

Hosea pt. 1

Introduction:

- My first introduction the minor Prophets
 - Bible reading plan
 - More than an easy checklist
 - A quick stop
 - Inspired word of God
 - Preserved for a reason
- Different genre = We will be doing these sermons a little different
 - More historical background
 - Looking at sections and highlighting verses
 - Main message of the book and look at a passage that reflects that
 - Sometimes one week sometimes multiple
 - Based on the time needed to fully explore the main message of the text
 - What was the message to the original audience?
 - Why is it important for us today?

Transition: As we begin our next sermon series, “not so minor prophets” we will first spend two weeks looking at Hosea. Over these two week we will see Hosea was a prophet who saw the heart of God in an unexpected way and preached judgment and ultimately restoration to the nation of Israel.

Lets pray and then dive into the text

Hosea 1:1

The word of the LORD which came to Hosea the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

- Setting
 - Prophet
 - Hosea 750BC-722BC Israel taken over by the Assyrians
 - Joshua=salvation
 - Divided Kingdom
 - Israel in the North
 - Judah in the South
 - Hosea mostly to Israel
 - Both in mind
 - Influential according to editor notes
 - Assyrians
 - Brutal Empire
 - Attacking the nations surrounding the Northern Kingdom of Israel
 - Under the rule of Jeroboam the II
 - Economic boom
 - Moral and Spiritual Decay
 - Get more into that later

Transition: It's in the last days before Assyria would rise up and ravage Israel that God called Hosea to be His messenger to the people.

Hosea 1:2

² *When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD."*

- God chooses Hosea not only to speak out his message to Israel but also to live out an example of God's relationship with Israel.
- God wants Hosea
 - To marry a woman of harlotry
 - Not necessarily prostitution
 - Unfaithful
 - Promiscuous
 - Recent Debate
 - Effectiveness of this lived out message
 - Have children of harlotry
 - Some debate
 - She will bear children that were not conceived by Hosea but which he will take as his own.
- People will look...
 - Astonished
 - Confused
 - Even call him a fool
- In the same way that Hosea's wife will betray and rebel against Hosea Israel has done the same to God

Transition: A common prayer is Lord give me your heart, help me see people the way you see them and love them the way You love them. Perhaps Hosea when he started to feel called to be a messenger for God prayed such a prayer. Maybe he knelt down at night and asked God to let him glimpse God's love for Israel. Whether he did or not God gave it to him. God gave Hosea a glimpse into his heart and we too can glimpse the way God's heart breaks at Israel's betrayal as we study the words of Hosea...

Hosea 1:3-5

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. ⁴ And the LORD said to him, "Name him Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will [Ⓢ]punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵ On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

- Hosea obeys God and marries Gomer
 - First Child
 - Prophetic names
 - Jezreel
 - Many layers of meaning
 - Prophecies of their time
 - And place
 - Sounds close to Israel
 - Scatter or Sow
 - Grass seed
 - Punish the house of Jehu
 - Jeraboam the 2nd
 - Bloodshed
 - Jehu came to power with intense bloodshed
 - Was supposed to drive out the worshipers of Baal
 - Substituted them with other idols
 - All happened at the valley of Jezreel
 - Foretelling the fall of Israel

Transition: Gomer will go one to bear two more children and the Lord again will give them prophetic names.

Hosea 1:6-9

⁶ Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them. ⁷ But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the LORD their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses or horsemen."

⁸ When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to a son. ⁹ And the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God."

- Two more children
 - Subtle difference
 - "Bore him" a son
 - conceived and gave birth
 - not Hosea's children
- Lo-ruhamah
 - No compassion, no pity
 - God will deliver Judah (the southern kingdom)
 - Although there sins will soon over take them 586BC
 - But Israel will be destroyed
- Lo-Ammi
 - Not my people
 - They had abandoned God
 - God never fully abandons them but he removes his special protection.
- Hope for the kids sake that they would not be primarily called by these names
 - Last days of Israel
 - Judgment and destruction is coming soon
 - Extreme measures to grab their attention

Transition: We have ask why is God using such extreme measures to get Israel's attention? What had Israel done that was so wicked, how had they fallen so far into evil that God not only would bring judgment but actually destruction?

To find that out we will have to move to chapter 2:5-13

Hosea 2:5-8

*“For their mother has played the harlot;
She who conceived them has acted shamefully.*

For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers,

Who give me my bread and my water,

My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.’

6 “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns,

And I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths.

7 “She will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them;

And she will seek them, but will not find them.

Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my first husband,

For it was better for me then than now!’

8 “For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine and the oil, And lavished on her silver and gold, Which they used for Baal.

- Gomer is symbolic for Israel
 - So when it says their mother= the nation of Israel
- Israel struggled with idolatry for a long time
 - As their wealth increased so did their idolatry
- God was the one who was providing for them
 - Keeping them safe
- They chased after other gods
 - In the same way Gomer chased after other men
- God has acted as a good husband to Israel
 - Loved her, food, clothing, shelter
 - Israel does not recognize God as the good husband he is
 - Attributes the gifts of God to idols
 - Uses their wealth and safety to worship other gods

Transition: God has tried to call them back, tried to remind them. But they have so twisted the truth, so perverted the worship of God and mixed and replaced it with idolatry that he only has one more option. Remove the benefits and protection of their status as God’s people so they will once again recognize who it is they are to love and worship.

Hosea goes on to describe this in the next verses...

Hosea 2:9-10

*“Therefore, I will take back My grain at harvest time
And My new wine in its season.
I will also take away My wool and My flax
Given to cover her nakedness.
10 “And then I will uncover her lewdness
In the sight of her lovers,
And no one will rescue her out of My hand.*

- Removing his protection and provision
- Kids in the cold
 - Obviously a less severe example but the concept is the same
- Israel has fallen so far into sin so far into death and depravity that God is going to stopping putting their coats on for them and let them experience the consequences of their rebellion

Transition: but its not just material comforts that Israel has twisted and its not just physical things that God is going to take away...

Hosea 2:11-12

*"I will also put an end to all her gaiety,
Her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths
And all her festal assemblies.
12 "I will destroy her vines and fig trees,
Of which she said, 'These are my wages
Which my lovers have given me.'
And I will make them a forest,
And the beasts of the field will devour them.*

- Israel was still offering sacrifices
 - Celebrating holy days
 - Going through the motions of worshiping God
 - Blended and neglected
- You have heard me say
 - Rituals are beneficial...
 - Good to do Bible time, have a rhythm of prayer, recognize special days
 - Doing physical things to worship God helps us experience the glory and presence of God with our whole being
 - But if we do the motions and forget the God we are worshiping
 - That physical side of worship becomes a corpse
- God is going to make it clear that life is not found in the rituals, or the sacrifices, but life is only found in a relationship with God and in order to do that he is going to strip them of the religious corpse that surrounds them.

Transition:

I read once that a pastor instructed his staff to ensure that after every Sunday people left feeling better about themselves than when they came in. On the face that doesn't sound so bad, but if we keep that in mind when we read the Bible we will see that if we always want to end on a happy note or leave feeling good we will be neglecting large portions of God's word. If we are never convicted, made uncomfortable, or challenged by a sermon then we can be sure we are not preaching the whole Bible.

We are going to end with verse 13 for today. Not a super happy place to end but I think it's important to for this first week focus on the warning that God is giving to Israel and why that's important for us today.

Hosea 2:13

*13 "I will punish her for the days of the Baals
When she used to offer sacrifices to them
And adorn herself with her earrings and jewelry,
And follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me," declares the Lord.*

- The true depth of Israel's wickedness and the wickedness of Idolatry is summed up in this last line
 - So she forgot Me
- Idols
 - Sports
 - Cell phones
 - Celebrities
 - Often times more about poor time management than actual idolatry
 - I understand why people use the language of idolatry
 - But this cheapens the truth wickedness of idolatry
- What concerns me much more is when people say things like
 - Happiness, authenticity, religiosity, achievement, education, money
 - Where do you find life? What the answer to the questions and problems plaguing our world.
 - If only...
- Benefits of a relationship with God
- Idolatry creeps in when anything other than God becomes the answers
 - Gomer said let me chase after other lovers
 - Israel said let me chase after other gods
 - Protection, provision, and joy
- Years and generations

Conclusion:

Israel had betrayed God and chased after idols because they mistook the blessings of God for gifts from idols or for God himself. They chased after the comforts of wealth, and pleasure, and religious experience but forgot God. So after many attempts to call them back God is going to remove those comforts, he is going to strip them of his protection and peace so that they will once again remember that God is the one who deserves their love and loyalty and no one and nothing else.

As we dwell on Hosea's words to Israel we need to ask ourselves. Are we forgetting God, are there ways that we have mistaken the benefits of a relationship with God for God himself?

What threatens to take God's throne in our life what threatens to steal our heart and seduce us into forgetting God?

Lets pray.