

## Hosea pt. 2

**Introduction:** Last we talked about how God instructs Hosea not only to speak his message to the people of Israel but also to give a living sermon by going and marrying and raising a family with an unfaithful wife named Gomer. And what God is trying to communicate to the Israelites both with what Hosea says and with his life is that in the same way that Gomer betrayed Hosea over and over again when she deserts her family and her husband Israel has continually deserted God when they turn away from him and commit idolatry.

One of the issues when we study passages like this and try to apply it to our lives today is that we don't commit idolatry in the same in the western world. Some people do break out a physical idol and worship it but its not a common occurrence in most western cultures. But idolatry has not gone away its just that instead of worshiping physical idols we worship ideologies and agendas. And when we try to explain this as a church we often times go wrong in one of two ways either we point to almost everything and call it idolatry and therefore weaken its meaning or we make idolatry so abstract that we don't recognize it when it happens. And its important to recognize it early because idolatry doesn't just happen one day it creeps in little by little until before we know it we have forgotten God.

As we go through Hosea 2 we are going to try to understand how Idolatry crept into Israel so that hopefully by the end of today we will be better equipped to stop idolatry in our own lives, families, and communities before it seduces us into forgetting God.

So lets pray and then dive into the text.

## Hosea 2:1-2

*Rebuke your mother; rebuke her.  
For she is not my wife and I am not her husband.  
Let her remove the promiscuous look from her face  
and her adultery from between her breasts.*

- Gomer in place of Israel
- God is calling the people of Israel
  - Those who will hear the prophecy from Hosea and repent and turn back to God.
  - To call to repentance the nation and the people that formed them.
    - Difficult and painful
- Its not like all of Israel fully admitted they were committing idolatry and just owning it
  - As we will see they still offered sacrifices to God
  - They still celebrated the feasts
  - Twisted god
    - What we think and believe matters
    - Cults

**Transition:** But what if Israel doesn't answer God's call? What if they don't turn away from their idols and repent? Well Hosea gets into that in the next verses...

## Hosea 3-4

*<sup>3</sup> Otherwise, I will strip her naked  
and expose her as she was on the day of her birth.  
I will make her like a desert  
and like a parched land,  
and I will let her die of thirst.*

*<sup>4</sup> I will have no compassion on her children  
because they are the children of promiscuity.*

- If Israel does not turn away from their idols and turn back to God
  - Give them what their asking for
  - Give them what the idols will supply
  - He is going to remove His gifts and his protection from the nation of Israel
- Children the people of Israel will not
- When Idolatry creeps into a family, a community, a nation it doesn't just impact the one committing idolatry but it can filter through and lead many others into deception and death.

**Transition:** and in verses 5-6 Hosea talks about on of the main ways that idolatry crept into Israel...

## Hosea 2:5-6

*<sup>5</sup> Yes, their mother is promiscuous;  
she conceived them and acted shamefully.  
For she thought, "I will follow my lovers,  
the men who give me my food and water,  
my wool and flax, my oil and drink."*

*<sup>6</sup> Therefore, this is what I will do:  
I will block her way with thorns;  
I will enclose her with a wall,  
so that she cannot find her paths.*

- Hosea says that Idolatry crept into Israel when they started to look to idols to meet their needs rather than to God who can actually supply their needs.
- If we are reading carefully
  - We see that they were worshipping their statues and venerating their idols
  - But even more than the idols they were idolizing "My wants and needs my physical yearnings"
- Instead of seeing God as the end itself They say both God and their statues as just means to an end
  - Instead of worshiping and yearning for God they were truly worshiping and yearn for their physical desires
    - Concert ticket
- God was the ticket to getting satisfying their physical desires
- And when they felt like God didn't do enough they bought a different ticket
  - Anglican Minister
    - Celebrating the fact that people could find transcendence and fulfillment all different cultures and all different religions and how good it was that so many people were so spiritual.
    - Maybe he didn't realize it but that thought pattern idolizes fulfillment and forgets God
  - Moses Allah and Jesus are means to the end of fulfillment and transcendence
- Rather than fulfillment and transcendence being results of giving God the love and worship and glory he deserves
  - survivalist vs fire enthusiast

**Transition:** Idolatry crept into Israel when they idolized their physical desires and chased after whoever they thought could do that the best. Idolatry still creeps in when we see God as a ticket as a means to an end to achieve happiness or fulfillment or transcendence or whatever rather than recognizing that God is the end and those good things are just benefits of God's presence.

So how did idolatry continue to creep in on Israel we will see in verses 7-8...

## Hosea 2:7-8

<sup>7</sup> *She will pursue her lovers but not catch them;  
she will look for them but not find them.*

*Then she will think,  
“I will go back to my former husband,  
for then it was better for me than now.”*

<sup>8</sup> *She does not recognize  
that it is I who gave her the grain,  
the new wine, and the fresh oil.  
I lavished silver and gold on her  
which they used for Baal.*

- Israel is going back and forth between God and their idols looking to see who provides the best
  - And So God proves His power and his love “I lavished silver and gold on her”
  - But Israel refuses to recognize God
    - But of course they couldn’t recognize God because they aren’t looking to him in the first place they are looking past him at their true desire, their true idol their, physical desires
  - The Devil doesn’t care if you give him glory
    - As long as he can keep your focus off God.
    - The more we strive for and look for other things other than God it become easier and easier not to recognize him.
- Pew research did a survey in 2018 asking Americans what gave life the most meaning
  - Open-ended questions
    - Forced answer: Cat and your nieces and your grandparents
  - Family
  - Career
  - Money
    - Same study in 2021 but across 17 “advanced economies” several countries
      - Italy equal number said career/family
        - Faith 15<sup>th</sup> right after retirements and right before pets.
  - Now its difficult to imagine that that many people really worship their work or their wealth
    - But they definitely could be idolizing
      - The security
      - Feeling of accomplishment
      - Feeling of importance
  - And family is a very meaningful thing but even family if its elevated to the highest importance can become just as destructive an idol

- In America and across the world we may not have as many statues around the corner with fervent worshipers offering sacrifices
  - Israel idolized their physical desires and while our idols may be different one thing is very clear for many people God is either not recognized at all or He is seen as a means to the end of reaching something of reaching fulfillment, or wealth, or happiness of satisfaction.

**Transition:** So how does God respond to Israel's idolatry? He gives them exactly what they idols they so love can provide...

## Hosea 2:9-10

<sup>9</sup> *Therefore, I will take back my grain in its time  
and my new wine in its season;  
I will take away my wool and linen,  
which were to cover her nakedness.*

<sup>10</sup> *Now I will expose her shame  
in the sight of her lovers,  
and no one will rescue her from my power.*

<sup>11</sup> *I will put an end to all her celebrations:  
her feasts, New Moons, and Sabbaths—  
all her festivals.*

<sup>12</sup> *I will devastate her vines and fig trees.  
She thinks that these are her wages  
that her lovers have given her.  
I will turn them into a thicket,  
and the wild animals will eat them.*

- God is going to remove all of his gifts all of the benefits of being His people and he being their God
- 12 “She thinks that these are her wages that her lovers have given her”
  - God is going to remove all of his blessings and of his provision and leave them with just what Israel’s idols can provide.
- One of the most interesting things in this list is the Jewish celebrations
  - The ones that God had ordained
  - Idolatry crept in to every corner of their life
    - Still going through the motions
    - Still acting like and deceiving themselves into thinking that they were worshiping God
    - But their idea of God and what they were really worshiping and become so twisted and perverted that its even necessary for God to remove the celebrations he ordained from their midst.

**Transition:** Idolatry crept into Israel when they began to look past God and idolized their physical desires. Then they went back and forth between Baal and God to whoever they thought so meet their physical desire the most. Idolatry corrupted their hearts and minds so much that when God showered them with gifts to win them back and show them His love they didn’t even recognize that the gifts were from him and finally in verse 13 we see what happened when idolatry was no longer creeping in but holding them captive...

## **Hosea 2:13**

*<sup>13</sup> And I will punish her for the days of the Baals,  
to which she burned incense.  
She put on her rings and her jewelry  
and followed her lovers,  
but she forgot me.*

*This is the LORD's declaration.*

### **Conclusion:**

Next week we will end our time in Hosea and look at God's faithfulness, unconditional love, and plan to win Israel back. But for now its good for us to consider how idolatry crept into the nation of Israel twisted and corrupted the idea of God and ultimately caused the people to forget God.

Its necessary for us to sit and ponder this because we live in a world where the idols of achievement, fulfillment, happiness, and countless others have stolen the throne that belongs only to God.

One of my pastor friends about a year ago posted a reflection on his sermon in which he said that Coffee had become an idol maybe for some people it has but for most people coffee is just something we drink a little too much of.

If we pretend like idolatry is only a threat to those who bow to statues or we minimize it to spending too much time on your phone or drinking coffee then we will remain blind and defenseless to the way that idolatry creeps and destroys people, families, communities and nations.

True faith in God, Biblical faith in God loves and worships God for the pure and simple reason that He is God He deserves all our worship. He is not the means to an end. He is not a ticket to happiness or fulfillment. He is the Alpha and the Omega the first and the last He is the beginning and the end. Idolatry is when anything else threatens to become that end. Idolatry is when God becomes a means to achieving any other purpose or goal.

We were created to live and worship God and when we live as we were created to live we will experience the benefits of being in a relationship with God. But we never worship God for the benefits we worship Him because he is more than worthy of all our praise.

Lets pray.