

Faithful or Unfaithful? (Hosea 2:2-13 and James 4:4-10) 14-May-2017¹

Please have your Bibles opened up to Hosea chapter 2 as we continue our series on the OT book of Hosea.

There's an outline in the bulletin if you would like to take some notes.

Let me pray first and ask God for his help and guidance

Recap

Before we begin let's do a quick recap of last week

The prophet Hosea lived in a period of time where the nation of Israel had divided

[Powerpoint 1 - Divided Kingdom/Hosea's ministry]

10 of the 12 tribes had formed the Northern Kingdom - under King Jeroboam II - and this Northern Kingdom retained the name "Israel"

The other 2 remaining tribes, Judah and Benjamin, formed the Southern Kingdom, and became known as Judah - as Judah is the larger tribe

The King of the Northern Kingdom - King Jeroboam II was a corrupt king - leading his people to worship false gods like Baal - a Canaanite fertility god

Whereas the kings of the Southern Kingdom - Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were pretty much faithful to God - except for King Ahaz

During this time, God told Hosea to go and marry a woman, Gomer, who is promiscuous and will be unfaithful to him

The reason God told Hosea to go and marry a woman who will be unfaithful to Him - is because Hosea's marriage is going to be a picture of what God's marriage to His people is like

[Powerpoint 2-A Picture of God's Marriage]

The idea is to give Hosea, through his difficult marriage to his wife, Gomer - a greater understanding of God's character and God's love

As Hosea continues in his marriage to Gomer who is going to be unfaithful to him.

The people of Israel looking at Hosea's marriage will have a PICTURE of what the marriage relationship between God and his people is like. God is the loving and faithful husband and Israel is the adulterous, idolatrous, unfaithful wife, chasing after other gods like Gomer chases after other men!

The 2 marriages run in parallel!

Intro

In fact as we read these verses - if we want to see how it applies to us today, we need to see that, in fact, there are three marriages in view

[Powerpoint 3-marriages]

Husband	Wife	Children
Hosea	Gomer	Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah and Lo-Ammi
God	Israel the Nation	The Israelites
Jesus	Church	Individual Christians - children of God - US

So as we read Hosea 2:2-2:13

We need to see how it applies to each of these 3 marriages

These verses take a look at unfaithfulness in these 3 marriage relationships

And there is

Firstly a warning

And then secondly a threat of punishment

And because of the warning and the threat of punishment

There needs to be a response from the unfaithful party

So let's look at the unfaithfulness first...

Warning against unfaithfulness

V2 begins like a courtroom scene

Where the unfaithful wife - Gomer - is in court

And Hosea is talking to his children and says:

Rebuke your mother, rebuke her – for she is not my wife and I am not her husband

[Powerpoint 4-Rebuking...]

But as we apply that to the 3 marriages

In Hosea's marriage to Gomer:

Hosea is talking to Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi and says 'Rebuke your Mum, Gomer, she's not my wife and I'm not her husband'

In God's marriage to Israel:

God is talking to the people of Israel - the Israelites - and He says as a whole nation - through your wicked kings who have encouraged you to worship false and fake gods - you have been unfaithful

In our marriage relationship with God through Jesus:

God is talking to Christians - and saying how are we as a Christian church and as Christian individuals being unfaithful to God and in His Son?

So - what has the unfaithful one in these marriages actually done?

[Powerpoint 5-Unfaithfulness]

See V3 - they have an adulterous look on their face - they look guilty

And still in V3 - there's unfaithfulness between her breasts - it's like a picture of a woman wearing a revealing seductive top showing her cleavage - tempting other lovers and admirers

For Gomer - she was flaunting herself at other men

For Israel - she was flaunting herself at other false gods

For us - we're flaunting ourselves at people or interests or things which will lead us into sin and take our attention away from God

What might they be for us?

(pause)

[Powerpoint 6-Unfaithfulness]

Then in v8 - she has not acknowledged that I was one who gave her everything
For Gomer - she had not appreciated all that her husband, Hosea, had given her
For Israel - they used all the things God gave them - to worship and make
sacrifices to false gods. The grain and food and the silver and gold, God had
provided for them - they offered to Baal - and they thought their worship of Baal
had given them all their abundant fruitful crops, and wealth and many children and
prosperity - instead of realizing it ALL came from God

For us - we might think all we have and all we have achieved is down to ourselves -
and worship ourselves - pat ourselves on the back - saying how good am I - I've
done all this and achieved all this all on my own - instead of realizing all we have is
God's - and all we have achieved is because God blessed us and allowed it to
happen!

(pause)

[Powerpoint 7-Unfaithfulness]

Then in v10 - we see that the unfaithfulness includes lewdness - which means
being sexual or lustful in a provocative or offensive way. Asking someone for
sexual favours

For Gomer - she was sleeping around and offering herself to many men

For Israel - the worship of Baal involved sexual acts with the temple prostitutes to try to get Baal to act in a favourable way and make the crops fertile, the people fertile and make the nation prosperous!

For us - it might be getting sucked in to pornography or sexual sin. You might say - well that doesn't apply to me - I'm not into pornography or sleeping around.. But it can also be not so much what we are doing or saying but what we are thinking

Jesus says this in Matthew 5:28

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

(pause)

[Powerpoint 8-Unfaithfulness]

In v13 we see that unfaithfulness includes burning incense to Baal - and being decked in fine jewelry going after lovers and forgetting about her husband

For Gomer - she was dressed up to the nines and chasing men

For Israel - they burned incense and made sacrifices to these false gods including Baal - and they'd forgotten about the one True God

For us - what are we chasing after? What Baals do we have? What idols do we have?

Here's just a few to think about?

Technology - addiction to smart phones, computers, computer games, social media is becoming alarming - everywhere we go - we see people on these devices constantly - communication with God and with each other is suffering because of it!

Idols like the latest fancy cars or boats or caravans

Idols like partying - which leads to binge drinking, drugs and cheap sex

Idols like shopping, money, possessions...

Idols like TV...

Have we forgotten God - except when we're in trouble and need help?

(pause)

When was the last time we thanked God for what we have?

(pause)

Bottom line

What have we been unfaithful to God in?

What do we need to confess to God - what do we need to repent of? Write it down and repent today!

(pause)

Punishment

The reason God gives these warnings

[Powerpoint 9-Reason for Punishment]

Is because punishment follows if this unfaithfulness doesn't stop

The idea of the punishment is not so much as a payback for unfaithfulness - but in order to win the unfaithful one back

See the second half of v7

Then she [the unfaithful one] will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off then now'

In other words - maybe the grass wasn't greener on the other side after all!

So what are the punishments?

V3- the unfaithful one is stripped naked, made like a desert and parched line

V4 - the children of the unfaithful marriage will not be shown love

V6 - the path will be blocked with thorn bushes

V7 - the unfaithful one will chase after other lovers but not catch them

V9 - The grain will be taken away

V10 -the unfaithful one's lewdness will be exposed

V11- celebrations will be stopped

V12 - vines and fig trees will be ruined

[Powerpoint 10-Punishments]

For Gomer - the punishment means that Hosea will withdraw all he has given her and expose her for the hussy she is - so she realizes just how much Hosea has given her - then she will come to her senses and come back to him

For Israel - God will withdraw his provision for His people - He won't show love to them - they won't be able to have their festivals and sacrifices anymore - because there's no food and no wine. God will expose Israel for who they really are - and He'll punish their unfaithfulness - to bring them back

For Us - there's a warning here - that if we continue to be unfaithful to God - in not loving Him - not serving Him - not following His rules for our lives - not living a life pleasing to Him - he will withdraw blessings on us

So if you feel your life's not going so well right now - it might be - because there's something in your life that is showing unfaithfulness to God - and you need to address it.

So it's worth all of us doing a self-examination - on a daily basis

King David put it this way in Psalm 139

²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Friends, each one of us - needs to examine our hearts and see if there is anything in our lives that is unfaithful and offensive to God - and get rid of it!

(pause)

Our Response (James 4:4-10)

The warnings against unfaithfulness

And the punishments for unfaithfulness

Require our response this morning

And that's where our NT passage from James 4 comes in:

So turn to James chapter 4, starting from verse 4:

[Powerpoint 11-Our Response]

God is a jealous God - he doesn't want us to be friends with the world - see verses 4 to 5

We can't serve two masters - we can't love and serve God and love and serve what the world has to offer us

The world's temptations will lead us away from God

And God gets jealous about that?

You might say how is being jealous - loving?

But what we have to realize is that God balances His desire that sin must be punished and His jealousy that He wants us to worship Him alone - He balances that with His amazing faithfulness and His amazing love

The love God gives us in our relationship with Him is far better than any love this world would ever give us

The apostle Paul puts it this way in Romans 5:8

Quote Rom 5:8

[⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.](#)

The Bible calls that grace - God's free gift of love!

Will anyone else in this world die for you even though you've been unfaithful to them?

And fix your sin?

And take your punishment and your blame for your wrong doing?

And replace all that with forgiveness

And give you life forever in eternity with God

No love on earth can do that!

But God allowed His beloved Son, Jesus, to die for our sin on a cruel cross!

God is loving and faithful - even when we are unfaithful

So James says in V6 - God doesn't like pride because pride is about self not about God or about others

But He gives grace - He gives His favour -to those who are humble because the humble are not seeking to gratify and glorify themselves but are giving credit to God for everything in their life

[Powerpoint 12-Response]

So our response should be as in v7

Submit yourselves to God -put God first - in all things!

And Resist the devil - resist the temptations that the devil puts in your way

Song: "Resist, resist - resist the Devil - James 4 verse sevill!"

And our response should be as in v8

Come near to god

Song: "James 4 verse 8 - James 4 verse 8 - "Draw near to God - and He will draw near to you - Draw near to God - and He will draw near to you" - na - na - na

And v9 - Grieve our sin

In other words be sad about the sin in our lives

Confess and abandon the Baals in our lives

The conclusion is - God is always faithful - always keeps His promises

What about us?

Are we faithful like God - or are we unfaithful?

Let's pray...