

## Hosea 1-3

### Introduction

- I. The Lord is a Jealous God (Exodus 34:12-14)
  - A. There is a bad jealousy = wanting something that is not rightfully ours  
= “envy” or “covetousness”
  - B. But God has a holy jealousy = wanting something that is rightfully His (our hearts)
    1. God’s jealousy is his zeal and passion to be first in our hearts and lives
    2. Analogy: marriage  
It is fitting for a husband to be “jealous” for his wife’s romantic affections
- II. Hosea is the story of God’s jealousy for his people

### The Passage

- I. The context
  - A. About 750 BC, during the divided kingdom
  - B. On the outside, life is good
  - C. On the inside, the people have wandered from God and have pursued other gods
  - D. So God uses Hosea’s life and words to express his jealousy for his people
- II. Hosea’s Experience
  - A. Hosea’s marriage
    1. God calls Hosea to marry someone who will prove unfaithful (v. 1-2)
  - B. God calls Hosea to raise a family with her
    1. First son, Jezreel (v. 3-4), would remind people of an event where a former king went on a reckless killing spree
    2. Daughter, “Not Loved”
    3. Son, “Not my people”
  - C. Imagine what it would have been like for people around town to witness this marriage: an adulterous woman and a faithful, loving husband.
  - D. Eventually Gomer leaves Hosea completely and probably sells herself as a concubine
  - E. God calls Hosea to buy Gomer back and be her husband yet again (3:1-3)
- III. God’s Experience
  - A. God uses Hosea’s marriage to say to Israel: “I have been a faithful husband to you, and you have cheated on me again and again. And I am Jealous!” God expresses both anger/judgment and ultimate grace/mercy/compassion for his bride.
  - B. Chapter 1
    1. God’s anger/judgment (v. 1-9)
    2. God’s mercy/compassion (v. 10-2:1)
  - C. Chapter 2
    1. God’s anger/judgment (v. 2-13)
      - a. Israel was worshipping the Canaanite God, Baal (v. 8, 13), and they were attributing to him provision for rain and therefore grain, bread, wine, oil (v. 5, 8)
      - b. Meanwhile they were still claiming to worship God (v. 11)

- c. God promises judgment in the form of drought and famine (v. 3, 9, 12) to prove that he is the one who provides, rather than Baal
- d. God's purpose is that Israel would repent and realize that they had it better when they worshipped him alone (v. 7)
- 2. God's mercy/compassion (v. 14-23)
  - a. God speaks tenderly and even seductively to Israel, communicating his desire to woo her and bring her back to the honeymoon phase of their relationship
  - b. God promises to bring the rain and provision again

### Conclusion

- I. Do we believe that God is really jealous and zealous for our hearts' affections?
  - A. At the center of the universe is not a moralistic God who merely wants our good behavior, but a passionate lover who wants our hearts
    - Most important command in Scripture is not "obey" God but rather "love" God with all heart, mind, soul, and strength
    - The battle is first and foremost not a battle for our behavior but a battle for our hearts
- II. What are our idols today?
  - A. What threatens to lead our hearts and minds away from a "pure and simple devotion to Christ (2 Cor 11:2)?"
  - B. Where are we tempted to place our ultimate security, significance, and satisfaction?
  - C. Possible idols: human approval, wealth, addiction, image, children, possessions, hobbies, a certain image of the future, etc
  - D. While many idols can be good things, over time if they receive too much of our devotion they can actually pull our hearts away from pure and simple devotion to Christ
  - E. We can worship idols and still live very moral and respectable lives (example of the rich young ruler)
- III. What is the call for us today?
  - A. Acknowledge our idols, confess them, and take action to rid them from our heart's deepest affection (this may require radical action at times)
  - B. Proactively pursue a passionate relationship with God
    - Create space in our lives for God to pursue us (time in his Word, retreats, small groups, things that connect us with him, etc)

## Discussion Questions

1. As you consider Hosea 1-3, what struck you most about the story of Hosea and Gomer and God's expression of his own jealousy for his people through that story?
2. Discuss your reaction to the statement made on Sunday: "At the heart of the universe is not a moralistic prude who is just interested in our good behavior, but a passionate lover who wants our hearts." How does that statement interact with your own view of God and the way you live your life?
3. As you consider the idols in our culture today, what currently threatens to lead you astray from a pure and simple devotion to Christ? What are you tempted to put your security, significance, or satisfaction in apart from God?
4. What steps do you hope to take to let go of the hold an idol has on you?
5. What steps do you hope to take to more passionately pursue your relationship with God? Or, to look at it another way, what steps do you hope to take to create more space in your heart and life to allow Him to pursue you?