

Our Restored Marriage: Hosea 3v1-5

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[0 : 00] turned into months away. Mr O'Shea looked out the window, as he always did before going to bed, hoping, longing, that she would come home.

A picture on the windowsill caught his eye. She looked so beautiful in her wedding dress, and he remembered those vows. Never will I leave you.

Never will I forsake you. Of course he knew where to find her. He had heard the rumours. He knew it was true.

Awkward and embarrassed, he walked into the strip club. The sight of his wife in the arms of another man cut to his heart.

Putting cash into the hand of her pimp, Mr O'Shea gently put his coat around his beloved Morag, and led her out the door, amidst jeering and laughing.

[1 : 07] hurt and ashamed. But how could he leave her? He loved her.

she was his wife. Now that's a true story. In fact, it's my story, and it's your story.

Remember what God had said to Hosea. Have a look back at chapter 1 and verse 2. Chapter 1 and verse 2. When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, Hosea, go take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land, that is the people, is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord.

So he married Gomer. It's what theologians call enactment prophecy. The prophet not only speaks God's word to the people, his life becomes a visible illustration of God's word to the people.

Hosea's marriage to Gomer plays out God's marriage to Israel. You see, Israel is Gomer.

[2 : 35] She is an adulterous wife. Israel has turned her back on God's faithful, loyal love. She is chased after other gods.

But God is not about to give up on his loved one. God is like Hosea. He is that loyal, faithful husband.

And through an act of grace and redemption, Hosea takes back his adulterous wife to show us the depth of God's love for us.

You see, this is my story. And this is your story. First, an act of grace towards an adulterous people. Look at chapter 3, verse 1. The Lord said to me, to Hosea, go show your love to your wife again.

[3 : 43] Again? You want me to love her again? Do you not know what she's like? Do you not know the men that she slept with?

Hosea had loved his wife again and again. And now he must love her again. It's an act of scandalous grace.

The Lord said to me, go show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress.

How can Hosea trust her? What if she runs off again? After all, you can't trust an adulteress.

Everyone knows you're asking for trouble if you take back someone who has had multiple affairs.

You see, the law was crystal clear. You don't welcome back an adulterous wife. You stone her. But yet Hosea reaches out.

[4 : 55] He remembers the vows on their wedding day. Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. And he shows his love again. It's scandalous.

Can you imagine the shame Hosea felt as he walked hand in hand with his wife? Taking her back in. The jokes.

Pointing of fingers. He's an idiot. What a fool. But it's not just scandalous. It's also reckless.

Look what God commands Hosea to do the second part of verse 1. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.

Well, I think we all get the loving the other gods bit. But what on earth are these sacred raisin cakes? Where do you get them? Down in Lidl or where? Well, when the Israelites wanted something instead of turning to God they went to their made-up gods.

[6 : 05] And to provoke the gods in the heavens to bring blessing down on the people they would bring well, one of their acts of sacrifice was to bring food. Raisin cakes.

And they would feed these lifeless stone wooden gods so that they would in return get better crops and their animals would reproduce and the rains would fall.

They went to their made-up gods instead of turning to the only true God. Now we mightn't be into baking raisin cakes but we have all turned from God to other things and other people.

We sacrifice our lives to the God of work in search or in return for joy and happiness. We search for a partner or a spouse hoping that they will provide the love that we long for.

We spend our money to the gods of upgrading our home and getting the latest gadget or fashion items in search of acceptance of other people.

[7 : 21] You see just like Gomer just like she went after her other lovers just as Israel went after their gods so we have turned our back on the faithful loyal love of God.

I am Gomer and you are Gomer. But look at the story. Now Hosea must love his wife again.

Why? Well look what it says in the middle of verse 1. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites.

Hosea is to take back his adulterous wife because that is exactly what God does with unfaithful Israel.

By taking back his promiscuous wife Hosea enacts the grace God shows towards his people. It's reckless.

It makes no sense. There's no guarantee that Gomer is going to stay and stop her adulterous behaviour. but that's the point.

[8 : 35] That's the reckless grace God shows to people like you and me. You see if we are in any doubt about God's act of grace just look at what God has done for us.

The scandalous act as God the almighty the one who has existed from before time began the creator and sustainer of the universe the one who alone is pure and holy becomes like one of us to search for us to bring us home to love us again.

the reckless act of God as he takes on my impurity on himself and suffers my shame my guilt and clothes us with his purity.

This is outrageous grace. We do not deserve it. It's not fair. It doesn't make sense. But that is the act of grace God shows to spiritually adulterous people like you and me.

So first an act of grace towards an adulterous people. Second an act of redemption towards a broken people. Gomer is an adulteress and she is living with another man.

[10 : 25] In fact the text implies that she is now owned by another. Look at verse two. So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver.

That's about six ounces just a little necklace. And a homer and a lethic of barley.

That's a barrel if you like of grain. and calculating these costs of the silver and the grain what Hosea paid out was the price that you would pay for a slave.

In other words Gomer his wife is in a form of slavery. Even if she wanted to leave she can't. Gomer has exchanged the love of her husband for the abuse of a pimp.

Hosea's wife is owned by another. So for Hosea his act of grace must become an act of redemption.

[11 : 31] Look at verse 2 So I bought her. This is costly. Someone must pay. Someone must bear the cost.

The only way Gomer can be released is for Hosea to redeem her. Now we mightn't think a few silver coins and a bag of barley is much but it seems it's all Hosea had.

He didn't have enough silver to pay off it all. He has to pay the rest of it off in grain. In other words he's giving all that he has to be able to redeem his wife.

And if that doesn't stir your heart see how God's love redeems you and me. You see what Hosea did for Gomer God has done for you and me in Christ.

The apostle Peter reminds us for you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you by your forefathers but with the precious blood of Christ.

[12:56] He gave his all to buy us back. Well Hosea not only bought back his wife he redeemed the relationship.

Verse 3 Then I told her you are to live with me for many days. You must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man and I will live with you.

The effects of this redemption are both personal and intimate. You will live with me and I will live with you.

Hosea takes his adulterous wife back into the family home but it's a relationship that's going to take time. Hosea if we look carefully places conditions upon Gomer.

Look at verse 3 again. He says to her you are to live with me or as it can be translated you must wait for me many days.

[14:10] You must wait for me. Before Gomer can enjoy the trusting sexual intimacy with her husband she must wait.

And further on in verse 3 he says you must not be a prostitute. Gomer you're to stop playing the whore. So before Gomer can enjoy the full blessings of the marriage she must wait.

She must show that she has no eyes for no other man than for her husband. And she can't complain can she?

the conditions are fair and reasonable after all that she's done. She can't complain about this. Well how much greater then is God's redemption of us?

You see when God redeems us it's for the purpose of redeeming the relationship and guess what?

There are no conditions. God doesn't look at us and go well let's see how this relationship goes.

[15:24] Let's see if you are going to be faithful to me. Let's see if you are going to be loyal in your love and never turn your back. No when God redeems us it is immediate and complete.

There are no conditions. We are treasured and treated as his own son enjoying the privileges of God's children with access to the loving father welcomed and embraced.

When we experience God's redemption we experience a brand new relationship. The past put behind our sin dealt with.

God is worthy Schweiz. The reason we drift from God like Gomer drifted from Hosea is why we chase after other things and people is because we don't believe that what God has to offer is truly satisfying and fulfilling.

Our sinful hearts continually tell us that God is not sufficient, that his love is not enough, we must go in search of it elsewhere.

[16:49] Well, listen to what God offers. We read it at the very beginning of this morning. The psalmist wrote, Apart from you, Lord, I have no good thing, for you have made known to me the path of life.

You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. We do not need to play the gomer.

We do not need to run from God. In him our deepest longings are met. He alone will fully satisfy us.

So, an act of grace, an act of redemption, and third, an act of repentance towards a faithful God.

You see, while God acts in grace and redemption, we must respond with repentance. God is loving.

[18:06] But part of his love means he will not overlook or ignore our sin. We must deal with our sin. You see, just as Hosea had said to Gomer in verse 3, You must wait for me many days.

So God says to Israel, look at verse 4, For the Israelites will live for many days. They too must wait without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stone where they had their idols, without ephod, which was what the priest wore, or idol.

In a sense, God is saying to the people, you are going to live many days without me. God is going to strip Israel of everything they have and all that they rely on.

And history tells us that within a few short years, Assyria would come and they would invade the nation and crush them. And they will have nothing left. Not even God.

You want to live life without me? You want to chase after your own lovers? Then a life without me you shall have.

[19:34] Judgment will come. The people of Israel will be removed from God's presence. You see, sin cannot be ignored.

and it cannot be overlooked. We cannot live in sin and at the same time live in God's presence.

Adam and Eve knew that right at the beginning. They were shut out, removed from God's presence, guarded from going back into the garden.

And that's what's happened to us and the whole human race. We have ignored him. We have pushed God away. And God is saying, if you want to live without me, then a life you shall have without me.

We cannot have God while we ignore our sin. We must deal with it. We must repent.

[20 : 39] You see, repentance is not just stopping some kind of behaviour or habit. It's not just stopping some kind of behaviour or habit.

It's returning to and a seeking after God. And that's what God promises Israel will do. But look at who they are to seek.

Look at verse 5. Afterwards, the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king.

Now, does that strike you as something a bit odd? David, the king, is long since dead. How can they seek a king who has died, what, some 200 years before?

war? What do you mean they're to seek and return to David their king? This is not a call to return to their old king of Israel and to go back to his tomb or his grave.

[21 : 49] This is a call to return to the king who would come from David's line, the ultimate king. king. The king, Jesus Christ.

For he is the one we are to seek. Jesus is the one we are to return to because Jesus alone can deal with our sin.

When Jesus died for our sin, he was the one who was shut out of God's presence for us. He was the one separated for God.

He was without God for us, suffering hell so that we could be welcomed in and enjoy his presence forever. But in returning to Jesus, it's not just a dealing with sin.

In a seeking after our true king, Jesus Christ, we are fully satisfied so that we do not have to sin. Have a look at John's Gospel, chapter 4.

[23 : 05] John's Gospel, chapter 4. You might know this story because John records for us the story about a woman.

We don't know her name. from Samaria. She's feeding or giving water to her livestock. But we know from the place where she's come from, Samaria, if you could trace her family line, she would find her roots among the people of Israel, the very people Hosea has been ministering to.

The people Hosea had said, Assyria is going to come and deal with you, but afterwards you will return to me and you will seek me.

She is one of the ones God promised who would return and seek the Lord. We're told a little bit of what her life is like. In fact, this woman is not unlike Gomer, is she?

She had five husbands and the man she was with is not presently her husband. And she offers Jesus a drink and Jesus says these words to her, chapter 4, verse 13.

[24 : 36] Jesus answered her, Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up to eternal life.

we do not need to chase after other lovers. In Jesus we are fully satisfied, in him our thirst is fully quenched, we do not have to sin.

You see the story of Gomer, the story of Israel, the story of this woman from Samaria, it's my story, and it's your story.

We are just like them. And like them, we have a faithful, loyal husband in Jesus who comes searching for us, seeking us out, knowing exactly what our lives are like, and in an act of grace and redemption, he provides the way home for you and for me.

[25 : 58] so the invitation is return to Jesus, seek Jesus, for he alone deals with sin and satisfies us completely.

Let's pray together. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

We can hear the rain on the roof as we listen to the rain. Think of that rain as the water that Jesus gives so that we will never ever thirst again, flowing down upon us.

the invitation to drink that we might know him fully. Father, help us that we would return to you the source of all life, the one who gives us joy, eternal pleasures.

Forgive us when we do run from you. Help us that we may seek you all our days as the perfect, loving, faithful and loyal husband.

[27 : 40] We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.