

Handouts

Notes & Questions



Why do you think God has you go through hard times?

Is it because God doesn't love you?

Is it because He's trying to teach you something?

Or is it another reason?

In today's lesson, I've challenging and not always easy answers for you in

Hosea, the Prophet, how God uses human lives as lessons

Be sure yours is a good one

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Where we are

- Just before Hosea appears, God sent the prophet Amos to condemn sins of Israel.
- He preached forceful, harsh messages for about 3 years.
- With Hosea God gives his people a similar message, but in a very different way, where his overall message is of God's incredible love to His people, no matter how badly they treated him.
- The book is an excellent rebuttal to those who say that the Old Testament God is one of vengeance and hurtful actions.

Summary of Hosea, details follow

- Not only did he preach God's love, ***but Hosea lived it.***
- He was told to marry a woman who would be unfaithful to him.
- He obeyed God.
- She ran away—he went after her and bought her from the slave market.
- His love and mercy to her used as a picture of God's love for Israel & us.
- I wanted you to see the overall picture and keep in mind as we study, that Hosea's life is not unusual in that....

God often uses people to teach His lessons

- We've seen that already in our earliest lesson on Genesis and Job.
- God uses the life of Job as a demonstration to Satan and the hosts of heaven that He could be trusted in the most difficult of circumstances.
- We saw how the Children of Israel were a witness to God's power to their world as God brought them out of Egypt.
- The pagan inhabitants of the land knew throughout their history that it was God who gave Israel their victories.

And He may use you in this way also

- Before we get into the lesson, keep this reality in mind—this isn't just about a story far, far away.
- It is fair to assume that though your life may not have the influence of the characters in the Bible,
- At the same time, you have an audience watching, both earthly and heavenly, observing, evaluating how you trust God, especially how will you believe in Him when things become difficult.
- ***And they always will. When the hard times come, remember—***

An eternal perspective is essential

- ***This life is not all there is.***
- Your best life, your greatest joys, your most complete love and fulfillment are coming.
- And all that happens to you here is preparation, refining for it.

- When trials and tests happen, you may have an idea why, what you are to learn, or they may be for a reason known only to God that you will not understand and simply need to trust Him for.

This is why you must be SO careful of many contemporary views of the Christian life

- ***The Christian life IN THIS WORLD is NOT a guarantee that all will go well and happy and that you will be free of pain and suffering.***
- Jesus, Paul, and the majority of Christians throughout history verify the reality of godly people enduring great suffering.
- If we don't understand that—and many do not today.
- We won't be able to spot false gospels when they come, such as

Some of the false teaching to watch out for:

- **The Prosperity Gospel**—where all your financial problems will fade, especially if you give a lot.
- **The God as Cheerleader, the Life-coach Gospel**, “where sadness, not sin, depression, not depravity is your problem” where the gospel is all about you becoming a better YOU. Lots of hype, loud emotional, pep talk preaching with little Biblical content is characteristic of this.
- **The Deconstructed Gospel**—where you decide what parts of the Bible and God's teaching have meaning for YOU, and you decide the truth of it, in reality often a pseudo-intellectual approach as often people don't know what they are talking about.
- **The Celebrity Gospel**—where its truth is based on the fame of those believing it without a commitment to a changed life—as an example, the Story of Mickey Cohen, the gangster who after a Billy Graham Crusade “asked Jesus into his life,” but didn't change at all.
- Later when challenged about it, he said that he knew of “Christian actors and athletes, models and other famous people who said they were Christian and lived like they always had. He didn't know why he couldn't continue to be a Christian gangster.”
- We can laugh, but it really isn't funny as many people think that though they might not be gangsters, they can do whatever they want because of teachings out there that include...

Ones whose primary characteristics are teachings that

- Do not focus on God's Word and are not true to it as a WHOLE—though some bits and pieces are useful.
- They pick and choose passages (if at all), often out of context, to prove a point, but their point is primary, it is the starting place, and the passages are supportive.
- They don't start with scripture and allow the scripture to guide their teaching (which is what I pray to do in Bible805 and these lessons)—the difference between *exegesis and eisegesis*.
- **What all these have in common in a focus on happiness and success according to ME in this world.**
- They ignore the reality of our total depravity and sinfulness before God, the extraordinary gift of salvation, and that upon accepting that gift, Jesus expects us to live as his disciples—that is part of the package as we are reminded in**The Great Commission**
- Matt. 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰**and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.**

- The expectation that teachers will teach “everything Jesus commanded” so that we will “obey everything commanded” has been an expectation from the time of Hosea and it hasn’t changed today.
- Let’s now look at how Hosea did it....

Hosea’s story begins

- Hosea’s background is unknown, possibly he was a priest.
- God told him what to do and what would happen...
- Hos. 2:² *When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife **this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD.**”³ So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. ⁴ Then the LORD said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. ⁵ In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”*

Continues—an overview

- Hos 1:⁶ *Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, “Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means “not loved”), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. ⁷ **Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the LORD their God, will save them.**”⁸ After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. ⁹ Then the LORD said, “Call him Lo-Ammi (which means “not my people”), for you are not my people, and I am not your God.*
- **But even as he begins, mercy prophesied after judgement:**
- ¹⁰ *“Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God.’ ¹¹ The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.*

Because God had a covenant with Israel, he had to enforce punishments

- **Hos. 7: 1 because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law. . . .8:7**
- **“They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.”**
- Judgement would come, though the people were given decades of preaching messages for them to repent—**he preached for 60 years**—from an earthly view, a failure in many ways.
- And more than messages, he used Hosea’s life to illustrate his love.
- Through the powerful image of a wronged husband, who loves his wife even though she betrayed him, he continues to love her, to go after her, God showed His love to the people again and again.

A historical reality and a prophetic picture

- Hosea’s love extended even to the point of buying his wife out of slavery when her lovers discarded her.
- Not only did this show the depths of God’s love—remember these are the people who promised to follow God after all He did again and again to rescue them in the time of Judges.
- Who promised to follow God after Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal.
- But it was also a picture of the coming Messiah who would buy back

fallen humanity from the slave market of sin.

An additional reason for their failures

- Lack of teaching, failure of priests and prophets—
My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. “Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; The more priests there were, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their glorious God for something disgraceful. They feed on the sins of my people” Hosea 4: 6-7
- This is so serious and sadly prevalent today—refer back to the false gospels and related deceptions today.
- ***Ultimately it is OUR personal responsibility to take in adequate Bible content today, church time so limited in the best of situations.***
- Many resources on Bible805.com—in many formats, videos, podcasts, short social media challenges—***but you need to read your Bible and the best way is chronologically—Bible805 has reading plans.***

As the book continues

- About midway through, the story of the relationship between Gomer and Hosea ends. We don’t know what becomes of them or their children.
- Those will be amazing stories in heaven, but
- The rest of the book is a series of sermons to Israel.
- Again, and again the theme of God’s love and how Israel rejected it—to their harm— is shown.

Israel reminded of their history

- Hosea 11:1-3 New International Version (NIV)
- *11:1 “When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
2 But the more they were called,
the more they went away from me.
They sacrificed to the Baals
and they burned incense to images.
3 It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
taking them by the arms;
but they did not realize
it was I who healed them.*
- How easily we forget what God does for us and that he does ALL for us—remind yourself—of your SALVATION and all else!

Because He was their God, they were reminded how to live...

- Hosea 12:6 New International Version (NIV)
- ***6 But you must return to your God;
maintain love and justice,
and wait for your God always.***
- Remember in Amos the expansive meaning of the term and how it involves those less fortunate
- ***The Bible makes social justice a mandate of faith and a fundamental expression of Christian discipleship. Social justice has its biblical roots in a triune God who time and time again shows his love and compassion for the weak, the vulnerable, the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the disinherited.*** Quote from World Vision

Along with denying justice to others, people often fall prey to the deceit of wealth

- Hosea 13: 6 ***When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me. . . .***

- Be careful when you have a lot, it's easy to forget God and as he goes on to say—
- **Hosea 14: *Your sins have been your downfall***
- Money, possessions, prosperity are never the source of security they promise to be.
- Sin never delivers what it promises.
- In reality, Romans 6:23—wages of sin-death.

Hosea however, as all the prophets do, looks beyond judgment to restoration

- *Hos. 2:16 "In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.'*
¹⁷ *I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. . . .¹⁹ I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.
²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.*
- . . . *I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.'*
I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

Not only for them, but also

- Paul uses this passage to show God's ultimate love and mercy to Israel, but to the Gentiles as well—
- *Romans 9:22* *What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As he says in Hosea:*
"I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one,"
²⁶ *and, "In the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'"*

The New Testament also shows how God uses our lives to teach others, as He did Hosea's in his day

- **Paul again:** *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 2 Cor. 1:3-11*
- **As difficult as it is for the person who is the living lesson—**
- **People who have suffered have far more credibility than those who haven't in sharing how God helps them.**

God will use you in difficult ways, don't be surprised, as it says...

- I Peter 4:12, *Beloved, think it not strange when you are tried by fire (which is done to prove you) as though some strange thing happened unto you.*

- ***Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner. Life will often be unjustly hard. (MSG)***
- What will our response to it?
- What will we reflect? Anger? Resentment?
- Or Trust? Part of the job description of being a representative of the Lord is to trust Him and praise Him before the world.

Final applications, when we are called to be Hosea

- ^{1 Peter 2:11} *Dear friends, I urge you, . . .it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. . . . if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.²² "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

Jesus suffered many things he didn't deserve

- And we are called to do the same thing, remember—
- *"In this world you will have tribulations...."* He told us.
- Hosea (and Job) reminds us that trials they may not a result of sin on your part or unbelief.
- Quite the contrary, God may be greatly honoring you and using you as a lesson of trusting Him to those around you.
- It may not get better in this life.
- But someday it will.
- Someday every moment you trusted and affirmed that He is a good God, no matter what sadness you live in day after day—it will be worth it.

One more thing about Hosea

- Names of great importance in the Bible.
- Hoshea, Hosea, is an imperative which means: 'God, Save!' (Bring Salvation).
- The book illustrates the need for salvation and then in the New Testament, the answer comes in the name of another, a variation of the name Hosea:
- Yeshua, Jesus, means: 'God is salvation.'
<https://hebrew.jerusalemprayerteam.org/yeshua-jesus-joshua-hosea/>
- With Him as our salvation, and with us as His disciples, as His representatives let's remember –

This little poem....

***You are writing a gospel, A chapter each day,
By things that you do and the words that you say.
People read what you write, Distorted or true.
What is the gospel, according to you?***

- As Hosea's was, our life is a message—live it well to the glory of God and for the salvation of those around you!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Hosea, how God uses human lives as lessons

1. In our past lesson on Job, how did God use Job to teach Satan and the hosts of heaven a lesson?
2. What does it mean to have an eternal perspective and why is this so important?
3. Which of the false teachings talked about (the Prosperity Gospel, the God as Cheerleader, Life-coach Gospel, the Deconstructed Gospel or the Celebrity Gospel) do you think is most dangerous and why?
4. What are ways false teachers in our day and in Hosea's day distorted God's messages? How can we be aware of them and resist falling victim to them?
5. How did Hosea's relationship with his wife Gomer reflect God's love for Israel? How does this help answer critics who think God one of vengeance and anger in the Old Testament?
6. APPLICATION—How does God use people today to be a reflection of his message? What are some ways your life can be a good reflection of the true gospel message?