**BCM Bible Study: March 27/28, 2019**

**Hosea 2-3: Bought with a Price**

Recap

Last week we read about God’s command for Hosea to marry a woman who would be unfaithful to him. This marriage was a picture of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God as they chased after and worshipped idols. The names of Hosea’s children were another sign that was meant as a statement of judgement against Israel. However, the chapter ended with a promise of restoration.

God takes Israel to Court

Hosea 2:1-15 is written in the form of a courtroom prosecution – God is taking Israel, his wife, to court. This section contains three subsections, the first two bringing an accusation and judgment against Israel, and the third giving the final sentencing.

* **Accusation 1: Read Hosea 2:1-7**
  + The primary “lover” to whom the Israelites were drawn was Baal, the Canaanite fertility God. The people believed that if they performed sexual acts with prostitutes at Baal shrines, they could induce Baal to fertilize the ground and bring rain for the food to grow. (Gross, but true) Knowing this, what is the accusation against Israel in v.5? (They believed their provision would come from a manipulation of Baal.)
  + In v.3 God says he will take away Israel’s provisions (clothes and food). In verses 6-7 God says he will block the Israelites from chasing other gods. What is his intent in doing this?
    - This is God’s first judgement, but how do you see God’s mercy in this seemingly severe act?
    - The concept of Baal seems foreign to us, but we often think like Baal worshippers when we try to manipulate our way into divine provision or lose sight of the fact that God is the only provider. In what ways are you prone to fall into these ways of thinking?
* **Accusation 2: Read Hosea 2:8-13**
  + The theme in this section is similar to the last: God gave blessings, and the Israelites sinned by forgetting that it was God who blessed them. Instead, they attributed their provision to their own ability to manipulate Baal. God says he will take all this away by means of destruction and exile.
    - This week at 633, we talked about the importance of trusting God to provide for us and seeking his kingdom first. **Read Matthew 6:31-33.**
    - Recall this quote from Tuesday night: “Confidence in God’s provision allows the undistracted pursuit of God’s will.”
      * How does doubt in God’s provision influence the way that you live? In what way can those actions be contrary to God’s design?
      * In what way would your life look different if you were to live in complete dependence on God?
    - We would be foolish to say that this dependence is easy! In what way is it difficult for you to trust God’s provision?
      * Take a moment to share as a group some ways that you have seen God’s provision in the past. Encourage people to recall these examples when doubts arise.
* **Final Judgement: Read Hosea 2:14-23**
  + What is God’s final “judgment” on Israel? Why is this surprising?
  + In the first two accusations, God promises to bring Israel low. He will take away all her provisions. What was his purpose in these actions?
    - **“**Yahweh has decided to appeal anew to his wayward bride, starting over with her in response to her willingness to return. The wilderness was where she was dependent on and relatively faithful to him after they were newly ‘married’ in the covenant at Sinai so there they will return, symbolically.” (Word Biblical Commentary)
  + God requires obedience from his people because he knows that our greatest satisfaction and joy in life will come from obeying him. Therefore, he sometimes pursues us through discipline for same reason that a parent disciplines a child: **Read Hebrews 12:5-8** and **James 1:2-4, 12**.
    - Often, when we face trials, our main focus is to escape that trial. How do these verses say we should think about trials?
    - How could this mindset shift the way that you act when you are undergoing a trial?

Hosea Buys Back Gomer**: Read Hosea 3:1-5**

* Hosea is told to love his wife. What does love look like in this passage?
  + NOTE: It seems that Hosea has bought Gomer out of some sort of sexual slavery (prostitution). Also, raisin cakes had to do with cultic worship. Though, it is funny to just read it as an addiction to raisin cakes.
  + What does Hosea require of his wife once he has bought her back?
    - Hosea would bring Gomer into his care. In one sense, this would have been restrictive – she would not have access to her previous lovers. However, this was ultimately for her good. Gomer would be restored, healed, and reconciled to Hosea as a result. God is telling Israel that the same thing will happen to them. The are going into exile where their gods will be taken away. This process, though difficult, would be redemptive.
  + What is God’s redemptive intent in v.5?
* Like Gomer, we too have been bought out of slavery: **Read 1 Corinthians 6:17-20**.
  + What connections to you see in this passage to Hosea 3?
  + Though Paul is writing specifically about sexual immorality, the same principle applies to sin in general.Like Gomer’s and Israel’s situation, fleeing sin can often feel like a restrictive command to keep us from good things. What reasons does Paul use to persuade the Corinthians to stop sinning (especially v.20)?
    - When we remember the radical measures that God has taken to be in relationship with us, we can be sure that he has our best intentions in mind. When is it difficult to believe that this is true?
  + **Read Galatians 5:1**
    - Sin often feels like freedom, but in reality, it is enslaving. In what way have you found this principle to be true?
    - In what ways do you desire freedom? What steps can you take to start moving towards this freedom?