

Gomer: A Picture of Our Redemption

Preached by: Matthew S. Black

Text: Hosea 3

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Series: Hosea – God’s Relentless Love

Introduction: Open your Bible to Hosea 3. The title of our message tonight is “Gomer: A Picture of Our Redemption”.

Greatest Chapter

James Montgomery Boice said this about Hosea chapter 3: “The third chapter of Hosea is, in my judgment, the greatest chapter in the Bible, because it portrays the greatest story in the Bible—the death of the Lord Jesus Christ for his people—in the most concise and poignant form to be found anywhere.”¹

Let’s Read It

Hosea 3 (ESV) — “And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” 2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. 3 And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” 4 For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. 5 Afterward the children of Israel shall **return** and **seek** the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall **come in fear** to the LORD and to his goodness in **the latter days.**”

Hosea 3 shows us God’s work of redemption—the work by which the Lord Jesus Christ delivered us from sin’s bondage at the cost of his own life—portrayed in Hosea’s purchase of his fallen wife from slavery.

I. Consider the **price** of our redemption, vs. 1-2.

In Hosea 3 we read that Gomer had left Hosea to live with one lover after another. Finally, however, they all rejected her, and she found herself alone, possessing nothing and in debt. Here in Hosea 3 we find her standing in the marketplace **to be sold as a slave**.

Hosea 3:1-2, “And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” 2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley.”

¹ Boice, J. M. (2002). *The Minor Prophets : An expository commentary* (31–40). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books.

Hosea is called to redeem Israel. Hosea's name is literally "Salvation". This redemption points us to the Cross of Christ.

A. We are purchased from the **slavemarket** of sin.

Gomer had left Hosea, as we have already seen, and she had sunk lower and lower in the social scale of the day. Now, at the last, she became a slave and was sold in the capital city of Samaria. There were different ways in which a person could become a slave in antiquity.² A person could become a slave through:

- War – if another country invaded, it was possible you would be separated from your family and sold into slavery in the conquering country.
- Birth – if your parents were slaves, and you were born to them, you automatically became a slave.
- Poverty – This is likely where Gomer was.

Gomer Purchased from the Slave Market

Hosea came to the marketplace where the slaves were being sold. In those days slaves were brought, stripped naked, and put on display so the buyers could evaluate their bodies. They needed to see whether they were strong or weak, emaciated or fat, because they were spending money on these slaves.

Hosea's wife Gomer stood naked, on display with the rest of the slaves. There was an auction and Hosea outbid the others. He didn't have thirty shekels of silver, which was the full price of a slave, so he said, "I will give you fifteen shekels of silver for her and the rest in grain." In that way Hosea bought back his wife, clothed her, fed her, and brought her home. Oh, what love that will not let us go!³

Why Silver and Barley?

What a picture we have. "Silver" is what nobility and those who were more well off would have used to purchase things. "Barley" is what the poor would barter with. And so we see a shadow of Christ here. Christ gave the silver of His deity and the barley of His humanity for our redemption.

Hosea, whose name is "Salvation" **ransomed** Gomer from slavery, and in doing so he was living out the biblical drama of redemption, and prophesying through His love, of the love of Christ, who was also a **ransom**.

- **Jesus** said in **Matthew 20:28** "even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- **Peter** tells us the same thing. **1 Peter 1:18–19** (ESV) —"...you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things

² Boice, J. M. (2002). *The Minor Prophets : An expository commentary* (34). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books.

³ PG Matthew, "*Love That Will Not Let Me Go*". Online Sermon and commentary Hosea 3.

such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”

- **Paul** told the Ephesian elders in **Acts 20:28** – (KJV), “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which **he hath purchased with his own blood.**”

We were slaves to sin!

The reason we need the new birth is because outside of Christ, we are all shackled to our sins. We love our sins and will never turn to Christ unless he frees us. This is why Jesus said things like...

- **Matthew 16:24**, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”
- **John 8:34**, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.”

B. In Christ, we become “slaves of **righteousness**”.

Paul paints the same picture:

Romans 6:16–18 (ESV) — “Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient **slaves**, you are **slaves** of the one whom you obey, either of **sin**, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once **slaves** of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become **slaves** of righteousness.”

Salvation in Christ is about no longer having our hearts divided!

Jesus said in **Matthew 6:24**, “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Christ must come to the slave market of sin, and purchase our redemption.

II. Consider the purpose of our redemption, vs. 3-4

In Hosea 3 we read that Gomer had left Hosea to live with one lover after another. Finally, however, they all rejected her, and she found herself alone, possessing nothing and in debt. Here in Hosea 3 we find her standing in the marketplace **to be sold as a slave**.

Hosea 3:3-4, “And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” 4 For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without

ephod or household gods.” In short, the purpose of our redemption is to deliver us from sin. Israel would need to go into captivity to be delivered from her idols.

The purpose of our redemption is to be delivered from sin! When a person is redeemed, God guards that person from going back to the former life. Hosea could have done anything he wanted to with Gomer. He could have killed her on the spot. He owned her. We are owned by God.

Peter says it this way – **1 Peter 2:24–25** (ESV) — “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.** By his wounds you have been healed.”

Paul says it this way – **1 Corinthians 6:19–20** (ESV) — “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

Application

God’s purpose for Christ coming is that you would deal with the sin habits in your life, and from the heart become obedient to God. What are you doing to die to sin and self and live to righteousness?

Again, Paul says in **Romans 6:13** (ESV) — “Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.”

Cookie Jar Illustration: Part of the answer is what I am calling the “cookie jar syndrome”. Let me illustrate it. A little boy’s mother had just baked a fresh batch of cookies and placed them in the cookie jar, giving instructions that no one touch them until after dinner. But it was not long until she heard the lid of the jar move, and she called out, ‘Son, what are you doing?’ To which a meek voice called back ‘My hand is in the cookie jar resisting temptation!’ Brothers and sisters, the fact of the matter is, *no one* can resist temptation with his hand in the cookie jar.

III. Consider the plan of our redemption, vs. 5

Hosea prophesies what this drama of redeeming Gomer is all about. This is why James Montgomery Boice, the long time pastor of Tenth Presbyterian in Philadelphia said, this is one of the most important chapters in the Bible.

Hosea 3:5, “**Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.**”

A. The **Plan** points to Christ, our King.

Chaldean Translation

The ancient Chaldean translation has an added note. It reads: “...they shall seek the service of the Lord their God and shall obey Messiah, the Son of David, their King” (**Hosea 3:5**, Chaldean). So immediately, the believing Jews were looking ahead to Christ’s coming.

B. The **Timing** of God’s plan.

Hosea says, “**Afterward** the children of Israel shall **return** and **seek** the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall **come in fear** to the LORD and to his goodness **in the latter days**.”(vs. 5). “**Afterward**” is speaking about “after the **exile**”. Specifically, it says Israel will return “**in the latter days**” (vs. 5).

And it says they will return to “David their King” – the Messiah.

Listen to how beautiful the **TIMING** of God’s redemption is! Paul says in **Galatians 4:4–7** (ESV) — “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”

Where do we find Hosea 3:5 in the New Testament?

“**Afterward** the children of Israel shall **return** and **seek** the LORD their God”

Bible scholars through the years have looked to the New Testament to understand what Hosea was saying. There are several key passages that refer back to Hosea 3:5 and others like it.

John the Baptist is to Turn Israel back to God

Luke 1:16-17, speaking of John the Baptist, we read, “And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

This combines Hosea 3:5 and **Malachi 4:6** (ESV) — “And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers...”

James tells us these prophecies are about God turning Israel back to God through the Church

We find this in a very important passage in **Acts 15:13b–18** (ESV) — “...James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, 16 “After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, 17 that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things 18 known from of old.””

In this passage, James, the pastor of the church at Jerusalem, with the whole church present, gives the prophecy of **Amos 9:11–12** where he interprets it to mean the promises of restored Israel are fulfilled in Christ and through the Jewish remnant that would evangelize the world and build Christ’s church.

One commentator put it this way...

“In the Gentiles, God was choosing a people for himself, a new *restored* people of God, Jew and Gentile in Christ, the true Israel. In the total message of Acts it is clear that the rebuilt house of David occurred in the Messiah. Christ was the scion of David who fulfilled the covenant of David and established a kingdom that would last forever (2 Sam 7:12f.; cf. Acts 13:32–34). From the beginning the Jewish Christians had realized that the promises to David were fulfilled in Christ.”⁴

Who Could Have Imagined?

In Acts 2, 3000 were saved (Acts 2:41) and then not long after that 5000 more were saved – **Acts 4:4** (ESV) — “many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.” That was just the men. There could have been over 20,000 Christians

Then as they spread abroad, first to Antioch, and then throughout the Roman Empire, the Apostles and early Christians preached first in the synagogues, “To the Jew first”. They were gathering together into local churches the Jews first, and then to the nations. It’s just like Amos and Hosea said.

Amos 9, as quoted by James in Acts 15, “*that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things 18 known from of old.*” (Acts 15:17-18).

Hosea 3:5 (ESV) — “Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.”

Think about it. Who would have thought that after Israel and Judah were taken off into captivity, that God would reunite them? He brought them back after the exile, but in the time of Christ He united them, not under a political relationship, but in a personal relationship with Him. He united the Jews together in His church and made them the evangelists they were supposed to be.

Peter talked about this at Pentecost...

Acts 2:29-35, “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a

⁴ Polhill, J. B. (2001). *Vol. 26: Acts* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (330). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.’ 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

All Israel Saved

Now God is not done with Israel. He's started His work in the latter days beginning at Pentecost. But He will continue to the end. He will ultimately turn back to Israel before He comes again and bring in a great harvest. Paul says in Romans 11 speaking of ethnic Israel, "all Israel will be saved". He's quoting **Isaiah 59:20** (ESV) — "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD."

Conclusion: Redemption means we take on Christ's identity. Just as Paul says in Ephesians 1:13–14 (ESV) — "you also... were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

God gave you the guarantee or "wedding ring" of our inheritance.

Do you live like you are redeemed? How do you spend your time? What do you need to repent of?

As you leave here tonight, consider the price of your redemption and how you can honor God with your new lease on life!