

**Sermon Series:** Minor Prophets

**Sermon title:** Book of Hosea

**Scripture Reading:** Hosea 1:1-3

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Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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Today we begin a new series in the Minor Prophets. This autumn we are going to take 12 Sundays and do an overview of each Minor Prophet each week.

I would encourage you to be reading through the Minor Prophets on your own as we go through this very important part of the Bible.

As we begin, let me give some important things to remember as we study these books.

1. **“Minor” doesn’t mean lesser.** It just means these books are smaller in length than the larger books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, etc.
2. **The time period** of the prophets in the Old Testament **is pretty small.** It’s a period of about 300 years. From 8th century to 5th century BC.
3. The prophets were more *reminders than they were foretellers* of the future. **They reminded Israel of the old covenant, while pointing them to the new covenant and Christ.**

4. Be careful trying to apply the meanings of their prophecies to our time today. **Most of their prophecies were of their near future** and not 9/11 or the current trade war or something like that.

Let's pray together as we begin.

### **Have you ever forgotten something?**

- What's the worst thing you have ever forgotten?
- Maybe your wife's birthday?
- Perhaps you've forgotten a kid somewhere?
- Forgotten to pay a bill.
- Forgotten to say your prayers.
- Maybe you're like a pastor that I used to work for...he forgot to preach someone's funeral. He was playing golf and they were standing around the casket wondering where he was.

Well, what's the worst thing you could possibly forget?

GOD! GOD! Forgetting God!

Being so busy, caught up in all kinds of things that you forget GOD! And what's worse than forgetting God is forsaking him deliberately.

That's exactly what we have going on in Northern Israel about 750 years before Christ. The kingdom of Israel had been split in two, with most of the tribes being in the North.

They were rich. They had a good relationship with mighty Assyria to their east. They had great feasts and expensive perfumes and luxury goods and fine clothes.

But something was wrong. What was it?

**Their marriage to God.** Their union or covenant with God. Everything was going fine but the nation was having marriage troubles.

Let's begin to try and understand God's message to us through Hosea by first looking at:

## **I. HOSEA'S MARRIAGE**

In the beginning, God calls this man, not to speak a message but to get married and to get married for a purpose. Hosea would act out or dramatize in his own marriage what God was experiencing with his bride, Israel.

So, the book starts out in 1:2 by saying....**The LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD. So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.”**

And in chapter 3:1 again it says, **“Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.”**

Now, you may think it is quite weird for God to do this, to ask a man to marry a prostitute. But the evidence suggests that Gomer was not a *literal* prostitute in chapter 1.

She is a *spiritual* prostitute just as the whole nation is in *spiritual* prostitution. She is a true daughter of idolatrous Israel; a daughter of her generation.

But.. in chapter 3 it is clear that at some point, after Hosea and Gomer were married..she fell into sin, turned away from Hosea, forgot him and became united with others.

The important point is not the *minute* details of their marriage but what it represents.

*Just as Gomer has forgotten Hosea and ran off with another man...the nation of Israel has forgotten her Husband and ran off with another god.*

So, the prophet's marriage is a picture but the prophet also has a message from God.

## **II. HOSEA'S MESSAGE**

This Husband, GOD, isn't happy. He is Jealous. He is offended. We might say it this way; God decides to separate from her. Not a divorce but a separation.

Israel deserves judgment and God is perfectly right to judge them for breaking their covenant relationship.

- Israel had forsaken God. 1:2, 9:1, 13:6
- Worshipped Baal 2:8, 9:10, 10:5
- Lived in lavish extravagance 2:11-13, 8:14, 13:6
- Swearing, lying, murder, stealing, bloodshed 4:2
- Forgot the law of God 4:6, 8:1

- Love wine 4:10
- Their repentance is fluff! 6:1-4, 10:4
- Transgressed the covenant 6:7, 8:1
- Turned to other nations for help instead of God 7:11
- And God's word is so foreign to them, that they wouldn't even recognize it. 8:12

Hosea's message is firstly one of **judgment**. Israel in the short term will experience *separation* or exile and destruction for their behavior. We see this message all over the book of Hosea.

**Chapter 1:9** "You are not my people and I am not your God."

**Chapter 2:13** "I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned offerings to them and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers and forgot me, declares the LORD."

**Chapter 4** is an entire chapter where God accuses Israel of their sin and says things like, "I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

So God tells them for their behavior that he will send them to Assyria. They shall eat unclean food there. Their idols that they love, he will give to the king of Assyria as a gift.

Hosea's message is firstly one of judgment but it is also mixed with a message of **mercy, grace and hope**.

The book of Hosea shifts from messages of judgment to messages of deliverance.

**Chapter 1:10-** right after he says 'I am not your God' it says, 'Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people' it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God."

**Chapter 2:13-** where it says that he will punish her for Baal worship...and forgot God....he says in verse 14 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor, a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. "And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord."And in that day I will answer, declares the Lord, I will answer the

heavens, and they shall answer the earth, and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'”

**Chapter 11-** God likens Israel to a prodigal son, whom he called out of Egypt and raised and cared for and taught to walk and fed him...only for the son to turn away from his Father.

So, what does the Father do? Look at chapter 11:8

How can I give you up, O Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, O Israel?  
How can I make you like Admah?  
How can I treat you like Zeboiim?  
My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.  
I will not execute my burning anger;  
I will not again destroy Ephraim;  
for I am God and not a man,  
the Holy One in your midst,  
and I will not come in wrath.  
They shall go after the Lord;  
he will roar like a lion;  
when he roars,  
his children shall come trembling from the west;  
they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt,  
and like doves from the land of Assyria,  
and I will return them to their homes, declares the Lord.

Look at this beautiful passage in chapter 3:1-3

“Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins. So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.”

You see, **Hosea’s marriage is Hosea’s message.**

Just as Hosea chases Gomer down and loves her, though she doesn’t love him and doesn’t deserve his mercy...just as he buys her back and won’t let her go....so God chases Israel and won’t let her go. Though Israel is unfaithful to their covenant, God is still faithful.

Hosea’s message to them is also a message to us.

We are all Israel.

We are all Gomer.

God is chasing some of you down today and pleading with you and speaking tenderly to you and saying, “Turn away from idols and give your life to your Maker, the one who has provided everything for you your whole life. Stop resisting me. Divorce your worthless idols and get married to me and you’ll be happy forevermore.

We are all idolaters. The heart of man is an idol factory.

**What is idolatry?**



New City Catechism #17 defines it this way:  
*Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the creator for our hope, happiness, significance and security.*

Tim Keller has some great quotes on Idolatry. These maybe helpful for us to examine ourselves.

*“Idolatry is anything in your life that is so central to your life that you can’t have a meaningful life if you lose it.”*

*“Anything you look at and in your heart of hearts you say to it...if I have that, then my life has value. If I lose that, I don’t know how I would live.”*

*“When you take a good thing and make it an ultimate thing, you’ve created an idol.”*

Fill in the blank....

**“If I just had \_\_\_\_\_, I would be happy.”**

**Hosea’s Marriage**..a picture of God’s love.

**Hosea’s Message**..a prophetic word of judgment and mercy.

So where does Hosea point Israel for deliverance?  
Where does he point us so that we can be rid of our idolatrous hearts? Shall we just try harder?

Hosea points to a new covenant, a new marriage on new terms and to a powerful deliverer who can do what we can’t do.

### **III. HOSEA'S MESSIAH-**

**Chapter 2:16** says,

“And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.

You see what it says? God says, “I WILL do it. I will remove. I will make for them a covenant. I will abolish. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and justice and steadfast love and mercy and faithfulness.

How did he do it? Through Jesus Christ.

**Jesus Christ is the groom who died for his bride; who bought his bride.**

He kept the covenant perfectly. He paid the price. He is the husband who rescued his wife, the church.

God made him who knew no sin to become sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God.

He himself bore our sins on his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds we are healed.

Let me ask you a question this morning.

**Who are you married to?**

Are you married to Jesus Christ or are you married to another?

Married to Buddha? Married to a good reputation?

Married to riches? Married to education?

Married to the perfect life? Married to your job?

**Divorce all your idols and come and be faithfully and happily married to God.**

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Christian, you're married to Jesus Christ!

How's your marriage doing?

Are you cheating on Jesus with somebody else?

Been talking to another? Been looking at another?

Some little god caught your eye or gotten your affection?

Cut off the relationship today. Sever the relationship.

**Be fully devoted to your husband, Jesus Christ.**