

- Hosea, a prophet, is called to mirror God's love for Israel by marrying Gomer, a woman with a roving eye and fickle heart.
- Ch 1-3 deals with Hosea's marriage to Gomer
- Ch 4-14 God's 'marriage' to Israel – contrasting their unfaithfulness with his faithfulness and warning of judgment if there is no turning back.

1. **The intensity of the relationship God wants**

- God doesn't simply relate to us as a king/shepherd/creator
- He is a husband – Song of Songs; Jer 2:2; 3:14; Is 54:5-8; Eph 5:22-33
- A relationship that is intensely personal and utterly binding
- Do we want to hold God at arms length?
- Do we close off areas of our lives from God?
- “The most incredible moments in the most incredible marriages in the history of the world are just dim hints of God's love for us” – Tim Keller
- Christianity is about enjoying the relationship purchased by Christ, not earning it ourselves

2. **The sordid ugliness of all sin**

- 1st son is Hosea's, 2 other children are someone else's.
- Then Gomer leaves. String of lovers, until finds herself in poverty.
- Hosea provides food, she thinks its from lovers 2:8,9
- Ungrateful, selfish, blind – chasing the short-tem thrill

a) **All sin is a betrayal of love**

- Saying to God “You aren't enough I need to look elsewhere for happiness”
- Maybe we flirt with sin as opposed to diving in – still a betrayal
- Spiritual adultery happens little by little

b) **All sin is deeply heartbreaking to God**

- The closer a relationship the more the hurt
- Is this how we repay God for rescuing us?

c) **All sin is a using of God**

- We only want God for what we can get out of him – gifts or even forgiveness
- We take, but what do we return?

d) **All sin is a lie**

- Always promises more than it gives
- There is always a cost
- Sin uses us and spits us out

3. **The Staggering beauty of Grace**

- Ch3 starts with Gomer being sold as a slave
- Who wants Gomer, the used up prostitute? God does!
- Hosea bids for her – bearing the cost, both financial and social

a) **Grace is costly love**

- Hosea was prepared to pay a great price for damaged goods because that's what God does
- Can you see Hosea bidding without seeing Jesus enduring the shame of the cross to rescue you?
- Hosea takes Gomer's shame, and he bears the cost of setting her free
- Jesus takes our shame and frees us from slavery to sin

b) **Grace is knowing love**

- Hosea knew what he was getting even when he married her 1:2
- God knows we have a roving eye and a fickle hrt – yet he chooses to love us

c) **Grace is forgiving love**

- 3:3 “You are to *live* with me”
- Adulterers usually stoned – Hosea offers life
- Doesn't cast her off, but gives her a home, even after repeated offences!
- Clothes her – Jesus clothes us with his righteousness

d) **Grace is purifying love**

- “You are not to be a prostitute or intimate with any man (inc Hosea)”
- There is not going to be a return to the old ways, but a patient rebuilding of a relationship

e) **Grace is a giving love**

- 3:3 “I will live with you” lit “I am for you”
- God's love isn't simply possessive, but giving
- The gospel isn't just the good news that we get forgiveness, but that we get God

Conclusion

- Do you have this relationship with God?
 - Is it based on grace, and is it personal?
- What do I seek happiness in? In God or elsewhere?
- Where have I been excusing sin? Make a thorough and searching moral inventory
- Be amazed at grace – stand at the Cross and marvel. Put yourself in Gomer's shoes.