

The Book of Hosea  
January 7, 2018

Sermon #1  
Reading: Hosea 1:1-2:1  
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## Of Faith and Disobedience

### Salvation For The Faithful

This morning will be a group effort. You will need to have your Bible open to Hosea. As I researched the many Hebrew names found in the Book of Hosea and others I have discovered they may not be pronounced as I have commonly heard. I will put them up on the screen and you can help me pronounce them correctly. As many of you are aware one of my spiritual gifts is the ability to butcher languages. While we learn what God is teaching us this morning - we will also have some fun. So together we will resolve how to say these names – at least how to say them for this morning.

Hosea's (ho·shay·ah) name means “Salvation” or “Deliverance” and indeed Hosea's story contains these themes. This book was written about 750 B.C. and is first in the order of the Minor Prophets found in the Bible even though it was not the first to be written, but it is first in regards to the message Hosea delivers. For Christians the greatest story in the Bible is the incarnation, life, suffering, death and resurrection of the Messiah Jesus Christ. I believe another great story is found in the Book of Hosea with its anticipation of the coming story of Jesus Christ.

Hosea was a preacher and prophet during the reigns of four successive kings of Judah (yeh·hoo·daw), the oldest and southern kingdom of the two Jewish states that made up Israel (yis·raw·ale). Open your Bible to Hosea and read with me beginning in verse 1, “The word of the LORD (yeh·ho·vaw) meaning “the existing One” that came to Hosea (ho·shay·ah), the son of Beerī (be·ay·ree), in the days of Uzziah (ooz·zee·yaw), Jotham (yo·thawm), Ahaz (aw·khawz), and Hezekiah (yekh·iz·kee·yaw), kings of Judah (yeh·hoo·daw), and in the days of Jeroboam (yaw·rob·awm) the son of

**Joash (yo-awsh), king of Israel (yis-raw-ale).**” Hosea (ho-shay-ah) was the only prophet of his time to reside in the northern kingdom. At the same time as Hosea, God called the prophets **Isaiah (yesh-ah-yaw)** and **Amos (aw-moce)** in the southern kingdom of Judah (yeh-hoo-daw).

God commissioned Hosea (ho-shay-ah) to reveal the widespread apostasy and corruption in the northern kingdom and to exhort his fellow countrymen to repent and return to God. Hosea’s story of his own family shows God’s love for Israel and this story is true of America today and of the world, as I will unfold this morning. Hosea’s ministry must have spanned 50 to 60 years, yet we know only the story of his family, which is the prophecy.

God came to Hosea (ho-shay-ah) and commanded he take on a task that would be most difficult. God said to Hosea in verse 2, **“Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD (yeh-ho-vaw).”** God was saying Hosea your marriage will be symbolic and an object lesson to Israel (yis-raw-ale). The name God gave to this nation means, “God prevails”. God says to Hosea in your marriage you will be the faithful husband representing Me, God of all creation. This woman, your wife, will be an unfaithful bride representing my people. The reason this wife will be unfaithful is because this is the way my people have acted and are acting in the spiritual marriage that I established with them. Hosea (ho-shay-ah) you are going to be faithful, because I am faithful to Israel even though she dishonors my name.

### **Salvation For The Unfaithful?**

At the beginning of the story Gomer (**go-mer**) meaning *“complete”* marries Hosea (ho-shay-ah) as a pure bride and completes Hosea as meant to be true of marriage. Over the next few years Gomer gives birth to three children. These children’s names suggest what will happen to Gomer for her unfaithfulness and what will

happen to Israel (yis·raw·ale) and I believe applies to the state of our own country today. When each child is born God intervenes and gives them names that are symbolic.

In verse 3 God tells us the first son born is Hosea's (ho·shay·ah) and God names him Jezreel (yiz·reh·ale) meaning "scattered". This name is so close in spelling and sound of Israel (yis·raw·ale) meaning remember "God preserves." Some think the name of this child may have been recorded wrongly. However, God indeed meant the child's name to be Jezreel and shows God's coming judgment that Israel will be scattered from the promised land throughout the world for their unfaithfulness. Which we know through history came true. For Israel and for all who are unfaithful to God they will never be satisfied and the pleasures of this world will turn to dust as they thirst and their thirst will not be quenched – only God brings living water through Jesus Christ.

Some time later a second child is born, but it does not appear to be Hosea's (ho·shay·ah). Unlike in verse 3, which says, "bore him a son" verse 6 says Gomer "bore a daughter." However, even though Gomer has been unfaithful Hosea does not seek a divorce though he had scriptural grounds. The daughter is named *Lo-Ruhama*, a compound of two Hebrew words. "Lo" meaning "no" and "Ruhama" meaning "mercy." God is saying, because of the growing sins of his people there will come a time when He will have no mercy for them. This is not strange for God to judge the people of Israel. God is merciful, long-suffering and his love endures forever. But when a nation or tribe or people or an individual insists on life on their own terms and perseveres in their sins, a time comes when out of righteous love God will withdraw and abandon these to their own folly. His judgment is mercy for it shows the depth of their sins and provokes the Jews and people today to turn back to God and shows them their desperate need to turn to

God through the loving grace of Jesus. Was it not the greatest of mercies that Jesus took the world's sins upon himself on the cross?

A third child is born, a son, and God names him "*Lo-Ammi*" again a compound with "*Lo*" meaning "no or not" and "*Ammi*" meaning "my people." God is saying a time is coming when the nation of Israel (*yis·raw·ale*) will **not be my people**. Some might object by saying "the Jews are God's chosen people." They were, however, they are not at this time - but will be again. In this present age God's chosen people are those of his church. His chosen people are those who have come into relationship with him through Jesus. God's chosen people come from every nation, tribe and people group and these include believing Jews, but all must believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

### **Salvation Through The Cross**

Paul (*pow·los*) meaning "small" is the Greek form of Saul (*shaw·ool*) meaning "desired". Paul wrote concerning the Church of Jesus as the people of God in chapter 2 of Ephesians (*ef·es·ee·ans*), reading a few verses beginning in 13, **"But now in Christ Jesus (the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name Joshua (*yeh·ho·shoo·ah*) meaning "Jehovah is salvation") you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both (Jew and Gentile) **one** and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ... <sup>15</sup> that he might **create in himself one new man in place of the two**, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both (Jew and Gentile) to God in **one body through the cross... referring to Jesus. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God** *God's Church who was created by Christ* <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the**

cornerstone...” (Ephesians 2:13-20) The chosen people of God come from every nation, tribe and tongue – they are those who have come to believing faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ is the Head of God’s Church and chosen people during this present age, this age we call “The Church Age” that will continue until Christ’s return. The nation of Israel will gain be favored at some point in the future, but now God’s chosen people are those of His Church.

Paul wrote to the gentile believers in Rome to caution them about taking God’s love for granted as the Jews did. The Jews felt that God would always favor them because they were of the lineage of Abraham (ab·raw·hawm) meaning “father of multitude”. Paul agonized over God’s harsh dealing with Israel. Paul wrote that it is Jesus who is the center of God’s people and referred to Jesus as the “root” of the Olive Tree meaning those who are true believers. Reading from Romans chapter 11 beginning at verse 17, “But if some of the branches were broken off (*Paul is referring to the disobedient people of Israel*), and you (*speak of the gentile believers*), although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree (*Jesus is the nourishing root*),<sup>18</sup> do not be arrogant toward the branches. *Paul is saying as gentile believers grafted into the family of God though Christ do not become arrogant. Continuing in verse 18, If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.*<sup>19</sup> Then you will say, ‘Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.’<sup>20</sup> That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.<sup>21</sup> For if God did not spare the natural branches *Israel*, neither will he spare you.” (Romans 11:17-21) Paul is warning the gentile believers to live in fear or awe of God and to be obedient in the living of their lives. For if they become arrogant and proud as Israel had done there will come a point when God will, through righteous anger and justice, judge them as he judged Israel.

## Salvation For Israel and America?

I see this story of Hosea (ho·shay·ah) representing the faithful and loving God and Gomer representing an unfaithful Israel seeking after its own passions and desires to be a parallel to our place and time. America was a nation founded with many Christian principles and its laws based on the Ten Commandments. It is a nation that has been greatly blessed, but because of those blessings it has become a nation that is arrogant and has lost its way, like Gomer, and seeks pleasure without regard to what is right, moral and just. Hosea's (ho·shay·ah) story begins as a story of faith verses disobedience, a story of Gomer insisting on living in sin despite knowing the love of a faithful husband. God pronounces judgment through the names of the three children. America needs to understand this story. The American church needs to understand this story. Much of the American church is becoming ever more like Gomer. It is the remnant that desires to and works at staying faithful to God and His Living Word. Is Canyon Bible a remnant church? Are we, you and I, my beloved, striving to remain faithful to the only true God and the only eternal truth of His Word found in the Bible? Together as a community of Christ we are stronger and can uphold each other to the light of the Word. Is America at the point of no return like Israel of 750 B.C.? Is it time for God's judgment to bring us as people back to the foot of the cross? I am not sure. But this I know **“as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (yeh·ho·vaw) meaning “the existing One”.** (Joshua 24:15) My house is not just Joyce and I or our children and their families but my house is this church that belongs to Christ. Let us together become ever more faithful to our eternally faithful God who has blessed us beyond measure.

In closing let me remind us that we are at the beginning of God's story lived out through Hosea (ho·shay·ah) and Gomer and the beginning is a story of disobedience, sin and judgment. Hosea represents God and he is faithful to Gomer just as God is faithful, as we will see in the rest of the story. But so far it is a story of judgment

through the names of *Jezreel* meaning “scattered”, *Lo-Ruhama* meaning “no mercy” and *Lo-Ammi* meaning “not my people.” One might ask how is this a story of God’s faithfulness?

Because we know the rest of the story we know God does call Israel back and he will change the three names given. God will change *Jezreel* meaning “scattered” to *Jezreel* meaning “God sows or planted.” *Jezreel* is a name with double meaning one negative and one positive. In the story of Hosea (ho-shay-ah) the name *Jezreel* begins with the negative meaning. God punished Israel for its unfaithfulness and scattered the Jewish people throughout the world. In 1948 the Jewish people began to return and the new nation of Israel was planted. Now *Jezreel* has the positive meaning.

God will change the name *Lo-Ruhamah* to *Ruhamah*. By removing the *Lo* meaning “no” the name is changed from “no mercy” to “mercy.” God will have mercy for those who believe in Him through His Son Jesus Christ. By doing this God will then have changed the name *Lo-Ammi* to *Ammi*. From “not my people” to “my people.” God always seeks the lost and shows them the way back to him.

Reading from Hosea beginning at verse 10, “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.’”<sup>11</sup> And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together (*together into one nation Israel*), and they shall appoint for themselves one head. *I believe this will be Jesus Christ.* And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of *Jezreel*. *This is the positive meaning - the day of planting.*<sup>2:1</sup> Say to your brothers, ‘You are my people,’ and to your sisters, ‘You have received mercy.’” God’s plan of redemption will be fulfilled for both Jew and Gentile.

There are many lessons to be learned from this story. The first that comes to my mind is that many people including some in this room, before they came to Christ, were unfaithful to the point of denying God just like Gomer. Committing spiritual adultery with the false gods of this world against the only true God. After being saved there have been times when we received the love of the Bridegroom Jesus Christ with less obedience than he deserved. There are times when we have been halfhearted in our love for Christ. Many who call themselves Christian give God a tip for His service in their shorting of their tithe offering on Sundays. We tend to short change God when our focus is on the material things of this world. We cannot change the past – but this day, this day, you have the opportunity live for Christ. Will you live for Christ for yourself, your family and as a witness of Christ to the lost world? Will you take this opportunity as we read in Ephesians, “Husbands, love your wives, (as Hosea loved Gomer and) as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” (Ephesians 5:25-27) If this is our desire and goal then we must learn what it means to be the bride of Christ. Find comfort in the arms of Christ. Read God’s Word and tell him of your love for him. Get up each morning bathing your souls in the Word of God so that you might slay disobedience and sin. No longer commit adultery with the world but live in spiritual purity.

Peter wrote to what he referred to as “God’s elect” in his first two letters, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God’s elect...” (1 Peter 1:1) These were not special people, but broken people like you and I, that God called and healed and breathed new life into the dust of their bodies just as he breathed spiritual life into the dust of Adam. Peter wrote in clear reference to the story of Hosea, “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but

now you have received mercy.” (1 Peter 2:10) Hosea’s story is our story. We were scattered with no mercy and not the people of God. But now though Christ we are gathered into Christ’s church, we are planted on his foundation, he freely gives us his mercy and we are the people of God! Let us live up to this great calling and privilege. Amen!