

How Great is the Love of God

Hosea 2:6-23

11/9/03

Intro

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To be a prophet in Old Testament times meant that your life could be a lesson for the people. **Hosea** was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel, during the same time that Isaiah was a prophet in the southern kingdom of Judah.

Hosea was told to take a wife of harlotry as a life lesson for Israel. They were being spiritually unfaithful to God and He wanted to get their attention.

But the point was different than you might expect. It wasn't just to show how unfaithful Israel was to the Lord in chasing after foreign gods, but **it was also to show how great was the love of God toward His people.**

Illus – The people of Israel could see that the prophet was in a strange relationship. People would gossip, the leaders could have called him and asked him, “What is happening in your marriage?”

“This is the way Israel is toward God,” he could have said. Every time Gomer headed to the cheap hotel, it would have reminded them of the wandering hearts inside of them.

These, then, are insights into what God does when His people wander away from Him.

I. He Allows Troubles to Come

A. The hedge of thorns principle

Vs 2:6

- We must understand that there are consequences to our actions.

- How we live affects the most important people around us.

Illus – We are writing our funeral right now. The funeral where the pastor kept saying good when everyone knew it wasn't so. Finally, his wife had enough...

- The “Hedge of Thorns” is God's grace in attempting to restrain us from our sin.

Proverbs 22:5, “Thorns *and* snares are in the way of the perverse; he who guards himself will be far from them.”

- **There is a wrestling match with God when there is a “Hedge of Thorns” in place.**
- Woe to us when God no longer is willing to wrestle with us!!

B. They will come trembling to the Lord

Vs 3:5

- Out of the troubles will come humility so that in the end there is a seeking after God.
- **They will come trembling because they have a new respect for God and His Word.**

C. In affliction they will earnestly seek God

Vs 5:15

- Verse 7b; “Then she will say, I will go back to my first husband, it was better for me then than now.”

Illus – The Prodigal son in Luke 15; He finally came to his senses.

II Chronicles 33:10-15 Evil Manasseh returns to the Lord

II. God Will Allure Us Back

Vs 2:14

- A. He will speak kindly to us
- He speaks to our hearts through the Holy Spirit wooing us back to Himself.
 - This is one of the most wonderful things that shows the greatness of God's love for us.

Romans 2:4, “Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

- B. The Valley of Achor is a door of hope
- The Valley of Achor means, “Valley of Trouble.”

Illus – Achor sinned when Israel was taking Jericho by taking things that were banned. Joshua said to him, “Why have you troubled Israel? Now God will trouble you.”

- Israel will return to Israel through the Valley of Trouble and will remember. It will become to them a door of hope.

Isaiah 65:10, “And Sharon will be a pasture land for flocks and the Valley of Achor a resting place for herds, for My people who seek me.”

- C. “She will sing as in the days of her youth.”
- When Israel returns back to the land of promise, they will remember the first time they entered the land.
 - **Verse 15b, “As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.”**

Jeremiah 2:2, “I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth, the love of your betrothals, your following after Me in the wilderness...”

Message to the church in Ephesus, “Return to your first love.”

III. His is an Everlasting Love

- A. “You will call Me ‘Ishi’”
- A Hebrew word for “husband.”
 - **“I will betroth you to Me forever.”**
 - **God considered Himself the husband of Israel since the days He took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt.**

Isaiah 54:5, “For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the LORD of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel Who is called the God of all the earth.”

c Is 6:3; 11:9; 65:16

B. “No longer will you call Me ‘Baali’”

- This is the word for “Master.”
- But it was also a word which contained the word, “Baal,” and God wanted this removed from their vocabulary.

C. In His love He will pour out blessing

- Verse 21, **“It will come about in that day that I will respond.”**
- And He will cause the heavens to respond (meaning that it will rain.)

- **This will set up a series of events that will end with their great blessing.**

Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

Conclusion

One of the most wonderful things about God is that His love knows no limits. He loves with an everlasting love.
