

Right, children, off you go. Amen. Last week, we began our new series in the book of Hosea. I must admit, it's not really a book I have turned to particularly often.

[19 : 24] I probably read it once, and I challenged myself to read the Bible in one year, and after that, that was probably it. I wonder, who's been challenged by the life of Hosea already?

So often I read passages like that in Hosea, and I sort of see it as purely a metaphor, which I know in a lot of ways it is.

But I always forget sometimes there was a real person at the center of this in the life of Hosea, called by God to share a difficult message, but also living a very difficult home life.

I doubt I would have the strength to be called to do what God called him to do. Hosea arrives at a time of a divided kingdom.

Enemies are approaching on both the northern half of the kingdom and the southern half of the kingdom. We've got Israel and we've got Judah. And he speaks to a people who have repeatedly turned from God with a message that is on the one hand quite blunt, but on the other hand points to a final redemption.

[20 : 30] Now as we listen to the passage this morning and as Andrew brings the word to us, I challenge you to listen out to the parallels in Hosea's life, and to that of God's people and maybe our own lives, and to where it is all eventually pointing.

I'm going to invite David now, or someone who's going to be... Yes, he is. David. Lovely. Good. He's been bringing a reading, and then we'll have our prayers of intercessions. Thank you.

I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the bars. She decked herself with rings and jewellery and went after her lovers.

But me she forgot, declares the Lord. Therefore, I am now going to allure her. I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards.

I will make the valley of Accor 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. In that day, declares the Lord, you will call me my husband.

[22 : 09] You will no longer call me my master. I will remove the name of the Baals from her lips. No longer will their names be invoked. In that day, I will make a covenant for them, 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. I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord. In that day, I will respond, declares the Lord. I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth.

And the earth will respond to the grain, the new wine, and the olive oil. And they will respond to Jezreel. 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 people, not my people. You are my people. And they will say, you are my God. Then the Lord said to me, Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress.

[23 : 27] Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turned to other gods and loved the sacred raisin cakes. So I bought her for 15 shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethic of barley.

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 behave the same way to you. The Israelites will live for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods.

Afterwards, the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.

Amen. We're now just going to have a time of prayer.

So let us pray. Dear Lord God, we praise you that you are love. We praise you that you are our creator, our sustainer, our father.

[24 : 58] Father, we praise you that you are all-knowing, all-powerful, in control of this world and every power around and beyond it.

We praise you, Lord, that your will is being done in both earth and heaven. And we thank you, Father, that your love for us is so immense that you sacrificed your dear son so that we would have the opportunity to become your sons and daughters.

and live with the certain hope of eternal life with you. So forgive us, Lord, that we have so often failed to accept the love you offer and live obedient to your commands and direction for our lives. Forgive us, Lord, for our repeated disbelief, inaction, and disobediences. Forgive us, Lord, for not living in the freedom and fullness offered by your grace and love.

O Lord, help us to allow your spirit to convict, transform, and direct our lives day by day. We thank you, Lord, for your word so freely available to us in our Bibles.

[26 : 12] Lord, give us a desire to open your word daily and use it, Lord, to change us. And we thank you, Lord, that you delight in listening and speaking to us.

Help us grow ever more reliant on prayer to bring us into a closer relationship with you. For, Lord, we know that we are not promised an easy life on earth.

we are facing daily troubles, persecution, stress, illness, sorrow, grief, and pain. And you call us, Lord, to endure these, focusing on the eternal hope we have in you.

So, particularly again today, Lord, we lift Roger, Amy, and Joanne, and we pray for your continuing comfort, love, and hope to sustain them in the days to come.

And in the next few quiet minutes, we also, Lord, lay upon you those that you have laid upon our hearts to pray for because there are many who are struggling.

[27 : 31] thank you, Lord, that you hear our prayers.

Thank you, Lord, that you are sovereign. Thank you, Lord, that your will will be done. And thank you, Lord, for your immense redeeming love for us.

Amen. Amen. Pray for Andrew as he brings his word to us.

Father, we thank you for Andrew. We thank you for the way that you've guided him and his preparations towards this morning. Father, I pray as he opens up your word to us that your Holy Spirit would speak through him that he would be a channel of the message that you want us to hear.

Amen. Amen. Thank you so much, Ollie. Well, good morning, everyone. It's been great to worship with you this morning and to continue to worship together.

[28 : 42] It's been a big week here at Uni Baptist Church. In the midst of our sadness and our grief at the loss of Judy, I'm thankful for the way the church has really come together in supporting each other and particularly loving Roger and his family at this time.

I think there was a real sense of God's presence at the committal and Thanksgiving services that we held on Friday and I'm really thankful that through our grief what was shared at those messages sent the message to many, many people that if you enjoyed being with Judy, you're going to love Jesus.

It was also a really encouraging time we had yesterday meeting with the life group leaders for training and catching up with them. That was really encouraging to hear all that God is doing through our life groups.

For the next few weeks, we're going to be having a slightly different format to our life group Bible studies. Rather than following the sermon series, they'll be focused on disciple making. So look out for something a little bit different in your life groups this week and we look forward to that.

So today we're looking at Hosea chapter 2 and 3. These chapters present in parallel Hosea's message to Goma, Hosea's marriage to Goma and God's covenant relationship to his people.

[30 : 00] Now actually, through the Old Testament, the language of marriage is used a lot to describe the relationship between God and his people. For example, in Isaiah 54 verse 5, God is described as husband of Israel.

For your maker is your husband. It says, the Lord Almighty is his name. The Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer. He is called the God of all the earth. Now the Bible, when you think about it, starts with a wedding and it ends with a wedding and marriage is a really important theme running all the way through.

But before we get too deep exploring the idea that God is a husband, we need to cover some basics. Now, I'm very aware that some of us here will have not had a good experience of what a husband is.

But I want to remind ourselves of what husbands are supposed to be according to God's design. So a key verse for us when we look at this right at the beginning of the Bible in Genesis is Genesis 1.27.

It says, So God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them. Male and female, he created them. Now the object here is clearly plural.

[31 : 09] God created both man and woman in his image. They're both made in the image of God. They are equal in their being. We cannot say that one is more important than the other.

And then this verse in chapter 1 is elaborated in chapter 2, which goes into more detail about the creation of men and women. So if we look at Genesis 2 verse 18, it says, The Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone.

I will make a helper suitable for him. Now there is a difficulty here with the way this is translated into English and the connotations it gives us. Because when I hear the word helper, it often has connotations of somebody on a level below.

The helper being subordinate to the master. But that's not the meaning of this word in scripture. The Hebrew word that's translated here, the Hebrew word that's translated suitable means like him.

It means matching him, corresponding to him. And the word helper, the original word in Hebrew is a word that occurs nine times in the Old Testament. It's used twice here referring to Eve in Genesis.

[32 : 14] In other times it's used of God being the helper of his people. So we can throw away any ideas of this helper being lower. The person is important and indispensable in the same way that God is to his people.

Now moving on to Genesis 2 verse 22 it says, Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man and he brought her to the man. Now it's very interesting here that the bone was taken from Adam's side.

It wasn't taken from Adam's head which might imply that Adam was to dominate over Eve, man dominate over the woman. It wasn't taken from Adam's foot which might indicate that the man was to be subordinate to the woman but from the side which I think indicates beautifully that the man and the woman the husband and the wife are to complement each other to work side by side to stand side by side.

In verse 23 man said she should be called woman for she was taken out of man. Now I just want to pick up on the Hebrew words here because we're going to find them useful later when we look at Hosea.

The word for husband here is ish the Hebrew word ish and the word for wife or woman is ish shah.

Now in Genesis 2 verse 24 the next verse we have what's known as the marriage mandate.

[33 : 32] That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh. So the mandate is one man joined to one woman united as one flesh.

That's what we understand as the biblical definition of marriage. So imagine as God says this to Adam and Adam says to God what's a father and mother? And God says well go ahead you'll find out.

So we see that men and women are created equal in status. They're both made in the image of God but they're made to complement one another. And I believe that the Bible shows us that men and women have different roles in marriage.

In a nutshell that's God's intention for marriage and how he intended it to be. But unfortunately sin entered the world and the reality of marriage in the broken world was somewhat different from what God had intended.

After Adam and Eve had sinned there was a curse on their relationship. So Genesis 3 verse 16 Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.

[34 : 37] Now here the word desire is not a very positive word it implies longing and craving and ungodly lust for power and control. And the rule of the husband is also not a very positive word it implies the husband dominating and wielding power over his wife.

In other words the result of the fall is conflict between the sexes. Now this verse has been misquoted many times as a justification for husbands to mistreat their wives and for wives to not love and respect their husbands.

But you've got to look at the context here. This is not prescriptive it's descriptive. This is not God's design for how it's supposed to be. This describes the outcome of mankind's sin in our relationships.

And the pattern throughout history is that men have often not fulfilled their roles of being husbands who lovingly serve their wives protecting and providing for them. And us men tend to end up going for two extremes.

One is to hold back and not provide or protect being a bit of a passive wimp. The other is to go to the other extreme and to dominate or lord it over our wives. But in order to understand God's intentions for his relationships with us we need to hold on to his intentions for husband Ish to provide loving leadership to serve provide and protect our wives.

[36 : 03] So we see throughout the Bible and through the history of Israel that God is a husband Ish to his people in the sense of being a loving leader serving providing and protecting.

God's love for his people was the pattern for Ish for what every husband should be. But how did Israel respond to God the loving husband? Well after God brought out Israel from slavery in Egypt they arrived at Sinai the mountain in the desert and God established the law with his people who were led by Moses and this was like God confirming his covenant with his people and in many ways it was like a marriage ceremony with Moses as the minister officiating.

So in Exodus 20 verse 2 God says I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt out of the land of slavery. So at the start of the ceremony God reminds his bride what he has done for her and then God tells his people how they are to live as his holy people within that covenant starting with the ten commandments and then on to the other laws in Exodus 22 and 23 21 to 23 and it's very significant that the first and second of the ten commandments are about not having any other gods and not making idols and after reading the law which was like the vows of a wedding ceremony in Exodus 24 verse 3 when Moses went and told the people all the words and laws they responded with one voice everything the Lord has said we will do.

So this is like the people saying I do in the marriage vows they're making their covenant but unfortunately they didn't keep their vows because after that Moses went up the mountain for 40 days to get the stone tablets and the instructions for the ark of the covenant and he left Aaron and her in charge down at the bottom but while Moses was away the people started to get a bit bored they got a bit fed up so they melted down their gold and they made a calf an image of a calf and they worshipped that for bringing them out of Egypt this is just days after making that special covenant when God said I am the God who brought you up out of Egypt and here they are blatantly violating the first and second commandment to not have any other gods and to not make idols their violation isn't even subtle Israel breaks the covenant she's just signed even before the honeymoon is over she is unfaithful to her husband she has committed idolatry which when you think about it is spiritual adultery now sadly that wasn't the only time it happened actually a lot of the Old Testament describes Israel leaving her loving serving husband and committing adultery by making or worshipping other gods now related to all this there's something very interesting that happens with the vocabulary that's used in the Old Testament because in Genesis when it talks about marriage and the relationship between Adam and Eve the word for husband is ish as we saw but Baal the name of the pagan God is also used in the Old Testament to mean husband because when the Israelites started worshipping Baal they exchanged the Hebrew word ish which means a loving serving husband for the Canaanite word for husband Baal which implies a tyrannical brutal owner so actually in 90% of the Old Testament the word for husband is actually Baal not ish which it is in Genesis now unfortunately the practice of idolatry influenced the Israelites understanding and treatment of women worship of Baal was very closely related to prostitution and sexual abuse in which women were often treated as mere sex objects for the

[39 : 53] Israelites their exchange of their creator God for the pagan deity Baal led to the exchange of women as an equal person made in the image of God to women being considered the property of man so Israel became just like all the pagan nations around them and women in particular were depreciated in their being and in their function they exchanged ish for Baal and perhaps here is the root of chauvinism machismo sexism misogyny and domestic abuse which is such a problem all over the world today but within this grim reality God raised up Hosea the prophet and Hosea spoke to a society in which the biblical concept of husbanding has been deformed from a loving serving faithful headship to a tyrannical dominating adulterous ownership remember from last week God told Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman named

Goma and after getting married Goma gives birth to three children but she is unfaithful to Hosea and leaves him now if you can turn with me to Hosea chapter 2 the bible reading that David read to us it's on page 902 sorry page 901 we'll look at the start of Hosea chapter 2 in Hosea chapter 2 verse 2 Hosea speaks again of his wife Goma but these are also words of God to his faithless wife Israel so the two relationships go in in parallel Hosea with Goma and God with Israel so Hosea chapter 2 verse 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 and if you continue to read from verse 2 to verse 13 Hosea and God speak as one about the faithlessness of their wives and the judgment coming upon them in verses 5 to 13 we see the tragedy of Israel firstly God wants her to be his husband he wants to be her husband but she is like a prostitute going after other gods secondly all she has she has received from her true husband but she thinks she's getting it from the

Baals and thirdly God is angry with this behaviour and it deserves to be punished now just like in chapter 1 that we saw last week we painted a grim picture but there is a ray of hope and God tells Hosea in chapter 3 verse 1 go show your love to your wife again though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress love her as the Lord loves the Israelites though they turn to other gods this is an amazing picture of God's love Hosea is to love his wife even though she is prostituting herself Hosea is to love this prostitute as God loves the Israelites how does God demonstrate such love well the answer is found in chapter 2 verse 14 to 23 this is a passage that John Piper calls one of the most beautiful love songs in the Bible so verse 14 of chapter 2 therefore I am now going to allure her I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her there I will give her back her vineyards and will make the value of a door of hope there she will respond as in the days of her youth as in the days she came up out of

Egypt so as Hosea caught Scoma this demonstrates God's tender treatment of his people it says he's going to woo her tenderly he takes his wife back to the place where they first fell in love now if you're in or have been in a long term relationship you may well remember with affection the place that you fell in love in my case it was the geography corridor at Bishop Rheindorf school in Guildford sadly it no longer exists God God and his people had entered a covenant relationship at Sinai in the wilderness that's what it's referring to here this was not only the place where God's covenant relationship with Israel had begun it was also the place where he so clearly and obviously provided for his people during that time in the wilderness but I want us to look at verse 16 which is particularly significant given what we've been discovering about the vocabulary of husband in the Old Testament so verse 16 in that day declares the Lord you will call me my husband you will no longer call me my master now if you've got very good eyesight you'll notice that on verse 16 there's a footnote in our

Bibles a little d and at the bottom it says Hebrew Baal so what it's saying is that in that day you will call me my husband the word there is ish you will no longer call me my master which is Baal you will call me ish you will no longer call me Baal so remember in Hebrew the original word for husband is ish the word for master is Baal from the Canaanite language the name of God will be restored he will once again be called ish God says you will call me ish not Baal and in the wider sense God is saying when I complete my restoration marriage will be between ish and ish between a loving protecting providing serving husband and his perfect counterpart both of them made in the image of God now in verse 19 and 20 God is going to renew his wife's betrothal and consummate the marriage again in purity and it says there three times

[45 : 53] I'll betroth you I'll betroth you I'll betroth you this is used for emphasis in the original Hebrew script they didn't have bold text they didn't underline things they didn't have italics so to emphasize things it would be repeated so he's emphasizing I will betroth you God is saying we'll go back to the days of our engagement we will start over and the most daring statement of all is the last one in verse 20 and you shall acknowledge the Lord as it's translated here it's the Hebrew word for know which is used in many other places in Genesis 4 verse 1 it's the same word where it says Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived and bore Cain you can see it's a very intimate kind of knowledge it's talking about that to which sexual physical intimacy points a deep relationship with God in which we know God and which we are known by God secondly even though Israel is a prostitute

God will restore her to a state of innocence how does God redeem his bride who has sold herself to prostitution well in chapter 3 verse 2 it says how Hosea buys back his wife so I bought her for 15 shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley a price is paid by the loving husband to redeem his wife from another man it's not clear whether he was buying her back from a pimp or a slave owner but this was very costly for Hosea clearly he didn't have enough cash to complete the transaction so he paid the balance out of his harvest now when you think about what God asked Hosea to do here as Ollie picked up on earlier you get a glimpse into what God's love for us in our wretchedness is like she had been faithless all along and finally she had gone off with another man

Hosea could have had her stoned under the law just like we but to be even willing to pay her new significant other to pay him to get her back and

God was saying to Hosea get her back whatever it costs get her back and this is a picture of the way God pays the price to buy back his people from prostitution to redeem them to redeem us to bring us back to himself that price is the blood of his son Jesus and that transaction will be brought to complete fulfillment when Jesus the bridegroom returns for his bride so in summary God the loving husband sacrificially redeems and restores his unfaithful wife and this is the gospel as revealed in the Old Testament this is the meaning of Christmas interpreted seven centuries before Christ appeared God comes to woo us tenderly to himself he promises us hope and safety he starts over with any who will come back to him and he offers us the most intimate and pleasure filled relationship possible so what does this mean for all of us is as we look back over the journey of the Israelite people it's easy for us to think well idol worship prostitution we're never going to do that but the point is that the Israelites just got involved in the stuff that was totally normal for the surrounding society and culture so for us we may not cast down our jewelry to make golden cows or to offer sacrifices to pagan fertility gods but like the Israelites do we sometimes get a bit fed up of waiting for God and try to do things our own way and do we sometimes get involved in the stuff which is totally normal for the surrounding society but actually goes against our worship of God and in a way do we worship the gods of the society around us that doesn't know our God you know I think materialism can do we love money more than we should or perhaps our career and even for those of us involved in Christian ministry I think success can easily become an idol do we want to be seen as being successful in our ministry more than we love

God idolatry is adultery when it comes to our relationship with God but the other application here is the pattern for marriage that we are presented with here and how we are to treat the opposite sex are we following the pattern of the world around us in how we act as husbands and wives and men and women rather than following God's pattern for ish and ish shah husbands do we love and sacrificially serve our wives like God loves his people or do we actually try to shirk our responsibilities wives do we love and serve our husbands in the way that God would want us to or do we try to control and manipulate our husbands if we've been following the pattern of the world around us rather than living according to God's ways then we need to repent but we have great hope in the promises of God that through the price he paid he can restore!

[51 : 26] us no matter how far we've gone he welcomes us back and gives us a new start a fresh start what wonderful news that is through the price Jesus has paid to redeem us he can restore us in our relationship with him and he can restore us in our relationships with each other let's pray together father father god we thank you for your word to us as we've read this we acknowledge that we have been led away from you by the culture around us we've not loved you with our whole lives we've been unfaithful to you we've not followed your pattern for how men and women are to relate to one another as people created equally in your image and according to the patterns for relationships that you've given us but lord we thank you thank you for the message of

Hosea thank you that you don't treat us as we deserve thank you that you paid the price to redeem us when we look at what Hosea went through with Goma we just think how painful must that have been and we recognize that you went through that pain for us to redeem us and you did that out of your love for us we're so thankful to you amen thank you Andrew today I think we need to hear once again this truth that there is a redeemer he heard us he saw us even before we knew that we were lost and stepped into history and gave himself for us one of my favorite passages that resonate with us more than others comes from

Romans and it says while we were still sinners Christ paid the price for us and I love it so much we had it at our wedding it seemed irrelevant for a wedding service I just wanted to have it in there because why not it was my choice our choice sorry our choice as I was preparing what to say at this point and thinking about the passage that we were looking at I got the sense that it was resonating really deeply with me and I needed prayer for it and I thought if that's happening with me as I'm preparing with a notepad and pen I can imagine it's true for a lot of us this morning if this message has resonated with you and for whom I believe this message is a deep one and needed one that is you we would love to pray for you this morning God wants to meet with you really really wants to meet with you he hears your cries and has a love so deep and profound it's a love that expands exponentially to accommodate whatever need there is if God has spoken to you today

Has no grave O came on me Then came the morning Then came the morning That sealed the promise Your buried body It began to breathe The house of the silence The roaring lion The roaring lion Take the one who set me free Oh, Jesus' source is the victory Hallelujah Praise the one who set me free Hallelujah Hallelujah Death, thy sauce, it's good for me You have broken every chain There's salvation in your name

Jesus Christ, my living hope Hallelujah There's no one who set me free Hallelujah There's no one who set me free You have broken every chain There's salvation in your name Jesus Christ, my living hope Jesus Christ, my living hope Oh God, you are my living hope Hallelujah Amen Please take a seat I wonder if you felt the presence of God here this morning

[69 : 28] The team that walk around with praying hands badges We'd love to pray with you, to meet with you in your needs To sit with you quietly To pray for your situations And to lift prayers and praise to our Father Before we go, there's a message I was meant to give at the beginning I completely forgot, I do apologise There's something, I want to figure out on the screen if that's possible I'll give it a moment, maybe not I'll do the blessing and then we'll see You may find it helpful to lift your hands out But just Now go In the name And that deep knowledge of Christ May he fill you with such light That you shine like a neon sign Amen Amen If there is a message

I don't know if it is I believe there was a Someone will correct me in all the details here But I believe the Halliday's are involved Sunday the 7th 5pm for tea and then an evening service 5pm for tea and then an evening service Missionaries in France Sorry?

Missionaries in France Yeah Missionaries in France I believe the tea will be In this building Where food is easily accessible Bless you Have a wonderful week And please join us for fellowship Tea and coffee and biscuits Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you