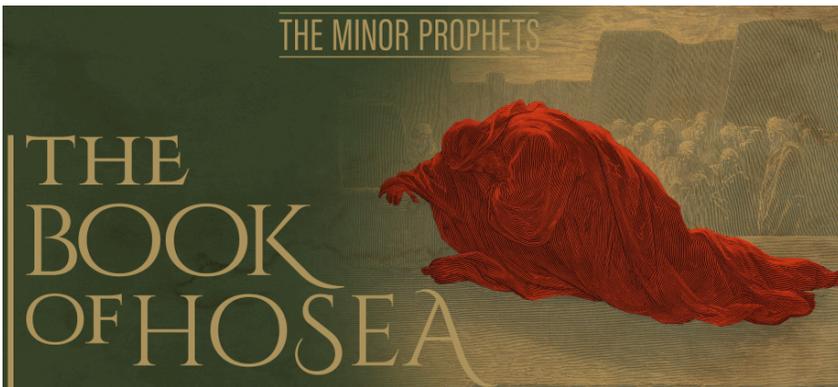


HOSEA

Faithful Love for the Unfaithful Lover

A St. Paul's Lutheran Bible Study



The world and Hollywood do all of us a disservice – they do not know how to define ‘love.’

More often than not, we love things and people that will love us back. We love things and people based on what they will do ‘for us.’ Tragically, this is not divine love. It is human love. It is a transaction.

In the third chapter of Hosea, we receive a definition of love that is out of this world. The view of love in the third chapter is ‘divine love.’ Or, we could classify this with the New Testament Greek word: agape love. More specifically, the kind of love portrayed in the Book of Hosea is love for the unworthy. It is love for the unlovable. As we will also see below, this love of Hosea is ‘costly.’ Love hurts the pocketbook. It is expensive.

As stated before, Gomer makes no move toward Hosea. How could she – she had forgotten him. And so, Hosea must pursue her. But where is she? As indicated in chapter 3, she is with her lover. Her promiscuity has brought her to another man.

So, there are three simple – yet profound – things we must pause and consider in chapter 3. First, there is absolutely no reason for Hosea to pursue Gomer. She has absolutely degraded the marriage and herself. Hosea has nothing to gain and everything to lose. Second, Gomer does not pursue Hosea, but Hosea pursues Gomer. Theologies that teach about mankind pursuing

HOSEA 3:1-5

Author:

Hosea the Prophet

Date:

740-715 BC

Place:

Israel

Purpose:

Israel was like an unfaithful wife. She was attracted away from her husband (the Lord) to other lovers (idols). In the book of Hosea, the Lord calls Israel back to Himself. It is a call for Israel to forsake her unfaithfulness and be restored in the Lord’s faithfulness.

Other:

Hosea is the most quoted book of the Minor Prophets in the New Testament.

God have it backward. Yes, when a church names itself, “The Pursuit,” they have entirely missed the mark on the nature of God. For example, the sheep does not go after the Shepherd, the coin does not find the woman, the prodigal son does not run to the Father, Gomer does not pursue Hosea, and Israel does not seek out God. Thirdly, as indicated before, ‘love hurts.’ In other words, love is not an abstract, ethereal feeling. Love is found in action. Love gets dirt under the fingernails. Love suffers, bleeds, and serves. In the case of Hosea, he literally bought Gomer back.

It is important to note that the cost of Gomer was half the price of a slave [according to some commentaries]. And so, this discounted price was most likely due to her worthlessness. She was not in a pretty state. It is also interesting to note that after Hosea purchased Gomer from her whorish life, there is an indication in the text that Hosea called her to temporary sexual abstinence. In other words, Gomer was to have no sex with any man – including Hosea. But why the abstinence with Hosea, her husband? Very simply stated, imagine if Hosea purchased Gomer and the very next night he approached her for sex – what would that communicate to Gomer? It would convey that Hosea’s love for Gomer was based on something that Gomer could give to Hosea – namely, sex. Oh, how this is such an important point for us to consider – spiritually speaking! It is ‘never’ man’s worship that brings salvation down from God. We are not like livestock that are purchased for what we can produce and do on the farm. We are not purchased by God for any future ‘return on investment’ that we can give to God. Gomer was not purchased because of the sexual satisfaction that she would give or could give to Hosea. She was not redeemed/purchased because of what she could do or would do; but instead, she was purchased and redeemed because of a divine love. Hosea mirrored the love of God – he loved and purchased Hosea because of his love for her and not for what he could obtain from her. Indeed, the love of God for sinners is not based on any return of investment or any output that the sinner can do or will do, but instead, it is based solely on God’s character.

It is often frustrating hearing 1 Corinthians 13 read at weddings, especially when it is clear that no one (often times including the pastor) knows what these verses are about. Consult 1 Corinthians 13 and consider this paraphrase/commentary: *Agape love does not act the way that we might think. It does its works of love secretly and hides them from others because it does not need the attention, affirmation, and applause from others. Agape love is not boastful, arrogant, or showy. Agape love does not seek to get but seeks to give. It does not insist on getting its own way; it is not irritable or resentful. It does not make a lot of noise rejoicing over the evil and failings of others. But this Agape love rejoices in truths, clings to truth, and promotes truth. It does not hold on to its works, but does everything for others. Agape love always turns outward with integrity and humility; it does not turn inward with loud selfishness.* Indeed, does not 1 Corinthians 13 describe the love of God, the love of Hosea? Contemplate 1 Corinthians 13 in light of Hosea 3.

