

WTF LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | from the MINOR PROPHETS



LESSON 2 – HOSEA (PART 1)

FACILITATOR'S

Note

In this lesson we will explore the preaching and prophesy of Hosea. Hosea does not throw any punches. He is addressing the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and speaks openly of their “whoredom”. His own marriage and children are a living part of his message. Consider being called by God to not only speak His Word, but also to literally live out an example of it so that it may call others to repentance. Overall, Hosea is a great message of God’s love for His people and His deep longing for them to repent, return, and intimately know Him. God’s message of grace rings loudly in the passages of this prophesy/sermon. Spend time in both this lesson (and Hosea - Part 2) on how Israel’s spiritual adultery reflects modern-day circumstances and even perhaps our individual faith walks. These lessons should bring about a lot of discussion as we all struggle with spiritual unfaithfulness to God in desperate need of God’s grace.

Through this lesson we hope to provide material that will provide knowledge (HEAD); then ask questions that will bring us understanding (HEART); and then motivate participants to go and live the Word in the world and demonstrate Godly wisdom (HANDS).

HEAD  **→ HEART**  **→ HANDS** 

We hope that by this study your class participants will not only hear, know, and understand the Word, but that they will also be driven to become the “Living Word” to the world around us. Your role in this process as a class facilitator is very important. Go beyond these lessons to demonstrate how what the Minor Prophets teach us can and should be lived daily. Use your life and the lives of others as examples of this “Living Word” concept.

*As always, we would encourage you to begin preparing for this lesson by digging into the Word and reading through the book of **Hosea**. We also encourage you to read/scan through **1 Kings 14-17** and **2 Chronicles 26-29** as a background to the book. As you move through **Hosea**, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is then that you should approach this lesson plan and use it (and others) only as a guide for the weeks to come. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.*

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PRAYER



Begin your time with a prayer asking God for the guidance of His Holy Spirit as you and your class seek to encounter Him through His Holy Word.

FOCUS

- Presentation of introductory material on the prophesy of Hosea.
- Come to understand how the Israelites (and we) commit "spiritual adultery".
- Understand God's desire for us to "know Him".
- Realize that God longs for all to return and repent so that He can shower His love upon His wife/children.
- For those who do not heed the call of repentance, God's judgment and wrath will be carried out.

DISCUSSION STARTERS (OPTIONAL)

- What sort of affects does adultery have on families and friends? Specifically, what affect does it have on the spouse who it is committed against?
- Does adultery just happen or does it usually take place over time? Explain.
- How difficult is it to reconcile through adultery? If you had a spouse that committed adultery on you time and time again, would you be willing to reconcile? Why or why not?

KNOWLEDGE HEAD

From God's Word through Hosea

- OVERVIEW
 - Author
 - Hosea means "salvation" or "deliverance" and comes from the same Hebrew verb (*yasha'*) as do the names "Joshua" and "Jesus".
 - He is the son of Beerli who we know nothing about.
 - Hosea was a contemporary of Amos (or preached slightly after him) and preached at the same time that Isaiah was preaching to Judah.

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- Hosea's prophecy/sermon is spoken to the Northern Kingdom, Israel (referred to as Ephraim, or Jacob, or Samaria by Hosea). As best as we know, he himself is from the north, which explains why he is able not only to relate to their circumstances, but also live in their presence as an example.
 - Amos and Jonah also preached to the Northern Kingdom but were not from there.
- **Date**
 - Hosea most likely wrote between 750 B.C. – 725 B.C. We derive this time frame from the kings listed in 1:1 – “Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.”
 - Between the last days of Jeroboam II (Israel) and the early days of Hezekiah (Judah).
 - It appears he wrote during the end of Jeroboam II, which would have been a time of prosperity and ease (complacency) and then experienced the anarchy and violence of the kings who followed: Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea (four were murdered by their successors, one captured in battle, and only one succeeded by his son). During this time the terms of office lasted from one month to a year. CRAZY TIMES!
 - Looking at the prophets that preached to Israel and considering the probable date of writing, Hosea has the unique distinction of being the last prophet of God to the Northern Kingdom prior to the final exile.
- **Theme(s)**
 - The overarching theme in Hosea centers on **God's unconditional and faithful love** for His undeserving and sinful wife/children (Israel).
 - *Hesed* (2:19; 4:1; 6:6; 10:12; 12:6), which is often translated “lovingkindness” or “steadfast love,” conveys not only a message of love, but also a message of “mercy” and “covenantal loyalty.”
 - GOD IS LOVE! All God's motivation and actions center on His love for His people.
 - Hosea is the prophet of God's love!¹
 - The theme of “**knowing God**” can also be found throughout Hosea. This concept is not the typical intellectual pursuit of knowing information about God. Instead, it is the “knowing” that is found between a husband and wife (Genesis 4:1). It is an intimate knowledge *OF* someone rather than *ABOUT* them.

¹ Jack P. Lewis, *The Minor Prophets*, 11th printing (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 30.

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- Jack Lewis notes, “to know God is no mere intellectual matter, but is rather an intimate relationship that comes by living with and for him and must be persistently pursued (6:3).”²
- Knowing God and displaying mercy is what He desires more than sacrifice (6:6).
- Hosea also speaks a great deal about **spiritual adultery and its consequences**. The term “whoredom” is used 16 times in the book of Hosea. This term refers to Israel’s spiritual adultery and prostitution. Hosea is commanded (1:2) to find a “wife of whoredom” who will in turn produce “children of whoredom” demonstrating the lifestyle the Israelites had been living in the presence of God. God will no longer tolerate their unfaithfulness to Him. Their spiritual adultery will bring about punishment and the ultimate end of Israel (1:4-5). God’s feelings towards adultery are no different than what we would feel if our spouse cheated on us (multiple times).
 - The Israelites *nominally* recognized and worshipped God, but gave their full attention to the gods of the peoples (El, Baal, Dagon [male gods] and Asherah, Astarte, Anath [female gods]).
- **ASK:**
 - Consider these themes (**Love of God, Knowing God, Spiritual Adultery and its Consequences**). Do these themes still speak to us today? Explain.
- **Hosea in the New Testament**
 - “Not my people” (Hosea 1:10; 2:23 – Rom. 9:25-26; 1 Pet. 2:10)
 - “I desire mercy (steadfast love) not sacrifice” (Hosea 6:6 – Matt. 9:13; 12:7; Mark 12:33)
 - “Out of Egypt I called my son” (Hosea 11:1 – Exodus 4:22; Matt. 2:15)
 - New Testament thoughts adapted from Hosea:
 - Terrors of the end of time (Hosea 10:8 – Luke 23:30; Rev. 6:16)
 - Death, where is your victory? (Hosea 13:14 – 1 Cor. 15:55)
 - Resurrection on the third day (Hosea 6:1-2 – 1 Cor. 15:4)
- **THE TEXT**
 - The text of Hosea can be split into two major sections. Chapters 1-3 deal with Hosea and his marriage/family and how it relates to the relationship of God and His people. Chapters 4-14 center on Israel’s ungodly/adulterous ways, punishment, and ends with Israel’s return and God’s pardon. In this lesson we will spend our time on the first section and finish with chapter 4-14 in *Hosea – Part 2*.
 - **1:2-2:1**
 - Have someone read Hosea 1:2-2:1

² Ibid., 28.

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- **1:2-9** – Hosea/Gomer and God/Israel: Israel as a spiritual adulteress and her children
 - God instructs Hosea to take a “wife of whoredom” who is to bear “children of whoredom”
 - Some have assumed that Gomer was a prostitute. There is nothing here to indicate that is the case. Some translations have used the word “harlotry” rather than “whoredom” which led people to believe that she was a “harlot” or “prostitute.” However, the word used here speaks more to sexual misconduct which indicates a married woman who is unfaithful. While 2:12-13 speaks of “wages” earned like a shrine prostitute, it should not be assumed that Gomer was one.
 - Also, it should not be assumed that Gomer was already promiscuous at the time of marriage. Something to note here: verse 3 indicates that Hosea went to Gomer and she conceived “him” (Hosea) a son. In verse 6 and 8 simply say she conceived and bore a daughter and son. Leaving no indication that either were Hosea’s, but instead were conceived through affairs. The names given to each of these children are a part of Hosea’s sermon:
 - **Jezreel** – this name symbolizes the overthrow of Jehu’s reign. In 2 Kings 9:16 it was at Jezreel that Jehu established his dynasty. Now, God shares that it is at an end as Jezreel means “God scatters.” However, a double-meaning is present here. Not only does Jezreel mean “God scatters,” but also the “God sows.” While God takes down Jehu, He also shares hope as His ultimate desire is to reconcile with His children (Hosea 1:11; 2:22-23).
 - **Lo-ruhamah** – to the daughter of whoredom is given the name Lo-ruhamah, which means “she has not received mercy” or “not pitied.” This is God’s promise to Israel that if they do not turn and repent, then they will receive no pity, no mercy.
 - **Lo-ammi** – to the son of whoredom is given the name Lo-ammi, which means “not my people.” This sad statement is an indictment on the Israelites for covenantal unfaithfulness. In Lev. 26:12 God tells His people that if they are faithful, then He will be their God and they will be His people. If they hold their current course, He will withdraw from them.

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- **1:10-2:1** – *Read this passage slowly together.* Although God pronounces His displeasure with His people through the example of Hosea’s family in verses 2-9, there is hope. God now turns to His reason for His message through Hosea: to bring His people back through Love and Grace.
 - Although they will be exiled, God wishes to restore them if they will turn toward Him rather than from Him. In the same place that they are called “not my people” they will then be called “Children of the living God.”
 - Verse 11 is echoed in Jesus words over Jerusalem when He says, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (Matt. 23:37, ESV)
 - God desires to gather His people under one head, that is Jesus Christ and they will be His people and they will receive mercy (2:1). The exact reverse of the names they were given in their spiritual adultery. What a great God we serve?
- **ASK:**
 - What does the first chapter of Hosea teach us about the nature of God?
 - Is God about judgment or grace or both? Explain.
 - Through these verses, what have you learned concerning God’s desire for His people (and specifically YOU)?
- **2:2-23**
 - Have someone read the text...
 - Israel is punished for their spiritual adultery, but there is final restoration.
 - **2:2-13** – God promises punishment for unfaithfulness.
 - In verses 2-7 God condemns their sinful conduct. He describes it as following after other lovers and playing the whore.
 - In verses 8-13 He develops His punishment more fully. He reveals to His children that even as they have been with their “other lovers”, all that they have and have enjoyed has still come from Him, their first Husband (v. 8). He is and always has been their source for all things.
 - Verse 13 is very sad. Through these words we can hear God’s heartache as He says, “she went after her lovers and forgot me.” If that doesn’t hit you in the depths of your heart, you need a heart transplant!
 - **2:14-23** – This is a beautiful passage of Conversion and Restoration!
 - Verses 14-17 shares God’s promise of their conversion for His people. He will take them in the wilderness (the place where God shapes us) and speak tenderly to them. They will call on their “Husband” with love and will no longer call after their “other lovers.”

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- **ASK:**
 - What feelings arose in you as you heard/read these verses?
 - Do we run from the “wilderness”? Why?
- In verses 18-23 God renews His covenant and mercies to His people. Key in here on verses 18-20. This marriage will never end and God’s people will “know” Him (in the very intimate way of “knowing”). Praise God!!!
 - **ASK:**
 - In what way do you want to know God? Is it merely an intellectual pursuit in order to check your box, or is it in a way to “know” Him as one “knows” their spouse?
 - Remember, many will come to Jesus on the last day and will say, “Lord, Lord, did we not go to church every Sunday and sometimes Bible class, did we not go on occasional retreat and do some service work for the community here and there?” And Jesus will look at them and say, “Depart from me. I never knew you because you never took the time to know me.” Obviously this is an adaptation of Matt. 7:21-23, but hopefully we get the point.
 - Knowing God is much more than checking boxes!
- **3:1-5**
 - Read this wonderful passage together...
 - God’s second marriage with His people.
 - Key in here on verse 5. God’s people will return by truly seeking after Him as their one and only lover/husband, Jesus (David their King). This is the picture that Paul gives us in Ephesians 5:25-32 (READ TOGETHER).
 - **ASK:**
 - Do we need to “remarry” God? Have we gone after other lovers and are in need of God’s grace to restore us to Him through Jesus? What do you need to do in your life to return to His call?

UNDERSTANDING ♥ HEART

- What are some of the modern-day messages that we have heard through Hosea today?
 - Have we been spiritual adulterers? How?
 - Have we produced children of adultery? Explain.
- How might the church need to be restored today?
- What promises did God give that affect us today?

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WISDOM HANDS

- What messages did you hear in this lesson that need to be shared with people you know
- Who in your group of friends or family do you need to share the message with TODAY? Think specifically.
- Commit to each other that you will all have the courage to share the message. Pray NOW and then pray for each other through the week to have the boldness to share.

PRAYER



End your time together with a prayer. Ask God to help you in sharing His Gospel message of Love and Grace to a lost world. Ask Him to open the eyes of our hearts through this study so that we may know Him more and develop an intimate relationship with Him.

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SEMESTER OUTLINE (SPRING 2016)

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE MINOR PROPHETS – Why Study This? (January 3)
2. HOSEA – PART 1 (January 10)
3. HOSEA – PART 2 (January 17)
4. JOEL (January 24)
5. AMOS (January 31)
6. OBADIAH & NAHUM (February 7)
7. JONAH (February 14)
8. MICAH (February 21)
9. HABAKKUK (February 28)
10. ZEPHANIAH (March 6)
11. HAGGAI (March 13)
12. ZECHARIAH – PART 1 (April 3)
13. ZECHARIAH – PART 2 (April 10)
14. MALACHI (April 17)
15. CONCLUSION TO THE MINOR PROPHETS (April 24)