

Big God, Big Love

- Morning Church
- You all look very good this morning
- For the next few minutes I want you to move around and greet someone that you haven't met yet
- This morning I will be speaking on Love and Service, consider that tomorrow is Valentine's day

Hosea 3:1 - 5

¹ The LORD said to me, “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 and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

² So I bought her for fifteen shekels^[a] of silver and about a homer and a lethek^[b] of barley. ³ Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.”

⁴ For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. ⁵ Afterward 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.

- Pray *
- I just read you a small portion from the book of Hosea but I feel it gives a nice summary into the emphasis and message of the book.
- Hosea was a prophet directed by God to marry an adulterous wife. Gomer, Hosea's wife, has many affairs but Hosea continues to love her despite this. He then takes her back as His wife.
- This was meant to be a picture of God's relationship with Israel. Israel at this time was prospering. It was not at war with any nations and was economically flourishing. During this time Israel began to turn away from God and worship other idols which were just a projection of their own desires and lusts.
- God used Hosea to warn Israel, that due to its corrupt state, it would eventually lead itself towards its own destruction. Throughout all these warnings Hosea pleaded with the people to repent of their idolatry and turn back to God.

- But I wonder if this story can be applied to many of us today as an example of our relationship with God.
- Simply put; God wants to have a relationship with us. He wants to share His love with us and receive our love in return.
- We have been created in the image and likeness of God; we are seen as valuable to Him.
- Unfortunately we do not always view God in the same way He views us.
- We can so easily put God to one side when life happens. (The children are going back to school and we get so busy with all the extra activities. Work issues arise and we focus on our finances and our issues. A family crisis strikes or an illness arises)
- Like Gomer we can easily prostitute ourselves onto the things of the world. **Yet God still loves us.**
- I can't imagine being Hosea, how he must have had to humble himself and swallow his pride when God instructed him to take back Gomer as his wife. How he must have felt to have loved her all this time but not be loved in return.
- But we can so often put God in Hosea's position of having to continually take us back

Romans 8:35 – 39

⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”^[a]

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[b] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- It amazes me how this big God, the creator of all things will continually love me no matter how low I might have fallen. That He loves me so much that while I was still a sinner He sent Christ to die for me.
- Church... we must learn to love God the same way He loves us. As passionately as we did when we first came into relationship with Him
- People are saying to me now that I am getting married that they remember being that in love with their wife when they first got married. They warn me of how that intense love will fade over time.

- I understand the romantic love will need to be worked at continually to keep it alive but my goal is to love my wife more and more with each day we spend together.
- To learn new things about her as our relationship grows and develops.
- Church... Let us not say the same in regards to our relationship with God. Let us not say I remember being that passionate about God when I first got saved.

Revelation 2:2 - 5

² “I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don’t tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. ³ You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

⁴ “But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first! ⁵ Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don’t repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches.

- We stop learning more about Him because we become casual about our relationship with Him. We become disobedient, we stop reading the Bible, stop praying, stop coming to Church.

- We must learn to love God more and more with each passing day. We must continue in the process of our discipleship with Him. We should be learning more about Him each day as we fall deeper in love.
- Our love for God should permeate everything we do. In how we live our lives and what we spend our time on or with. It should translate it service for Him.

Ephesians 6: 5 - 8

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. ⁶ Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. ⁷ Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. ⁸ Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

- Unfortunately we live in a world where things like ‘serving’ someone is unheard of. We live in a world that loves things and uses people when we should love people and use things

- Although we must serve God we must realise that God values us more than anything we can do for Him. So when we serve God, He is interested more in our attitude of service than in what we are doing for Him. So when we serve in worship, frontline, youth, planet kids etc. are heart attitude should be that we are not doing someone a favour. But that we show are love for God through our area of service
- Let's say for example that I bring my wife home some flowers. I mean these are some beautiful flowers. It's her favourite type of flower and I've gotten the arrangement and colours right and everything. Now I bring em in the house and she is just blown away. She takes out a vase and smiles and says this means so much that you were thinking of me; I'm so surprised that you went through so much effort. And what if I respond, I'm your husband it's my duty. It does really work does it? Or I say I wasn't really thinking of you, there was a sale and it wasn't really a hassle to get them for you. Or I say something like, I figured you needed them?
- Does she even want the flowers anymore? No! Why? Because she wants my heart. And if she doesn't have my heart, my words and actions don't mean a thing.
- It say in the book of Isaiah (29:13) that, 'these people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me'
- God doesn't want empty rituals of service... He wants our hearts, He wants to love us and be loved in return

- Hosea served God in spite of the situation with his wife. Hosea continually ministered to the people of Israel even though they rejected his message. It was not easy for him to serve God in the situation he found himself, it cost him something to serve God. **But he remained faithful!**
- We read earlier in Hosea 3 that, “² So I bought her for fifteen shekels^[a] of silver and about a homer and a lethek^[b] of barley.”
- It cost Hosea something to be obedient to God when he was told to take back his wife. It cost him some of his ‘riches’.
- We are ‘rich’ to reach
- We are rich in Christ, we are rich in the love and grace that God has for us. And we must use that love and grace to reach others. To minister to those in our workplace, our family’s, our friends.
- It will cost us something to serve God; it will cost us something to reach others and serve them.
- It may cost us our time when we have to get up early to come serve in Church on Sunday or come to a prayer meeting
- It will cost us our finances when we tithe or if God prompts you to bless someone in your life.
- It will even cost us our comfort zones, the places we feel safe in, because God wants us to reach beyond just ourselves.

- Even though at times it might be difficult to serve God, to push through, to remain obedient and faithful.... to live a big life for this big God...
- The reward far out-weighs the cost. Don't get caught up in what it will cost you; get caught up in the lives that will be changed, get caught up in the eternal difference you will make, get caught up in the love of God... and the cost won't matter.
- *Response Time* (possibly use Psalm 91:14 – 16 in response?)