

## LeMay Family Bible Study

**Date: Monday 14, February 2022.**

**Scripture Text:**

**Romans 5:6-8.**

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**John 15:13**

Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.

**Ref. Text. Hosea 1:2**

**Theme:** Trust in the Lord, with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding.

**Message:**

**Chapter 1 of Hosea begins with God ordering the prophet to marry and to have children with a woman in the sex trade.** Through this command to Hosea, God brings to life a consistent picture and a theme used throughout the Old Testament. It is the image that the LORD is the husband of Israel, and that their passionate, chronic attraction for idols was like the lust of an adulterer. His people are portrayed as being as unfaithful as a prostitute was.

In this vivid picture, we see how our idolatry and rejection of the LORD feels to God. When we put anything in front of the LORD, it hurts Him like unfaithfulness hurts the victim of an adulterous marriage. By commanding Hosea **to take... a wife of harlotry**, God will put Hosea in the place where he feels what God feel; and it won't feel good. We cannot say that God grieves exactly as we grieve because he is pure spirit. Nevertheless, there similarities between God's feelings and ours.

Many commentators press the idea that Gomer was not a prostitute when Hosea first met and married her, and that she only *became* that later. And also Hosea knew from the LORD that she would become that. This may be the case, but we don't know this from the text. It could go either way and depends on the scholar.

However, it is clear from the Narrative that when Hosea married Gomer, she did not give up her career as a prostitute. And it wasn't that Hosea had found a fallen woman and through love and kindness, restored her to virtue. He married a prostitute. No doubt hoping that she would give up her sin and be devoted only to him. **But she stayed a prostitute.**

The story is used as an illustration to show the parallel between what happened by human nature. When Hosea and Gomer first married, she probably promised eternal love and devotion. She probably showed every sign of being committed to Hosea. But after a while, and in difficult circumstances, she fell back into prostitution. Perhaps it was out of boredom. Perhaps it was out of a feeling of neglect. Perhaps it was out of a sense of need.

Some commentators believe this never really happened, and that Hosea is only telling a vivid story. They think it could never have happened because God would never have a prophet marry a prostitute. However, in contrast if Hosea's story cannot be real (because 'God could not ask a man to marry an unfaithful woman), then neither is the story of salvation real, because that is precisely what Christ has done for us.

The story of a man that was so in love that he would marry a woman, knowing that she was a prostitute, isn't a new one. We see this story played out in the movie *Pretty Woman*, (Richard Gere and Julia Robert's). But, the story of a man doing so, having been told to by God is anything but normal. The closest biblical character that I can think of that compares to Hosea, is Joseph the father of Jesus.

Joseph chose to keep the pregnancy of his wife to be, silent. He chose to divorce Mary, privately to avoid her going through the terrible retribution of the patriarchal culture that she lived in. In my opinion, this is a demonstration of integrity to the millionth power.

I thought that I would try to correlate some of the decisions that I've made in life to Hosea or even Joseph; but I'm nowhere near the stature of either of these humble men of God. These men both obeyed the voice of God, enduring the pain and strife and loss that coincides with the embarrassment that comes from your woman, being with someone else.

In the case of Hosea, it was a lifestyle that his wife would never cease. This is the condition that the Lord viewed his children; the children of Israel to be in. A lost adulteress and disconnected state from him. God's love for his chosen children is conveyed through this narrative as being so abused and so devalued that he has rejected them.

Yet, at some point God determines to put up with it and even decides to live with his children's indiscretions and abominations. And in his infinite love for his children, he develops a plan to redeem back to himself, through the offering of his own son, Jesus Christ. This is the ultimate sacrifice; that a man would lay down his life for another. (But God so loved the world).

I recall and recount my decisions to love a woman who with an ailment that couldn't be cured. I chose to support and to care for a woman who was on dialysis. *All for love, and by faith.* I have no regrets and only thanks to give God, for the heart and to have been able to make those kinds of commitments.

When I consider the love and patience that God extended to his children, I am reminded of the love and the patience that my wife to be, has extended to me, over and over again. I also remember the pains and the anxiety that I have caused her. Yet, in the same way as God did for his children, she forgave me and took me back. So, if there is anyone that can be compared to Hosea, it's my fiancé. If there is any love that can be compared to God's love, it's my fiancé.

Now, when I contemplate the ways to avoid hurting my love again, I realize that it is inevitable that I will at some point do something that will upset her. It's just human nature. But the degree to which the infliction does hurt, is determined by the kind of infraction that it is. Which, I have determined never to do, ever again. *For the sake of love and by faith.*

I like the children of Israel have been given a pardon and an opportunity to flourish and to love again. I've been granted a pass to move forward in love and in marriage and to restore my family. I've been shown the love of God, in action through my fiancé. And it is this same love that I believe through faith, that I'll see the dawning of a new day and our new blended family, together.

The things that we do for love are the things that my God did for his children. The things that my fiancé has done, is to show the path to having a restored relationship with her; just as God has laid out a plan for redemption for his children. A way to make it back into her arms, into harmony and into oneness.

Hosea gives us the ultimate example of what it means to be obedient to God. And also how to perceive in a relationship that is toxic at best. Always hoping, always believing that it would get better, only to have your heart broken time and time again.

I refuse to willingly repeat the offenses that broke us before. And I refuse to offend God. Therefore, I have pledged my hand in marriage and commitment to my love. Because I know that she has made the ultimate sacrifice for me as well. And that is, that she's given me all that she has, *for loves sake and by faith*.

Questions:

- 1) What do you think it must have been like on a day to day basis for Hosea to watch his wife, slip back into prostitution?
- 2) What do you think the triggers for her to go back to prostitution were?
- 3) What do you think that Hosea could have done to prevent Gomer from going back into prostitution?
- 4) Gomer, was from a different tribe and lineage. Do you think that this had an influence on her choice of the career path that she'd chosen?
- 5) What do parents experience when they wait for change to occur in their children?
- 6) What is the force, spirit that persuaded God to show patience and mercy to his children?
- 7) In what way can a man show his wife on a day to day basis that I value her love and that I don't take it for granted?
- 8) In what way can a woman show her husband on a day to day basis that I value her love and that I don't take it for granted?
- 9) In the current society and day, could counselors have helped to prevent Gomer's incessant return to prostitution?
- 10) Was Gomer's past just too much of a stronghold, to allow the changes that were afforded her, through Hosea and God?
- 11) What would happen to Gomer in our day and our society?

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