

Connection Group Questions

Taken from the sermon on August 13, 2017

The Story - 16, Fall of Israel

Hosea 1-3

Questions for PERSONAL GROWTH

Monday: The relationship... Please read Hosea 1-3 several times through. Hosea, a prophet who preached to the Northern Kingdom, lived and prophesied just before the destruction of Israel, in 722 BC. Ephraim was the largest tribe in Israel so, at times, the whole nation was referred to as Ephraim. God's command to Hosea to take Gomer (who was likely already a prostitute) as a wife was an example of God's relationship with Israel. Has God asked you, like Hosea, to do something difficult? As you read through this passage each time, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the lesson the Father wants you to learn.

Tuesday: Restoration and everlasting joy... Gomer was a picture of Israel. What do the names of Hosea's children teach you? Though God's compassion ran out, and discipline ensued, in what ways would God eventually restore the nation? (1:10a,b; 1:11 a, b, c; 2:1). How does that encourage you? What is the symbolic "adulterous look" on Gomer's face? (See Proverbs 7:6-22, Jeremiah 3:3). Jeremiah 2:27 references "tree" and "stone", objects used in the worship of Baal. How do we, like Israel, look to things outside of God, even our spouses, to give us life and happiness? How are we missing out on God's everlasting joy when we rely on such things.

Wednesday: Unremitting faithfulness... Please re-read Hosea 1. Remember, Hosea is a prophet to the ten tribes, known as "Israel", while the other two tribes represented "Judah". Because there were good times in the land, it was hard for people to hear Hosea's warning? Could we say the same today? Hosea was to experience in the flesh what was going on between the people and God in the spirit. Yet, as you see in vv. 10-11, God would bring restoration. What was the basis for God's faithfulness? (Genesis 22:17) Please set aside time to praise Him for His unremitting faithfulness, even when we fall short.

Thursday: With "ALL" your love... Moving on to Hosea 2, how would you summarize this chapter? This scene with Gomer depicts God's (the Plaintiff) charges against the nation of Israel (the defendant) and Hosea's urging is for them to "plead with your mother", the nation, to turn back to God. How are those today, like Hosea, who urge Christians to turn back to God, received? Please read Mark 12:30? Please note the word "all" in this verse; to not keep this commandment is spiritual adultery. Please prayerfully meditate upon this verse and consider how you might move from "some" toward "all" for the glory of God.

Friday: Pursuing the broken-hearted with godly love... Given what you learned, yesterday, why would God command Hosea to love Gomer "anyway". On what basis should we love people this way? (3:1) Hosea is not simply commanded to receive his wife, but to "pursue" her. What was unusual about God's love for Israel? Remember, we have all committed spiritual adultery to some degree. Like Gomer, we are all broken and fall short of His glory. Who do you need to pursue with a godly love today?

Questions for GROUP DISCUSSION

- Share a time when you were asked to do what seemed like an impossible task.
- Israel failed to "know" the Lord and all that He had done for them (Hosea 2:8). How does not remembering relate to God's people pursuing other things or people?
- How is the Hosea and Gomer story ultimately the story of God?