

Message #3**Hosea 2:1-13**

There was once a married person who bragged about the fact that he was faithful to his wife over 95% of the time. That is pure hypocrisy. What this in all reality says is I am not faithful to my wife at all. Now you can try to sugar coat this any way you want, but the fact is if you are not faithful to your mate 100% of the time, you are not faithful.

God is not holy and faithful to us 95% of the time; He is holy and faithful to us all of the time. He wants us to be holy and faithful to Him all of the time and the problem is sometimes we miss the mark and we aren't.

We are warned in this N.T. Grace Age that we are not to love the world or the things in the world (I John 2:15). This world is comprised of all kinds of worldly and fleshly lures and lusts that are designed to pull us away from God.

It is our responsibility as a believer to not become an "adulteress" who tries to be on friendly terms with this world (James 4:4). We are admonished not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:12).

So it becomes the responsibility of the church and of the individual to develop faithfulness to the Lord. This does not mean we don't struggle or fail. In fact, if any believer says they don't fail or sin, they are deceiving themselves and the truth is not in them (I John 1:8). However, when a believer does fail, he will be so sensitive to the conviction of God that he will run to God in confession and take care of the issue so that it does not fester and become a much more serious problem (I John 1:9).

Now one thing is clear from both the O.T. and the N.T. and that is **God always gives His people plenty of time to get things turned around, even when struggling with the worst kinds of fleshly sins.** When we come to Hosea, we come to a sin that is just about as bad as it can be the sin of prostitution. God's indictment against His own people is you have fallen into the sin of harlotry. You are totally unfaithful.

What God's people need to realize is that God does have a limit to His grace even when it comes to His own family and if His people do not face the sin and turn from their sin, there will be consequences.

That point is very clear from this passage in the book of Hosea. God warned Gomer to leave her sin and turn back to Him and He warned her that if she didn't, He would cause her to pay a severe price.

GOD WANTS TO COMMUNICATE TO HIS PEOPLE THAT IF THEY DO NOT TURN FROM THEIR SIN AND HONOR HIM HE WILL PERSONALLY CAUSE SOME HORRIBLE THINGS TO HAPPEN TO HIS FAMILY WHOM HE LOVES.

Now these verses break down nicely into six parts:

PART #1 – God wants everyone in the family to communicate the truth about His relationship with one who is unfaithful. **2:1-2a**

What we have described here is a sad court scene in which the children are being brought in to testify about the unfaithfulness of their own mother. Now in the analogy, the brothers and sisters are individual Israelites and the mother is the nation Israel.

God has a message for the brothers and the message was “Ammi,” which means “my people.” God also had a message for the sisters and the message was “Ruhamah,” which means she has obtained compassion or pity.

By starting out with this truth, God is basically saying to His people, you are my family. I have been gracious to you and made you my people and you need to realize that. Now they were not acting like His family. They were not acting like they belonged to Him. The problem is most of them had become Gomer-types. They were acting like a bunch of Gomer-types.

So God had another message for them that it is found in **verse 2**, “contend with your mother.” That word “contend” (rib) is one that means to judicially and forensically strive and plead your case (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 767).

God says I want you to realize this judicial point and I want this point communicated: you are so unfaithful to Me that you are no longer My wife and I am no longer your husband. In other words, I am shutting this relationship down because you will not respond to Me.

There is a major debate in theology over whether or not God actually divorced Himself from Israel. Some say God did not and others say God did. We do know from Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:8 that God did, at some point, divorce Himself from Israel and then one day will take her back and remarry Himself to her. It is certainly possible that He is referring to this right here.

Now this does teach us something about marriage. There are some very rigid people who believe no matter what the mate is doing, you just need to hang in there and take it. I do not believe the Bible presents any such idea. Certainly a divorce is not an ideal, but there are times when a relationship has become so pathetic that it is an option. When you have persistent adultery or addiction or abuse or abandonment of responsibilities, I do not believe it is the will of God that you have to put up with that forever. God divorced Himself from Israel because she was unfaithful to Him. He got fed up with her.

If you look at Israel today, you can certainly see God is not taking care of her as if she were His wife. He is not blessing her right now and He is not providing for her as a husband would for his wife. This is due to the fact that right now Israel is not His wife and that is precisely what Hosea was proclaiming here.

PART #2 – God demands that one unfaithful immediately get rid of the sin. **2:2b-5a**

Now God has a grace side and patient side to Him. Before He judges His family, He warns His family. Now God demands that Gomer put away her harlotry and adultery. In fact, He mentions two body parts that were immoral: “face” and “breasts.” There are different Hebrew words used for “breasts” in the O.T. and the one used here is the word “shad.” This particular word emphasizes that Gomer was very skilled at using this part of her anatomy to promote her immoral behavior (*Ibid.*, p. 805).

This woman was truly into her sin and God demands that she get away from it right now and He gives her four reasons why she better act now:

(Reason #1) - Because God will strip her naked and completely expose her. **2:3a**

Now when you first read this threat, one might initially think what is the big deal about this? Gomer obviously enjoys being naked and exposed so what difference would this make to her? Notice the end of the statement, God says I will do this “as on the day when she was born.” When a baby is born, it is born without clothes and it has no say at all in what happens to it. God is basically threatening that He would strip her naked and she would be attacked and brutalized and have no say whatsoever in what He was doing. In other words, God would permit her to be raped and there would not be one thing she could do to prevent it.

(Reason #2) - Because God will make her like a desert wilderness. **2:3b**

God would cause her to be totally and completely unfruitful and good for nothing. Nothing about her would refresh anyone. She would end up a pathetic woman that no one would even want to be around or go near.

(Reason #3) - Because God will slay her and let her die a horrible death. **2:3c**

Dying of thirst is a horrible way to die. When water goes out of your body the cells in the body shrink. Your tongue swells, typically your kidneys shut down first. Your brain cells do not operate normally. You become very confused and ultimately you slip into a coma and die. It is a horrible way to die. God says to His own family members, if you do not turn to Me and start being faithful to Me, this is what I will permit to happen to you.

(Reason #4) - Because God will have no compassion on her children. **2:4-5a**

The reason He will not have compassion on her children is that those children are children of a harlot, who is not interested in getting right with God.

I just read an article from the Washington Post that said right now in Syria and Iraq, “there are children dying on the mountain on the roads.” “There is no water, there is no vegetation, they are completely cut off and surrounded by Islamic State. It is a disaster, a total disaster” (*What it’s like to die of thirst*, The Washington Post).

Here is the point; if you refuse to deal with sin issues, God will see to it that it will affect your family. If a child of God refuses to face and confess sin and just blatantly pursues it, it will affect one's family. No matter what it is. There is a list of flesh things in Galatians 5:19-21—immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, temper outbursts, disputes, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing and things like that.

Refuse to face it and confess it and God can be angered to the point that He not only judges the individual, He may also allow negative things to happen to the children.

It is a very serious matter for a child of God to persist in being unfaithful.

PART #3 – God describes why Gomer became a shameful prostitute. **2:5b**

It is clear that this woman was in the world of prostitution not just as a hedonistic pleasure seeker; she was in it for money. Gomer gave birth to her children and then went right back to her shameful prostitution lifestyle. What we learn here are some reasons why she did it.

Now we may recall that Hosea was a prophet who had been given a command by God to go marry a harlot. Hosea did what God wanted him to do; he went and married Gomer and she became the wife of a prophet of God.

Now being the wife of a prophet we may assume that she was not making the big dollars she once made when she was plying her immoral trade. Prophets typically did not earn big salaries while they were ministering for God. In fact, at the end of **verse 7** it is clear that Gomer was interested in a “better” life. So we may assume that things were pretty lean in her life.

She wanted money and she did not care what she had to do to get it. She obviously had several customers and between them they provided several things for her. The things on the list are not bad, but how she got the things on the list is bad:

(Payment Type #1) - They gave her bread. **2:5b**

(Payment Type #2) - They gave her water. **2:5c**

(Payment Type #3) - They gave her wool. **2:5d**

(Payment Type #4) - They gave her flax. **2:5e**

(Payment Type #5) - They gave her oil. **2:5f**

(Payment Type #6) - They gave her drink. **2:5g**

As one commentator said, her prostitution brought her tremendous “agricultural prosperity.” Her lovers paid her well. Gomer was a prostitute because of what it got her. But what she didn’t realize is what this would ultimately get her is the judgment of God.

Back in 1993 there was a famous Jewish prostitute who was arrested for running a prostitution ring whose name was Heidi Fleiss. She netted millions of dollars in just a couple of years. She claimed that on her slowest night she made \$10,000. Of course it all came crashing down when the Federal government convicted her of tax evasion and she was sentenced to 7 years in prison.

Many of God’s people have sold out to the world for what it can get them. They are not faithful to God because they want their pleasure, their prosperity, their position and power. What they do not realize is what they will get for their sell out is the judgment of God.

PART #4 – God reveals what He will do to get His family back to Him. **2:6-7**

Quite frankly, these are two verses that are amazing because you do have to wonder why would God even want to take back this unfaithful spouse. The reason is God still loves His family.

God will actually cause things to happen that will prevent her from meeting with her clients. He would put up hedges and thorns and walls that would separate her from her clientele and then she would begin to say (v. 7), “I’ll go back to my first husband because it was better for me then than now.”

There is tremendous theology in these two verses. God can actually prevent things from happening. God can actually prevent one from pursuing something they love to pursue in order to get them back to Him. When people pursue things contrary to God, they do not realize that God is sovereignly permitting them to do it and the moment He decides to pull the plug, His will will be done.

PART #5 – God reveals what Gomer did not know about His provisions. **2:8**

What Gomer did not realize is that God was the One who gives all good things to His people. His people don’t have to pursue sin to get them; they need to pursue Him to get them.

(Provision #1) - God is the one who provides grain. **2:8a**

(Provision #2) - God is the one who provides new wine. **2:8b**

Now some have tried to explain this away by saying that “new wine” is not really a fermented wine, but a grape juice. In fact, Jack Van Impe, who is known to twist Scriptures on many things, specifically says that this refers to an unfermented type of wine that God gave. In one of his writings, he says we cannot turn to the inspired Greek text to determine whether or not wine is fermented (*Alcohol: The Beloved Enemy*, p. 119). The reason he says this is because he knows the inspired Scriptures will not support his convictions.

Well, if we cannot turn to the inspired written Word to determine it, should we turn to his written word? I think not. We will stick with the inspired Word of God.

New wine is a fermented wine and both God and Hosea make that point clear in this very book. In fact, in **Hosea 4:11** God lists two different fermented wine drinks that can get you drunk and take away your understanding—“wine” and “new wine.”

Wine and new wine are both legitimate provisions of God and they were supposed to be part of the offerings that Israel offered to God (Hosea 9:2-4). God says to Gomer, you did not get these things by your prostitution, these things come from Me.

(Provision #3) - God is the one who gives oil. **2:8c**

God’s own people lost track of the fact that all of their agricultural blessings were in fact wonderful provisions of God.

(Provision #4) - God is the one who gives silver and gold. **2:8d**

Notice carefully what they did with the silver and gold that God provided. Instead of them giving a great portion to God; they gave it to Baal. Instead of these people worshipping and praising God for all He had given, they worshipped Baal. Baal was not the fertility “god” who gave Israel her blessings; the God of the Bible gave her everything she had. She should have been worshipping Him.

I want to make an important observation here that is critical to the text. God is the one who gives people what they have whether or not they know it or honor Him with it. He is the One who provides for us. He is the One who gives people good things in life to enjoy (I Tim. 6:17). He gives people their incomes and many other tangible blessings. Wise are those people who realize this and honor God with all they have.

PART #6 – God reveals what He will do because she did not honor Him. **2:9-13**

God lists a series of things here that are not pretty. What He describes He will do is scary:

Punishment #1 - God will take back His grain. **2:9a**

Punishment #2 - God will take back His new wine. **2:9b**

Punishment #3 - God will take away His wool and flax. **2:9c**

Now these were commodities that the people needed to live and survive. These things were critical to their economy. God could take them back in a couple of ways. He could allow someone to come to dominate them who would take these things away from them or He could withhold rain so that these things could not flourish.

Punishment #4 - God will completely expose her. **2:9d-10a**

In fact, all of her lovers would see that the hand of God was completely against her. This idea of completely uncovering her pictures four things: **1) Coming captivity** in which the people would be stripped of everything; **2) Coming destitution** in which the people are left with nothing; **3) Coming humiliation; 4) Public disgrace.** God would do this to His own family.

Punishment #5 - God will make it so that no one can rescue her. **2:10b**

When God permits someone to be rescued out of sin, He is the one who permitted the rescue. Most people want to credit man, but the credit goes to God.

Punishment #6 - God will put an end to all of her gaiety and religious ceremonies. **2:11**

Do not miss what is said here, there are people who are deep in sin who go to some church and totally enjoy it. They are happy, backslapping people who never are convicted about anything. God says, "I'll put an end to that." "I'll stop them dead in their tracks."

Punishment #7 - God will destroy the vines and fig trees given to her for immoral payment. **2:12**

Israel believed that by practicing her religious stuff she was guaranteeing herself great prosperity and rewards. God says, "I'll stop it all and destroy it all. I will destroy your agriculture and I will permit the beasts of the field to devour everything."

Punishment #8 - God will punish her for her involvement in the worship of Baal. **2:13**

God gives blessings to His people and His people were worshipping Baal. So God says, "I will turn against My own family for her own immoral and idolatrous behavior."

God loves His family and He gives His family plenty of time to face sin, confess sin and turn to Him from sin. But if God's family refuses, there will be serious consequences. This is the whole theme of Hosea.