

This lesson is a continuation of Hosea's efforts to win Gomer back to him. Thus, it is also a continuation of God's effort to allure Israel back to Him. Though Gomer, like Israel, has done wicked things, God still loves Israel and Hosea still loves Gomer. The Bible makes it clear to us that it is easy to love those who love us. Yet, how difficult it is for man to love someone who may have wronged him.

Put yourself in Hosea's place for a moment. Here we find him under the command of God to go find his unfaithful wife and bring her back home. No, he was not allowed to take a gun with him to go look for her. Hosea will even be required to pay a price to get her back. What a godly and forgiving man Hosea must have been! Likewise, what a loving and forgiving God we serve. Blessed be His wonderful name. Are you a forgiving person?

(Verse 1)

"Then said the Lord unto me." God in heaven is making a request and giving an instruction to Hosea. He's asking him to go and find his estranged wife, Gomer. I pause to wonder how many men would have said "yes, God, I will do as You have commanded me." "My wife has acted like trash and betrayed me and broken our marriage vow. Yet, I will seek her out and love her the same as before."

Gomer has grossly misbehaved. She is walking in adultery. She has borne two illegitimate children. Now, Hosea is supposed to take her back? He is supposed to treat her as if nothing has happened? The Hebrew text reads, "go show your love to your wife again." He is instructed to go love a woman who has found other men. How much of God's grace would this require? How difficult would such a task be? It *can* be done by the grace of God. Women can forgive their husbands of unfaithfulness and men can forgive their wives of unfaithfulness. It requires the Lord's help. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Matthew 18:15 reads "*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*"

Gomer's lovers were providing her with something she dearly loved- "flagons of wine." This most likely is in reference to raisin cakes. Raisin cakes were evidently part of pagan worship of the day. Jeremiah 7:18 "*The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.*" Queen of Heaven was likely Astarte, the "mother of God." Gomer loves raisin cakes. Her adulterous friends could give them to her. Perhaps Hosea, being

poor as he was, could not provide her raisin cakes.

How much of God's grace is manifest in your life? Are you an example of patience, tolerance, love, and mercy or are you harsh, indicative, threatening, or intimidating? Could you have done what Hosea did with Gomer and forgive someone who has spurned you? Rest assured, it is very easy to hold grudges and cling to bitterness. This is natural for our flesh. On the other hand, to show mercy and forgiveness toward our offenders is *God's will for our life*. It requires the grace of God working in our heart. However, we know God's grace is unlimited, and God's grace can give us the power to do His will in our lives. I am speaking to people this morning who, if you would confess, are holding a grudge from many years ago. Deep in your heart you have made the decision to *not* let it go. Life will pass you by and you will never know the fullness God has for your life. Are you sure you want to carry that ill-will against one of God's people to the grave? Wife, don't club your husband over the head with his failure of the past. Husband, don't club your wife over the head with her failure of the past.

Some years ago I read a beautiful story in the newspaper. Along with the news article was a picture. The picture was of two men sitting in a porch swing side-by-side. Many years earlier, one man, a Japanese, had been an interrogator for Japan in World War II. The other man, an American, had been a U. S. pilot shot down and captured by the Japanese. He had been interrogated and tortured by the Japanese man sitting in the swing beside him. But now, all was forgiven. They sat in the swing together in a state of reconciliation. All animosity was gone. All bitterness was swept away. They were smiling. What a beautiful sight! This could be you!

(verse 2)

As we look at verse two, we find a price is involved. The sum of 15 pieces of silver is mentioned as well as one and one-half homer of barley. *Reconciliation rarely occurs without sacrifice*. Someone has to be willing to give. This is what the Lord did for us. As a member of God's creation, my relationship with Him was broken by my spiritual adultery. Jesus made the supreme sacrifice for you and me that we might be reconciled to Him. Hosea's actions in verse two are a picture of the great deeds done by God the father and His son Jesus Christ that we could be reconciled to Jehovah God.

Again, please remember reconciliation is rarely accomplished without sacrifice. One or both parties have to give. One of the greatest sacrifices may be "swallowing your pride" and saying to someone "I forgive you." Every red-blooded American wants to get even. You've held a grudge for 30 years and still do not yet feel that you've gotten even. You never will. A grudge is not an acceptable price for reconciliation. Someone that you are supposed

to love did wrong years ago and you can't turn it loose. Shame on you! Take them some silver and barley and say "I forgive you."

Hosea responded to the Lord's command. He was willing to make some sacrifices in order to bring reconciliation in his relationship with Gomer. Obedience can be costly, but it is the right thing to do in order to be right with God and with men. He paid a substantial price to bring back his wife. Hosea gave her one and one-half homers of barley. This is equivalent to 9 or 10 bushels. Some Bible historians put the value of this quantity of barley at 15 shekels or pieces of silver. Along with the payment of barley, he gave her 15 shekels of silver. Thus, if we add the price of the barley to the shekels of silver we have a sum of 30 shekels of silver. Exodus 21:32 reads *"if the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master 30 shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."* Gomer should be paying Hosea! I should have paid Jesus for doing Him wrong. Yet, my payment would not have pleased Jehovah God. He set the price- the life of His only begotten son.

Hosea was most likely poor. He gave a phenomenal amount of money to win back his own wife. Did you know that by creation you already belong to God? That's why we called Calvary an act of "redemption." Mankind was already God's by creation. Man was lost to God and wandered into the prison of sin being deceived by Satan. By the giving of His son Jesus Christ, man was redeemed, that is, bought back by the paying of a price.

The circumstances surrounding the purchase of Gomer are uncertain. She may have become a temple prostitute and become the legal property of someone to whom she was employed as a concubine or hired out as a prostitute. Hosea did not have to perform this beautiful act of redemption. Legally, he could have had Gomer stoned. Instead, he demonstrates a vast love for the very one who rejected his love. What a beautiful picture of the love God manifested through His son Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary! What an example of the patience and love of God who redeemed us to Himself! Galatians 3:13 reads *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."* I Peter 1:18-19 reads *"for as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers: but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* My redemption and your redemption cost heaven its very best.

Please remember this important lesson: mending a broken relationship almost always costs something. There is a price to be paid. Ask yourself this question: "how much would I be willing to

give to have a pure heart and clear conscience before God and mankind?” Acts 24:16 “*And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*”

(Verse 3)

This verse three shows us there are conditions for Gomer’s return unto Hosea. She must meet conditions before he can take her back. She cannot come back unconditionally. She cannot come back and continue walking in adultery as she presently does. Love is not *blind*. Whoever made that assessment concerning love was blind. Love makes demands to do that which is right. Love *does* have boundaries and limitations. God loves us, but He demands that we abstain from sinful living and lead holy lives. Have you ever read the 10 Commandments? Those commandments from God are things we *should* do and *should not* do in order to please Him.

Hosea makes it clear that if there is going to be reconciliation between himself and his wife, she must meet conditions. And these conditions are not unreasonable. He wants in harmony, communion, fellowship, and growth in their love and marriage. Gomer must first cease her wicked lifestyle and be *devoted to him*. Is that unreasonable? Is that asking too much? The prodigal son could not remain in the hog pen and be at the father's house at the same time. He had to depart the pen to go to the father. No, he never took the hogs home with him!

Gomer would have no respect for Hosea if he did not demand she “shape up” in order to return. If he said to her “Ok. Honey, come on back but you can bring one of your lovers with you.” “Honey, if you'll just spend a little bit of time with me you can still have your lovers.” Wrong, wrong, wrong. How many people have prayed “God save me, but let me keep my dope and my whiskey bottle.”

Hosea had a stern command for Gomer. The command was “*thou shalt abide for me many days.*” Notice the little word “me.” If you come back, you will be coming to ME- I will not share you with another man. You will be mine and mine only. Same with God. He is jealous and will not share His children with another. Hosea demanded that Gomer returned to him for “many days.” What about folk who come to the altar and weep tears and pretend to confess to God and then tomorrow they're back in whoredom? They never repented, they never returned to God. Hosea said to Gomer “you are to come to me for many days.” “You are to be mine and mine only and not just for a one-night stand.”

Hosea had demanded secondly, that she shall no longer “play the harlot.” If you are going to be my wife, you are **not** going to be

the neighbor's wife as well. You will have to give up your harlotry. I really don't know why some men and women get married. They do not intend to become pure and faithful to *one* person. I know folk now on their third, fourth, and fifth marriage. Why? They can't stay away from whoredom. They have never for one moment thought in terms of having and being true to one person. Yes, Hosea's demands to Gomer were powerful and direct; "Gomer, you must stop whoring around." If you are away from God today, don't play games. Don't come to this altar and weep and pretend to amend things with God, then, walk back into harlotry this week. You are making a mockery of the very concept of repentance. Repentance means "turn."

In closing verse three, Hosea promises once again that he will be pure and true to her for he says "so will I also be for thee." He pledges his devotion to her. He pledges his love to her. In fact, he's more or less repeating his marriage vow. I know some couples who need to repeat their marriage vows. Something has gone wrong in their marriage. A problem has arisen. They just need to forget the past and start over. Please note the following lovely verses of Scripture regarding reconciliation:

1 John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

II Corinthians 6:17 *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 2Co 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."*

(Verse 4)

There are consequences for evil, sinful living. The Bible well documents that we "reap what we sow." Israel must pay for their years of whoredom.

It is said in this verse that *"the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king."* This prophecy has been literally fulfilled. Israel has, from her early days, had a passion for a king to rule over her. Since the days of the judges they were unhappy and requested God give them a king. It has been noted that within three generations after the Lord gave Hosea these words for Israel, the 10 northern tribes were "without a king, and without a prince." When Jesus came to be their king, He was rejected by Israel who made a statement *"we have no king but Caesar."* Since the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D., the Jews have had neither king nor priest, but have been in different nations of the earth as mere exiles. In 1948, they became a nation again, but they still have no king, no prince, and no sacrifice.

Hosea said you will be without a "sacrifice." Sacrifice was the

very soul of Hebrew worship. Every sinner stands in need of a sacrifice. The only hope for Heaven and forgiveness of our sins is through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Israel rejected Christ as their sacrifice.

Hosea warns that Israel will be “without an ephod.” The ephod was part of the dress of the high priest. Israel has no high priest today.

(Verse 5)

However, there is coming a day when things shall change. Israel shall be restored as a kingdom with a king. That King will be Jesus Christ Himself sitting on the throne of David in Jerusalem! Israel will “*seek the Lord their God.*” When He comes to the earth the second time, Israel will look for Him. Israel will recognize Him. Israel will bow to Him. He, Jesus Christ, shall be their God and they shall be His people. What a glorious day!