

Sermon: **Scandalous Love (Hosea 3)**

Date: **March 20, 2016**

Marriage is used throughout Scripture to illustrate the relationship between God and his people. Marriage is supposed to be a reflection of the love that Christ has for the church. This is why it is so tragic when marriages fall apart. The book of Hosea is about the prophet Hosea and his wayward wife Gomer. In Hosea 1, God commands Hosea to marry a prostitute. Hosea marries Gomer and, after she gives birth to three children, she leaves him and becomes an adulteress, slipping back into her old lifestyle. Hosea 3 is a story of reconciliation, redemption, and restoration. God commands Hosea to go again and love Gomer even though she had fallen so far into adultery, sin, and slavery. As we study this powerful story we will see that Hosea's selfless love for his wife is a picture of God's love for us. We were once unfaithful, unworthy, and ungodly, but God still pursued, purchased, and purified us. This week's study will call us to behold the love of God.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

Individual Bible Study

1. Please read Hosea 3 and ensure that you have listened to the sermon.
 - a. Compare and contrast God's command to Hosea in 1:2 with God's command in 3:1. In what ways might it have been more difficult for Hosea to obey God's command in 3:1?
 - b. God commands Hosea to love Gomer. What does this teach us about love?
 - c. Gomer's name is omitted from this chapter. Why do you think that is?
 - d. The word "love" is used four times in verse 1. Compare and contrast each of its uses.
 - e. Gomer's pursuit of other men parallels Israel's pursuit of idols. What are some examples of modern day "idols" that we might be tempted to turn to?
 - f. Hosea *bought* Gomer. What does this tell us about how far Gomer had fallen? What does this teach us about love?

- g. How does Hosea buying back his wife from slavery foreshadow what Christ would do for us in the gospel?
- h. In verses 3-4, Hosea disciplines his wife and God disciplines Israel. Why? How is this an act of love?
2. Verse 5 explains how Israel will return to the Lord their God in response to his love. The message of Hosea, however, is not just for Israel. It is for all of God's people, both Jew and Gentile. Read the verses below and explain how they shed light on this truth.
- Romans 9:22-26 (see Hosea 1:10 and Hosea 2:23)
 - 1 Peter 2:9-10 (see Hosea 2:23)

Group Discussion Questions

1. What are the parallels between us and Gomer? What are the parallels between God and Hosea?
2. Despite God loving Israel to the uttermost, they still worshiped idols. What are some idols that we struggle with today? Why are we tempted to turn back to our idols even though God has freed us from them in Christ?
3. Why is it important that we continually remember and behold the love of God? How can we practically do this?
4. Hosea teaches us that love is a choice before it is a feeling. How does God's love for us reflect this truth? How can our love for others also reflect this truth?
5. Why is God's discipline in our lives an act of love? What does God's discipline look like?

Accountability Questions

Is there an idol in your life that you are tempted to turn to instead of God? What do you need to do to root out that idol and how can we help hold you accountable to do it?