

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Book of Hosea

3/22/17

Hosea Chapter 2

Israel Punished and Restored - Verses 1-11

¹ "Say of your brothers, 'My people,' and of your sisters, 'My loved one.' ² "Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts. ³ Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst. ⁴ I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. ⁵ Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.' ⁶ Therefore I will block her path with thorn bushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. ⁷ She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.' ⁸ She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold—which they used for Baal. ⁹ "Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her naked body. ¹⁰ So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands. ¹¹ I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals.

2:2 Israel's punishment and restoration are the themes of this chapter. As in a court case, the adulteress is brought to trial and found guilty. But after her punishment, she is joyfully and tenderly restored to God.

2:5-7 The Israelites were thanking false gods (specifically Baal, the god whom they believed controlled weather and thus farming) for their food, shelter, and clothing, instead of the true God, who gave those blessings. Therefore, God would block Israel's path with "thornbushes" and "wall her in" by making the rewards of idol worship so disappointing that the people would be persuaded to turn back to God. Despite Israel's unfaithfulness, God was still faithful and merciful. He would continue to hold his arms out to his people, even to the point of placing obstacles in their wayward path to turn them back to him.

2:7 Just as Gomer would return to her husband if she thought she would be better off with him, so people often return to God when they find life's struggle too difficult to handle. Returning to God out of desperation is better than rebelling against him, but it is better yet to turn to God out of gratitude for his care.

2:8 Material possessions are success symbols in most societies. Israel was a wealthy nation at this time, and Gomer may have accumulated silver and gold. But Gomer didn't realize that Hosea had given her all she owned, just as Israel did not recognize God as the Giver of blessings. Both Gomer and Israel used their possessions irresponsibly as they ran after other lovers and other gods. How do you use your possessions? Use what God has given you to honor him.

Israel Punished and Restored - Verses 12-23

¹² I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them. ¹³ I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot," declares the LORD. ¹⁴ "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. ¹⁵ There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. 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. ¹⁸ In that day I will make a covenant for the with the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety. 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. ²¹ "In that day I will respond," declares the LORD—"I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth; ²² and the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine and the olive oil, and they will respond to Jezreel. ²³ I will plant her for myself in the land; 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.'"

2:12 The Israelites were so immersed in idolatry that they actually believed pagan gods gave them their vineyards and orchards. They had forgotten that the entire land was a gift from God (Deuteronomy 32:49). Today many people give credit to everything and everyone but God for their prosperity—luck, hard work, quick thinking, the right contacts. When you succeed, who gets the credit?

2:13 Baal was the most important of the Canaanite gods, and his name came to be used to describe all the local deities worshiped throughout the land occupied by Israel. Unfortunately, the Israelites did not get rid of the idols and pagan worship centers as they had been commanded. Instead, they tolerated and frequently joined Baal worshipers, often through the influence of corrupt kings. One Israelite king especially noted for his Baal

worship was Ahab. The prophet Elijah, in a dramatic showdown with Ahab's hired prophets, proved God's power far superior to Baal's (1 Kings 18).

2:14-15 God was promising (1) to bring the people to the wilderness, a place free from distractions, so he could clearly communicate with them, and (2) to change what had been a time of trouble into a day of hope. The Valley of Achor ("trouble") is the site where Achan had sinned by keeping forbidden war plunder (see Joshua 7). He had brought great disaster to Joshua's troops when they were attempting to conquer the land. God uses even our negative experiences to create opportunities to turn back to him. As you face problems and trials, remember that God may speak to you in the wilderness times, not just in times of prosperity.

2:16 Not until Judah's exile would the entire nation begin to come to its senses, give up its idols, and turn back to God; and not until that day when God rules through Jesus the Messiah will the relationship between God and his people be restored. In that day, God will no longer be like a master or owner to them; rather, he will be like a husband (Isaiah 54:4-8). The relationship will be deep and personal, the kind of relationship we can know, though imperfectly, in marriage.

2:19-20 The time will come when unfaithfulness will be impossible—God will bind us to himself in his perfect righteousness, justice, love, compassion, and faithfulness. In this verse, God was announcing his betrothal to Israel. Betrothal in Hosea's time was more than a simple agreement to marry. It was a binding engagement, a deep commitment between two families for a future, permanent relationship. God was promising a fresh new beginning, not just a temporary rewriting of a tired old agreement (see Jeremiah 31:31-34).

2:19-20 God's wedding gift to his people, both in Hosea's day and in our own, is his compassion. Through no merit of our own, God forgives us and makes us right with him. There is no way for us by our own efforts to reach God's high standard for moral and spiritual life, but he graciously accepts us, forgives us, and draws us into a relationship with himself. In that relationship we have personal and intimate communion with him.