

## Connecting the Old and the New

### *Scandalous Love*

We all have the need to be loved and to have community. We are looking for hope and for love. This week we will be looking at two passages that specifically show us how God loves us through it all.

### **Am I Loveable?**

Hosea married Gomer, who may have been a virtuous woman in the beginning but turned out to be grossly unfaithful. Though it came as no surprise, it hurt him nonetheless. After bearing three children, she took to selling her body until it was no good anymore. Then, when Gomer was destitute and sold into slavery, the Lord told Hosea to seek her out, buy her back, and take her as his wife again. He did that. Hopefully, his life would teach the nation of Israel the depths of God's loyal, persistent, pursuing love for His people—the people who chose spiritual harlotry over the true love of the one true God. And we learned from Hosea and Gomer that a marriage can overcome the most extreme challenges, if they choose commitment over escape.

Hosea means “he saved” and comes from the same root as the names Joshua and Jesus. God instructed Hosea to marry an “adulterous wife” (1:2), an act that has caused great consternation among interpreters, but surprisingly no negative reaction from Hosea himself.

Scripture never tells us—but we don't have to look far to find the likely answers, for the same wanderlust that corrupted her heart threatens ours as well. We commit the sin of Gomer every time we turn from the love of God in order to run after the “love” of something else:

- a better job
- A bigger house
- A new car
- an exciting relationship

Yet God says to us, as He did to her, “behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her” (Hos. 2:14)

Sometimes when we are very angry or bitter with someone, our flesh says, “Get out of my face; I don't want to see you anymore.” God, on the other hand, has a different plan which involves an effort in trying to restore the broken relationship. He desires that we seek reconciliation in our marriage and in our friendships that have become estranged.

*Read Hosea 2:1-23.*

- How did Hosea feel about Gomer?
- What did God say to Israel through Hosea's words?
- What did the Lord plan to do to win Israel back to himself?
- How is God's faithfulness to us an example of the way we should treat others?
- What loyalties, things, or relationships do you need to hand over to God?

## In Christ We Find Hope

*Read Romans 5:6-8.*

How great is God's love? God saved us when we were at our worst. He showed His unmatched love for us in Christ's death. Christ did not die for us when we were worthy of being saved, He died when we were wicked. Paul focused on the greatness of God's love by pointing to the fact that it is rare for someone to willingly die for another person, especially an unrighteous person.

- What is the basis for our justification with God?
- What is our relationship with God if we have been justified by faith?
- How does Jesus Christ change a person's standing with God?
- For what reasons can a Christian rejoice?
- How has God demonstrated His love for us?
- What comparisons can be made between people giving their lives for others and Christ's death for all people?
- What was our relationship to God when Christ came to die for us?

We will never comprehend all of God's nature, but we can embrace all the revelation given to us in His Word. Jesus Christ came and died because God wanted to show His love for weak, ungodly sinners—and that includes all of us. In our shame, we often put limits on God's love based on our own limited view of His character. To believe God cannot love you enough is to completely miss the truth of God's revealed character. We might think that our sins are too many to be forgiven, or our hearts are too hard to feel God's love, or our brokenness is beyond repair. If we let those thoughts distract us from the reality of God's love, we remain powerless, focused on ourselves and our sin and our never-ending mess. This is not God's desire for us. He longs for us to trust Him and to begin living in the freedom of His eternal love.

- If you haven't already, are you now willing to believe in God's love for you? Will you turn to Him in faith and trust in His strength to save you?
- Who in your life needs to hear that through Jesus Christ they are no longer enemies with God?