

(Hosea 3:1-5, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 & Colossians 1:19-23)

It would be great to have your Bibles turned to Hosea chapter 3.

If you like taking notes, there's an outline in the bulletin.

Let me ask God for his help and guidance in understanding His Holy Word.

Let's pray...

## Recap

Before we begin then - let's do a quick recap of the book of Hosea

In chapter 1 - God told the prophet 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 1-A Picture of God's Marriage]

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!

The children from Hosea and Gomer's marriage have names that describe God's disappointment in His marriage to His people and are a picture of God's judgment on His people

## [Powerpoint 2-Children/Judgment]

The children's names are:

**Jezreel** - which means "God will scatter" and the people of Israel will be exiled to Assyria in 722BC

**Lo-Ruhamah** - which means "not loved or no mercy"

**Lo-Ammi** - which means "not my people"

But then in chapter 2 as we saw last week - God's love and faithfulness is bigger than the people's unfaithfulness

## [Powerpoint 3-Door of Hope]

And we saw in verse 15 of chapter 2 - that God promised to make their Valley of Achor (meaning their Valley of Trouble) into a Door of Hope

And we saw that the Door of Hope - pointed to God's love in sending Jesus - to give people hope in that if they believe in Jesus they can have - the forgiveness of sins that Jesus offers people - through His death on the cross - and they can have the hope of eternal life that Jesus offers - through His resurrection  
(pause)

With that love, hope and forgiveness in view

In chapter 3, God commands Hosea to go and do something equally as hard as he was told to do in chapter 1 in marrying a promiscuous and unfaithful wife...

But - before we look at chapter 3 though

Let me share this...

## Intro

Several years ago now

Heather and I attended a marriage enrichment seminar at Gosford Church

The couple running the seminar began by asking this question

[Powerpoint 4a-Question]

*"Why do you love your husband or wife?"*

There were several answers given - things like...

They are good looking,

They are kind and caring

They are supporting and faithful

We enjoy the same activities and interests

They have plenty of money

They make me laugh

So we can have sex

So we can have a family

Because they are very intelligent and have a great mind

Once all the answers were given, the couple running the seminar asked another telling question:

[Powerpoint 4b-Question]

What happens - when your partner's not good looking anymore - when they've gained 25kgs, lost most of their hair, or grown hair where it wasn't before, or when they've lost most of their teeth? Then what?

What happens - when they're not so kind and caring anymore - and they become selfish? Then what?

What happens - when they're not so supporting and faithful anymore - and in fact they're more interested in other people and other things - rather than you? Then what?

What happens - when you're not physically able to enjoy the same activities and interests anymore? Then what?

What happens - when they run out of money? As the saying goes "*when poverty comes in the door, love flies out the window*"

What happens - when they don't make you laugh anymore - when the same old jokes aren't funny anymore - and you now think their jokes are just lame? Then what?

What happens - when the sex drive is all but gone - then what?

What happens - when the children have all grown up and left the nest - then what?

What happens when age catches up and intelligence starts to wane - and the mind's not so sharp anymore. What happens when your partner gets Alzheimer's or dementia - then what?

[Powerpoint 4c]

When, do we stop loving?

(pause)

Now in case you're single or you're partner has passed away and you think this doesn't apply to you

We all have loved ones in our lives: children, grandchildren, family and close friends.

The same questions apply:

*Why do you love them?*

*What happens when...?*

*And - When do you stop loving them?*

Surely - real love doesn't stop when the other person - changes or lets you down, does it?

(pause)

**Love that wills to Love (Hosea 3:1)**

Let's see how God's love works through Hosea's marriage...

See chapter 3, verse 1 - so God commands Hosea to go and show his love to Gomer again even though she is loved by another man and even though she is an adulteress - it's not a suggestion or advice - it's a command.

In other words - Hosea must forgive Gomer and continue to love her

### [Powerpoint 5]

Let's put ourselves in Hosea's sandals - how would we do that?

How many times should we forgive?

One of my daughters - when she was about 8 - was struggling with forgiving her sister and I told her she must keep forgiving - we read Matthew 18 together where Peter asked Jesus how many times should he forgive a person who sins against him?

Jesus replied "not seven times - but seventy seven times" (Matthew 18:21-22)

My daughter said "I've already forgiven 77 times, Dad!"

I explained to her - that there was no limit on forgiveness!

And that in fact Jesus - taught in Matthew 6:14-15

### [Powerpoint 5b]

**14 ... if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**

So continuing to love and forgive someone - is a work of our will - not an emotional response

And God says to Hosea - that's how you must love Gomer again - you must use your will to continue to love - even though she's been cheating on you!

Just like - as God says in verse 1 - He continues to love the Israelites - even though they have turned to worship false and fake gods with sacred raisin cakes as sacrifices.

If we think about it - isn't that how God loves us - and continues to love us - even though we have disobeyed, rebelled and been unfaithful to Him. He still sent Jesus and offered us a way to come back into a right relationship with Him.

### **Love that buys back the Loved One (Hosea 3:2)**

Then in verse 2 - we read that Hosea buys Gomer back.

The assumption is that Gomer is in slavery or caught up in a prostitution ring - where someone has to be paid to release her.

#### **[Powerpoint 6a]**

It costs Hosea 15 shekels of silver (170g) which is half the price of buying a slave or female back (Exodus 21:32 & Leviticus 27:4).

And Hosea also paid 195Kg of barley.

Two theories can explain this payment:

Either Hosea only paid half the price of a slave because Gomer already belonged to him, being his wife

Or, more likely, Hosea couldn't afford the full 30 shekels of silver to buy back (redeem) Gomer and so Hosea paid half in silver and half in barley.

The point is that Hosea bought his wife back - even though she was his!

#### **[Powerpoint 6b]**

In the same way - God bought us - His people - back (He redeemed us) even though we were already His, made in His own image, designed for a loving relationship with Him - God bought us back - and it cost Him more than 30 shekels of silver (coincidentally 30 shekels of silver is the price Judas paid to betray Jesus by the way) - it cost God His Only Son's life - to buy us back.

As our NT passage from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says: "You are not your own; you were bought at a price"

### **Love that disciplines (Hosea 3:3-4)**

Now we learnt last week - that God disciplines those He loves (Rev 3:19)

Why? So those He loves, repent and turn back to Him!

#### **[Powerpoint 7a-Love that disciplines]**

Here in verse 3, we see Hosea sets a condition of discipline for Gomer

When she returns to him, she must not be a prostitute anymore and must not be intimate with any other man - and Hosea promises to do the same.

There is a probation period - if you like - to make sure her repentance is genuine Before intimacy can be restored.

#### **[Powerpoint 7b-Love that disciplines]**

In the same, in verse 4, the Israelites, will have a period where

They will have no king or prince

From the time of the exile of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) to Assyria - in 722BC - there were no more local kings ruling the people in Israel

From the time of the exile of the Southern Kingdom (Judah) to Babylon - in 586BC - there were no more local kings ruling the people in Judah

Even when Judah returned from exile 70 years later - they still had no king - and continued to be ruled by one Empire after another - the Persians, the Greeks and then the Romans

In their fallen exiled state - there was no opportunity to worship and sacrifice at the temple

In their fallen exiled state - they would be separated from worship of sacred stones (idols)

They would also have no ephod - a special garment which the High Priest wore and which contained the supernatural stones for divine guidance - the ephod was one of the things missing from the second temple - which was rebuilt after the return from exile from Babylon

And they would have no household gods

Basically the Israelites would live many days - with no ruler of their own, with no sacrifice to God, yet also no idols, nor false gods and no ephod.

This is exactly the state the nation of Israel has been in - for the last 20 centuries - since the Romans destroyed the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple in 70AD - the people of Israel are separate from idols, yet without any legal sacrifice to God at the temple, because there isn't a temple anymore! They profess to worship God without being acknowledged by Him as His Church!

**Love that reconciles (Hosea 3:5)**

But after this period of cleansing, discipline and purification process, there will be reconciliation. See verse 5.

[Powerpoint 8-Reconciles]

The Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their King.

Hosea prophesies a time when God's people will return and seek the Lord again - and come to David their King

Who is David their King?

Remember King David is long gone.

Hosea is over 200 years after the time of King David?

So who could this King David be?

Well - we have to understand that the term "Son of David" is a term used to describe God's Promised Messiah - the One God would send to save His people.

The NT is full of references of people referring to Jesus, as the "Son of David" (Matthew 15:22; 20:30; 21:15; Mark 10:47; 12:35-37; Romans 1:3 and Revelation 22:16)

And on top of that, one of the disciples that Jesus called to follow Him - the disciple Nathanael - refers to Jesus as "the Son of God and King of Israel"

And it's Jesus, the Son of David and the King of Israel - in fact the King of Heaven and Earth - who will reconcile people back to God

It's Jesus who reconciles Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) back to a relationship with God!

As our NT passage from Colossians 1 says:

It pleased God to have His fullness dwell in Jesus - and live on Earth for a while  
(v19)

Why?

To reconcile to Himself (God) all things on Earth and in Heaven (v19)

How?

By making PEACE through Jesus' blood, shed on the cross (v20)

That's amazing love - isn't it?

As Paul puts it - we were once alienated from God - we were enemies of God -  
because of our evil behaviour (v21)

But God chose to forgive, God chose to love - and He chose to send Jesus, His  
Beloved Son - to bring about reconciliation!

So here we have

Love that wills to love

Love that buys back the loved one

Love that disciplines

And love that reconciles

### **Application**

So how can we apply Hosea chapter 3 to our lives this morning...

[Powerpoint 9a-App1]

1. Firstly - God loves us so much - He wills to love us even though we are  
unfaithful - He buys us back again - through Jesus - because God's love is a

forgiving love. In fact God is love - and love never fails. Yes - God disciplines the one's He loves. However He also wills to love us by offering a solution to sin - by reconciling us through Jesus

### [Powerpoint 9b-App2]

2. Secondly - we need to love in the same way as God. So how are we loving in our marriage relationships, in our family relationships and our relationships with friends? Is our love an act of the will? Is our love always forgiving - like God's? Is there someone in our lives we are failing to love because we haven't forgiven them? What will we do? The apostle Peter gives this advice in 1 Peter 4:8 - **Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.**

### [Powerpoint 9c-App3]

3. Thirdly - it might be easy to keep loving our wife or husband, our children, our family and our close friends because they love us back. But what about the unlovable? The ones society has rejected? Will we love them? What about the homeless, the poor, the outcasts, the scruffy, the untidy, the smelly, the mentally challenged, the ones who ridicule us, who put us down, who criticize us, and persecute us?

What does Jesus say about loving them? Here's what He says...

**<sup>43</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you,**

what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? <sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 6:43-48)

There's no two ways about it.

God calls us to love the unlovable!

That's how God loves

He loved us - we're unlovable sinners who rebel against God's rules all the time. Our sin killed His Son.

What was Jesus answer on the cross?

He said: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

Can we say that to everyone who hurts us and lets us down?

*"Father forgive them, they don't know what they're doing?"*

God's love is love - that forgives!

Let's pray...