



Exploring God's Love through the Bible

Love that sent the Prophets

Oct 2, 2016

Text: Hosea 1:1-11

EXHORTATION CONCERNING GOD'S LOVE

- I've maintained for many years now, that the church has lost her **prophetic** voice to the world. Preferring instead messages of comfort and prosperity, the church has, by and large, **refused** to call men to repentance and obedience over the last few generations, resulting in cultural devastation.
- I've also maintained that the call of the prophet (one who speaks "thus says the Lord") is a call based in God's **love**. God said through Jeremiah:

From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. "So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. And you shall say to them, "This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips. (Jer 7:25-28)

- As we very briefly today consider the ministry of the Old Testament Prophets, please know that God sent them from a place of love and **mercy**. Their message ("repent and turn back!") came from the loving heart of a God who, among other things, sees Himself as a loving Husband to an adulterous wife...his people.
- Almost every OT major prophet in Scripture has language proving this, some very graphic and very sad (see Ezekiel chps 16, 23 and Jeremiah 3). And yet God continues to love His people! Isaiah sums up God's heart when he writes:

Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. (Isa 54:4-8)

One can feel the love of Jesus, when He said:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, **the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!** How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, **and you were not willing!** (Luk 13:34)

All too often however, the people's response to the love of God sounded like this:

They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts. "As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear," says the LORD of hosts, "and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate." (Zechariah 7:12-14)

HOSEA: LOVE THAT SENDS THE PROPHET SUMMARIZED IN ONE BOOK

1. According to G. Campbell Morgan, "We have in the Book of Hosea one of the most arresting revelations of the real nature of sin, and one of the clearest interpretations of the strength of the Divine love. No one can read the story of Hosea without realizing the agony of his heart. Then, lift the human to the level of the Infinite, and know this, that sin wounds the heart of God."
2. I totally agree. This incredible book demonstrates the love of God in a visceral, emotional way. It is simply astonishing. God so loved His people that He wanted them to literally see His heart. He gave them a "living **witness**" in the example of Hosea.
3. Set before Israel fell to Assyria, the prophet Hosea was commanded to marry "a wife of whoredom." This was to demonstrate how God feels about being "married" to a similarly-minded people!
 - God chose to make Hosea and Gomer physical examples of something *spiritual*.
 - God was angry that His people continually chose other gods to worship: *spiritual* adultery.
 - The shame of Gomer's physical adultery is emblematic of Israel's *spiritual unfaithfulness*.
4. Even their children's names were to show God's feelings: Jezreel ("God will scatter"), No Mercy, and Not My People!
5. And yet in our Text, despite His broken heart, God promised **mercy**! (vv10-11)
6. In chapter two, again, both the punishment of Israel AND the love and mercy of God is unveiled...

For their mother has played the whore; she who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.' Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. (Hos 2:5-6)

*"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.** (Hos 2:14-20)*

7. Chapter three (3:1-3) shows that at some point, adulterous Gomer had become a slave. Amazingly, Hosea goes and "redeems" her. **It is a beautiful picture of the love of God for His people!**
8. In just three chapters, we can get a sense of God's love and **disappointment**, His mercy and brokenness, His adoration and His indignation.

9. CRCC, understand this! *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, 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.”* (Hos 4:6)
10. In so many ways, Hosea is a picture of what has come upon the modern church, as we’ve looked to our own inventions and ideas...

*Set the trumpet to your lips! One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law. To me they cry, “My God, we—Israel—know you.” Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him. **They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. I have spurned your calf, O Samaria.** My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence? For it is from Israel; a craftsman made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces. **For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.** The standing grain has no heads; it shall yield no flour; if it were to yield, strangers would devour it.* (Hos 8:1-7)

And yet there is mercy...

*When Israel was a child, **I loved him**, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them. They shall not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me. The sword shall rage against their cities, consume the bars of their gates, and devour them because of their own counsels. **My people are bent on turning away from me**, and though they call out to the Most High, he shall not raise them up at all. **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.*** (Hos 11:1-9)

The book closes with more statements of God’s amazing love for His people...

*Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take with you words and return to the LORD; say to him, “Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips. Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride on horses; and we will say no more, ‘Our God,’ to the work of our hands. **In you the orphan finds mercy.**” **I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.** I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon. They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon. O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? **It is I who answer and look after you.** I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit. Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.* (Hos 14:1-9)

PREACHING CHRIST IN THE TEXT:

If Hosea’s ministry is a type, then Jesus’ ministry is certainly the antitype...the greatest **example** of prophetic love. Friends, we are betrothed to Jesus:

*I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! For I feel a divine jealousy for you, **since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.** But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (2 Cor 11:1-3)*

And yet, we are continually unfaithful. Despite our unfaithfulness, HE is faithful! (1 Thess 5:24; 2 Tim 2:13; Rev 19:11) And because of HIM, a wedding is coming....

*Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, **"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"**— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." (Rev 19:6-9)*

Oh rejoice today friends! Jesus, our Prophet, Priest, King, and Redeemer has conquered!

And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." (Rev 5:5)

May we remember...

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" (Rev 3:19-22)

Amen Lord Jesus.