

Applying Hosea 1 - 3 to our lives

A summary by Terran Williams of
Michael Eaton's brilliant commentary

Hosea Chapter One

AN UNHAPPY MARRIAGE

1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash [a] king of Israel:

- **Each age needs God's messengers with their own distinctive message.**
 - By this time in history (about 755BC) the Israelites had split into the northern kingdom called Israel, and the southern kingdom called Judah. Hosea lived in the North so his prophecies primarily focused in Israel.
 - Five kings are mentioned. Each were famous for different things:
 - Four of them kings of Judah in the South:
 - Uzziah - prosperous days, but became proud
 - Jotham - he beautified the temple, while neglected the rising Assyrian threat
 - Ahaz - false gods, gave his son in human sacrifice
 - Hezekiah - loved God, hated idols
 - One of them was simultaneously king of Israel in the North:
 - Jeroboam - long, prosperous reign but corrupt
 - In the midst of these various ages, God was speaking to and through Hosea. This was a time in Israel primarily marked by compromise and unfaithfulness to the God who had created and redeemed the nation of Israel. So God chooses a dominant metaphor in the preaching of Hosea: the metaphor of a heart-broken lover.

Hosea's Wife and Children

2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD."

- **God will sometimes use our life circumstances as a metaphor for what he's doing in us and through us.**
 - Hosea was instructed to marry a promiscuous woman, who already had children. He would adopt them as his own. This would bring him great pain, no doubt. But God used it as an object lesson to Hosea about how God himself felt about Israel.

- **God feels about our unfaithfulness like a husband feels about his wife's adultery.**
 - Throughout this book we will see different ways that Israel had fallen from God and his ways. Politics was corrupt. Society was unjust and immoral. Religion was idolatrous. But since God was in a loving covenant with Israel it was as though he were married to her. He experienced her unfaithfulness as adultery. It shattered him, and roused his jealousy and anger, severing the intimacy and communication between Him and her. Hosea, in this book, rebuked the adultery.

'I have made you a messenger. You too have experienced many different things in life that I have used to shape your burdens and your style and your emphasis in ministry. I have sovereignly shaped you for the work I have for you. And a prophetic messenger, before anything else, is someone who senses what God senses, feels what God feels, and thinks what God thinks. I will open your eyes so that you can see.'

3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. 5 In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel."

- **A culture of violence will bring God's judgment onto it.**
 - Hosea's son was named Jezreel, which was the place where, 80 years before, Jehu went on a blood-thirsty rampage and massacred many people. Jezreel symbolized the culture of violence that had marked Israel since that time. God promised to end Israel if it did not repent. Sadly they did not repent, because thirty years after the reign of Jeroboam the nation Israel would be stripped of their national identity and independence by the powerful Assyrians.
 - The judgment is that Israel will be defeated in war - which is the meaning of 'to have their bow (ie a symbol of military power) broken'.

LIKE THE SAND ON THE SEA-SHORE (1:6-2:1)

6 Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means "not loved"), for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. 7 Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God."

8 After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. 9 Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi (which means "not my people"), for you are not my people, and I am not your God." [OR I am not your 'I Am'.]

- **There comes a time when God says 'Enough is enough!'**
 - All three children have names that predict God's judgment on Israel. He will, in the coming judgment, withdraw his love and mercy (v6) and his ownership of them and his promise to be their 'I Am' (v9). This came to pass in 723 BC when the Assyrians overcame Israel.
 - The emphasis is on the *persistent* unfaithfulness of Israel as seen in the words 'no longer' in verse 6. He is basically saying 'enough is enough'. This same principle is seen in Hebrews 6:6 where it says that through persistent disobedience there comes a time where God cannot renew us *again*. Our hearts become so hard that God allows the relationship to die.
 - In Exodus 19:6 God has promised that if they listened to his voice and obeyed his covenant then they would be his special treasure. But they clearly have not kept their side - so God is backing off from them too. He will allow them to experience the consequences of their choices and their unfaithfulness.
 - A brief note on verse 7. Eaton suggests that the TNIV (and ESV) for that matter gets it exactly wrong - because instead of the word 'yet' it should be the word 'neither'. This means that Judah also is under God's judgment and he will not save them.

[c] 10 "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'children of the living God.' 11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

Hosea 2

1 "Say of your brothers, 'My people,' and of your sisters, 'My loved one.'

- **Understand the relationship between the church and Israel.**
 - For theological clarity, the church of Jesus Christ consists of the chosen, believing remnant (i.e. subsection) of the Israelites PLUS the large number of Gentiles grafted in. 'All those who belong to Christ are Abraham's seed' (Gen 3:29).
 - However, Romans 11:15 and 25 lets us know that at a certain time in history there will be a mighty revival that will sweep multitudes of Jews into the kingdom.
 - There is Israel 'according to the flesh' and Israel 'according to the Spirit'. Gentiles cannot be numbered in the first, but are numbered in the second. That's why the church can be described as the new Israel, or the restructured Israel.

- **God has been doing something wonderful in his church, ‘the new Israel’ (with Gentiles grafted in), since the coming of Jesus.**
 - In striking contrast to the promised judgment and withdrawal of God in the previous verses, God will make his people new again. We see seven different ways he shall restore them in the future, some of them being fulfilled even before the coming of Christ, but all of them being fulfilled in the coming of Christ...
 - *1) Numerical increase.* The promise God made to Abraham about his children being more numerous than the sands of the seashore will come to pass.
 - NT fulfilment: the explosive growth of the church in the world.
 - *2) A new relationship.* ‘In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God.’”
 - NT fulfilment: This was fulfilled in the Samaritan revival mentioned in the book of Acts (8:4-17). It was in the same ‘place’.
 - *3) A new unity.* ‘11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together’. This prediction has several fulfilments:
 - OT fulfilment:
 - Many of the Israel Jews would go live amongst the Judah Jews (2 Chron 30:11).
 - After the Exile, Jews from both the north (i.e. Israel) and the south (i.e. Judah) would return to make up the new Israel.
 - NT fulfilment:
 - Revival would come to Samaria (Acts 1:8 and 8:4-17).
 - The ‘people of Israel’ could symbolize the Gentiles (because they were Jewish-Gentile half breeds) - which explains why Paul quotes Hosea 1:10 in Romans 9:24-26 to refer to God bringing the Gentiles in.
 - As all different kinds of people experience the same head Jesus so they are united to each other in unity.
 - *4) A new head.* ‘they will appoint one leader’
 - NT fulfilment: Jesus - is the one who brings both Gentiles and Jews under his leadership. God is restoring all things under the headship of Christ (Eph 1:10).
 - *5) A new exodus.* ‘and will come up out of the land’
 - This refers to ‘people being set free from something and entering into something else God has for them’.
 - OT fulfilment: many Israelites would return after the exile - they would be set free from captivity and would come up out of the land.

- NT fulfilment:
 - Every person who gets saved experiences a kind of exodus. The remnant of Jews who would get saved would experience this. As with the Gentiles who would be grafted into Israel.
 - When Jesus returns to 'take us with him' into the new heaven and the new earth we will experience a kind of exodus.
- 6) *A new beginning.* 'for great will be the day of Jezreel.'
 - The name Jezreel means 'God sows.' It had a negative connotation as seen in 1:4 where it speaks of God sowing judgment. But God, in his redemptive grace, will give the name Jezreel a new positive connotation: 'God will sow his people again so that they will become fruitful.'
 - NT fulfilment:
 - Although we were meant to be destroyed by God's judgment - yet God in his mercy will make us seed that he plants in his kingdom and we will be fruitful. All because of Jesus. Eph 2:3 speaks of us being under God's wrath. Eph 2:10 speaks about the good works we get to do as God's new creations. We have a new beginning.
- 7) *A new identity.* "Say of your brothers, 'My people,' and of your sisters, 'My loved one.'
 - Hosea's children would have constantly said to each other, 'Your name is not-my-people. And your name is not-my-loved-one.' But Hosea says that instead, the new people of God will say to each other, 'Your name is my-people. Your name is my-loved-one.'
 - NT fulfilment:
 - We get a brand new identity in Christ. We were once not his people but now we are his people. We were once not his-loved-children but now we are!

'I am the God who makes all things new. I am doing something new in this world. I am doing something new in the church. I am the God who is restoring all things. As I bring all things under the One Head Christ, so they are, as a result, brought into harmony with each other. I am restoring the church to the fullness I have for her. She is my people. She is my loved one. I love her. I sow the church, and every local church, and every Christian, like a seed in this world to be fruitful and productive. I have called you to be fruitful and productive. I sow your life in fruitfulness. You will bear much fruit. In the place of judgment I sow you as an act of grace. I am a God in whom mercy triumphs over judgment. I am at work in this world - drawing people into grace and into newness.'

Hosea Chapter Two

WAYWARD WIFE AND WOUNDED HUSBAND (2:2-7)

- There is a break-down in the relationship with Gomer and Hosea as she is unfaithful. Hosea 2:2-23 is about this. But the prophetic focus is really on Israel's relationship with God - as seen in verse 8 (where it says 'they' instead of her).

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.

- **Wayward wife: Unfaithfulness alienates us from the experience of God's affection.**
 - Hosea asks the children (probably the adopted kids which she already had when they married) to speak to their mother (who must be living with another) to persuade her that she is ruining the marriage and that she must repent from her adultery and unfaithfulness.
 - The adulterous look on her face probably referred to the jewellery and make-up prostitutes wore - as did the something dangling between her breasts.
 - Israel had been unfaithful to God in the worship of Baal. They mixed the two together - Yahweh-and-Baal-worship.
 - We are in danger of syncretism as the church too: we can subtly mix lies into our teachings, or worldliness into our worship, or compromise into our lifestyles.

3 Otherwise I will strip her naked
and make her as bare as on the day she was born;
I will make her like a desert,
turn her into a parched land,
and slay her with thirst.
4 I will not show my love to her children,
because they are the children of adultery.

- **Wounded husband: unfaithfulness to God leads to humiliation, thirst and deprivation.**
 - Israel will be punished by God with:
 - Humiliation - being made naked - this referred to the prospect of being internationally shamed through being beaten by Assyria - which eventually happened in 723.
 - Dryness and thirst - instead of experience the 'milk and honey' that this land was meant to give them, they would experience a drought.

- Deprivation - Eaton explains that verse 4 that Hosea will cut the children off from the mother.

5 Their mother has been unfaithful
and has conceived them in disgrace.
She said, 'I will go after my lovers,
who give me my food and my water,
my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.

- **Wayward wife: we are in danger of distorting our religion to be something that exists to make our lives easier.**
 - Gomer did not just have affairs - she was drawn to prostitution because of the promises of provision.
 - Similarly, Israel worshipped Baal because it promised agricultural fertility, indiscriminate sex, and an easy-relationship with surrounding pagan nations (why repudiate them when you can imitate them?).
 - Similarly, we as the church are in danger of distorting our faith into something which makes our lives easier - as seen in the Prosperity teaching across the world, or in the suburban tendency to make Christianity the missing puzzle piece to the balanced suburban life.

6 Therefore I will block her path with thorn bushes;
I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.
7 She will chase after her lovers but not catch them;
she will look for them but not find them.
Then she will say,
'I will go back to my husband as at first,
for then I was better off than now.

- **Wounded husband: God is at work in the disillusionments that sin and pursuing the false gods bring.**
 - It seems that Hosea was doing all he could to undermine Gomer's pursuits of other lovers.
 - God, in his chastening grace, determined to 'block Israel's path' in the worship of false gods by letting them see that 'though so much is promised, yet so little is delivered'. His hope is that, as they become disillusioned with the 'new gods' that they will come to their senses and return to Him.
 - Similarly, today God is at work in the disillusionments of sin and the pursuit of false gods. The much easier way is to follow God's Word immediately - the harder way to take is to reject God's Word and chase your own ideas and the lures of the culture - only to realize after much wasted life that there is nothing there - and then, through pain, to come home to God. Why delay? Why go through that pain? Why waste your life?
 - Prophetically, many nations have become post-Christian - and have gone in pursuit of other gods and religions and values - and,

let's trust God that sooner rather than later that they experience disillusionment and came back.

8 She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold— which they used for Baal.

- **Wayward wife: we are in danger of using what God has given us to indulge our own evil pursuits.**
 - Israel believed that it was 'Baal' who was supplying them with grain, new wine and oil - when it was really God who had given them this! And they took the very gold and silver which God had entrusted to them and used it to make idols.
 - Similarly, we are in danger of not seeing that 'all good things come from God above' - and instead we attribute it to our own brilliance or luck or belief system. And we use our very God-given provisions to indulge the sinful nature.

9 "Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness.
10 So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands.
11 I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals.
12 I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them.
13 I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot," declares the LORD.

- **Threatening husband: If we don't repent, God threatens us with failure.**
 - God threatens their prosperity as a nation (v10).
 - This applies to us in that the end of our pursuits will be disappointment.
 - God threatens their honour with public, international shaming (v11).
 - This applies to us in that we will shrink in shame at Christ's coming.

- God threatens the apparent success of their syncretistic religion (v12).
 - This applies to us in that ultimately all forms of Christianity that are not firmly upon the revealed will of God will fail.
- God threatens their environment (v13).
 - This applies to us in that human sin (eg greed and inequality and corrupt government) are the root causes of our current ecological crises.
- God threatens her future (v14).
 - This applies to us in that the root sin behind worldliness and the pursuit of other gods is ‘forgetting God’. And the result is that our very future is threatened.

‘I am a husband to the church. I love the church. And I want her to be faithful to me. I want her to worship me in Spirit and in truth - as I really am. I want her to not forget me. And when she does slip into darkness my heart breaks, but I go to work with warnings and interventions. I seek to allure her back to myself. I love her with all my heart. She is mine. I want to bless her with my intimacy and my presence. I want to give her my glory - I want to honour her in the nations, and I want to honour her highly at my coming. I am at work in the beautification of the church. But she must not let her strength and her beauty be used for anything but my glory.’

PARADISE REGAINED (2:14-23)

- Just as 1:2-9 is followed up by the gracious section of 1:10-2:1 so 2:2-13 is followed up by the gracious section of 2:14-23

14 "Therefore I am now going to allure her;
I will lead her into the wilderness
and speak tenderly to her.
15 There I will give her back her vineyards,
and will make the Valley of Achor [b] a door of hope.
There she will respond [c] as in the days of her youth,
as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

- **God promises a new courtship wherein he restores sinners to a place of wonderful intimacy with himself.**
 - The language is the language of courtship (allure, lead, speak tenderly). He will awaken a response (v15) in her.
 - The Valley of Achor was where Achan was killed for his sin - when he stole goods for himself. Achor represents the place of trouble (that’s what the word literally means) and judgment. But God promises to turn the place of judgment and self-inflicted trouble into a door of hope. In other words his mercy will triumph over his judgment.

- He will so allure his people that they will be like they were when they first went into the wilderness out of Egypt. Although there were some low moments in the desert, compared to the apostasy under the kings, they were, while in the desert, relatively people of faith who did not give themselves to idolatry. God is promising to make them freshly devoted to him. He promises to redeem them from his own judgment (i.e. Achor) much like he redeemed them from his own wrath through the blood of a lamb and then took them into the wilderness.

16 "In that day," declares the LORD,
 "you will call me 'my husband';
 you will no longer call me 'my master. [OR 'my Baal' - which is the better translation]"

17 I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips;
 no longer will their names be invoked.

- **God promises a new purity of faith and worship.**
 - Israel will be allured back to treating God as he really is - their loving Husband. And they will no longer mix worship to Yahweh with worship to Baal or to the Baals. Instead they will be devoted only to Yahweh.
 - The Israelites in the North had created a religious cocktail - mixing pagan worship into their own religion. They introduced idolatry, sexual rituals, rituals to attract agricultural prosperity into their religion. But God was determined to purify them - and get rid of the cocktail approach to faith.
 - This speaks potently to our day where people say 'All religions are essentially around the same God.' However, just because Islam, Christianity and Hinduism all use the same word 'god' does not mean that it is the same God at all. The God of the Bible is very different to the other gods. And God wants us to know him as he really is.

'I am a gracious God. My mercy triumphs over judgment. While people are on this earth, all of my judgment is redemptive. I am seeking to wake people up to the emptiness and deception in their lives. I am trying to draw them to me - to the God I really am. I want to lure people into that place of intimacy and of my love. I want to show my affection to them, and draw them closer into my whispers.'

18 In that day I will make (or 'cut for them') 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.

19 I will betroth you to me forever;
 I will betroth you in [or 'with'] righteousness and justice,

in [or 'with'] love and compassion.
20 I will betroth you in faithfulness,
and you will acknowledge (or 'know') the LORD.

- **God promises an Eden-like restoration of creation and a new marriage between him and his people - he wants us to know him.**
 - God promises to cut a covenant with his people. A covenant is a totally binding pledge. In this covenant there will be:
 - The restoration of creation with its creatures. In 2:13 we have seen that human sin negatively impacts creation - yet God promises to restore creation (v18a).
 - The end of war and crime and violence on the earth (v18b).
 - An eternal experience of marriage-intimacy with God wherein we experience his righteousness, justice, love, compassion and faithfulness (v19,20).
 - A profound intimate knowledge of Yahweh (v20b).
 - This is an example of the panoramic nature of prophecy. From a high vantage point one can see nearby mountains and far-off mountains. And one can in an instant shift focus from one to the other. Similarly, the prophets were given panoramic glimpses into both the near future and the far future. These verses describe the far-off future of the new heaven and the new earth, which will be enjoyed by all who trust in Christ, the new King David.
 - However, we need to understand that this promise of restoration comes in stages:
 - Even before Christ comes, the restoration of Israel under Nehemiah and Ezra fulfils this in part.
 - In the coming of Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit on the new Israel (with Gentiles grafted in), and in the progressive mission of the church through the millennia, this is fulfilled progressively but in part. Romans 11:15 suggests a dramatic outpouring of the Spirit on the earth before Christ returns - a kind of latter-day rain.
 - In the return of Christ this is fulfilled completely.

21 "In that day I will respond,"
declares the LORD—
"I will respond to the skies,
and they will respond to the earth;
22 and the earth will respond to the grain,
the new wine and the olive oil,
and they will respond to Jezreel. [g]
23 I will plant her for myself in the land;
I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one. [see 1:6]'
I will say to those called 'Not my people, [see 1:9]' 'You are my people';
and they will say, 'You are my God.' "

- **God promises to restore harmony within creation and between Him and humanity - he wants us to experience his fruitfulness, his planting and his love.**
 - The word 'respond' can also be translated 'sing'. God will sing to the skies - which will sing to the earth by sending rain - which will sing to the grain, wine and oil bringing about amazing fruitfulness on the earth - all will be a singing display of 'Jezreel' (which means 'God's ability to plant') (v21,22).
 - God wants to plant his people in the land. He wants to reconcile them to himself, so that they can confidently know him as their God (v23).
 - This is fulfilled in part through the coming of Jesus and fully at his second coming! Oh happy day!

Hosea Chapter Three

HOSEA'S LOVE AND GOD'S LOVE

1 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another 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 (or 'and then indeed I will be yours')."

- **God calls us to an enduring, redeeming, costly kind of love toward each other.**
 - Put yourself in Hosea's shoes. He must have battled feelings of pain, regret, bitterness, anger, self-righteousness - and everything inside of him must have wanted to just move on. But God won't let him. Even while she is caught in adultery, Hosea is to move toward her in redeeming love.
 - The reason is that he is to reflect God's love for his people, despite their idolatry and love for the raisin cakes (offerings to a feminine deity).
 - Hosea is to love her in three ways:
 - 1) He is to buy her back from the man she has sold herself to (v2).
 - 2) He is to restrict her from sexual intimacy with anyone including himself, until such time there is a change of heart (v3a).
 - 3) He is to give himself to her and insist that he will never let her go (v3b).

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.

- Hosea is to love Gomer in three ways (see verses 1-3) that are energized by and expressive of God's love for his people in the same three ways:
- **1) God, at a price to himself, sets us free from the bondage of our sin.**
 - Our sin truly does land us in bondage. Gomer landed up enslaved. Israel had become enslaved to false gods. The very gods that promised freedom have brought slavery.
 - In the Old Testament God sets the Israelites free at the cost of a lamb. In this situation the cost is the distance to which he is willing to go to love them. In the New Testament, it is the blood of Jesus that is the cost.
- **2) God, in the case of severe persistent unfaithfulness, will eventually greatly strip us of our idolatries and false securities (v4).**
 - '4 For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods'
 - The time of this particular prophecy was probably about 752BC - and the nation would be destroyed 25 years later (in 723BC) - and then 'the many days' of great restriction (v4) would begin. All the things they have held onto with false security (see rest of v4) will be gone. The Northern kingdom was about to be destroyed. To this day, Israel has not restored 'sacrifices'.
- **3) Since the coming of Jesus, God's people will be restored in their whole-hearted pursuit of God and his King, and in their experience of his blessings (v5).**
 - Vs 5 speaks of 'afterward' and 'in the last days'. It speaks of the distant future. Although verse 4 is about the soon-to-come future and is very bleak, verse 5 is about the far-off future and is stunningly positive.
 - It speaks of the new King David who would come in the order of the first king David. This would mean that he would be a righteous king who loved God, and who hated idolatry, and who ruled a united victorious kingdom consisting of all the people of God. This is Jesus.
 - We have begun to experience the blessings that come from the pursuit of and trembling surrender to King Jesus: unlike the loss the Israelites experienced in verse 4, Jesus has become our:
 - King
 - Prince = he is the Son of God Most High
 - Sacrifice = his death on the cross that brings salvation
 - Pillar = the upright stone that commemorates an encounter with God (see Gen 28:18).

- Ephod = guide in major decision-making
 - 'household god' or Image = Jesus is the image of the invisible God.
- **God's love will ultimately triumph over the rebellion of his people.**
 - Hosea knew what kind of woman Gomer was when he took her, but he commits himself to her, through all the pain and cost, and ultimately he restores her to himself.
 - God knows what kind of people Israel is and yet he commits, through all the pain and cost and time, to win her over to himself. His love will triumph over her resistance to his love, and her crazy preference of other gods.
 - God, today, knows what kind of people we are when he calls us to be married to him (which is what trusting in Jesus amounts to) - and he commits to win us to himself despite all our rebellions and resistances and addictions and crazy fascinations with sin! He is committed to us for the long haul - and, when other people would be sure God has given up on us, let us not be so sure. Let us remember Hosea and Gomer - a picture of Christ's pained and patient pursuit of his own bride!