period of time, you will discover God will do some amazing things for you and with you. You will once again have a wonderful relationship with God. God will cultivate a very personal and private relationship with you.

Dr. J. Vernon McGee said if a church has a man in the pulpit who is not carefully teaching people the Scriptures and is not telling the people that they are corrupt sinners who need a Savior, it is not a church; it is a spiritual brothel.

**PART #3** – God applies this whole story to Israel. **3:4-5**

Dr. Charles Feinberg, a Jewish Hebrew scholar, said these two verses right here gives us one of “the greatest prophetic pronouncements in the whole revelation of God” concerning Israel.

Now in **verses 4-5**, God makes the application and it is aimed straight at Israel.

**Application #1** - For many days Israel will be without a king or prince. **3:4a**

It is clear that Israel is presently in this waiting period right now. There is certainly no Davidic King reigning over Israel and controlling the world. There is no one who can even succeed to the throne.

**Application #2** - For many days Israel will be without a sacrifice. **3:4b**

Ever since the days of Jesus Christ, the sacrifices have ceased. She has rejected the true sacrifice and since A.D. 70, she has not even offered any animal sacrifices.

**Application #3** - For many days Israel will be without a pillar. **3:4c**

Luke tells us that “Jerusalem shall be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). She has not had her temple standing since A.D. 70.

**Application #4** - For many days Israel will be without an ephod. **3:4d**

This has to do with proper priesthood and priestly authority.

**Application #5** - For many days Israel will be without household idols. **3:4e**

I understand this to mean that for many days Israel will be without idols, which is why she is without these other things she should have. For many years Israel fell into idolatry, worshipping various idols. God says she will go through a time when she won't even have that. She won't be able to worship idols because she will not have any freedom in her land.

**Application #6** - After the many days are completed, Israel will be reunited into a wonderful relationship with her God. **3:5**

Look at **verse 5**. Look at what God is going to do. Dr. C. I. Scofield said this chapter is a classic O.T. passage that describes Israel's past, present and future. She has an idolatrous past, she has many days without blessings present; but she will have a glorious restored future (*New Scofield Reference Bible*, NASV, p. 1205).

There will come a time when Israel will return to the LORD and will seek the LORD their God and the Davidic King. They will reverence God and come trembling, not come arrogantly. The Davidic dynasty will be reestablished.

Now carefully notice when all of this will happen, **"in the last days."** What you cannot deny is that **the Word of God does say that there will come a day when the covenant relationship between God and Israel will be fully restored.**

One of the things that we clearly see from this text is that even though we don't deserve God's love and even though we cannot earn God's love and even though we do not merit God's love, when we are in a covenant relationship with God, He loves us anyway.

No matter how pathetic we have behaved and in spite of ourselves, He loves us. None of us have ever earned or merited God's love. He loved us in our sin while we were yet sinners; He loved us enough to have Jesus Christ die for us. So why don't you come to Him today? If you know Him and are in sin, why don't you return to Him today?

What you will find is a God who will love you, forgive you and bless you. That is the story of the book of Hosea.