Desiring Difficult Love

Hosea 3

And the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” 2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech[a] of barley. 3 And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” 4 For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. 5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.

Intentional Christianity/More this morning on this theme

Want to get to the heart of our study, generally as Christians

This title is not deceiving, it is as plain as you read- I always give you plenty of reasons

I tell you this morning, desire difficult love

Once again, an idea we may not be too familiar with

2 major trains of thought surrounding our sermon today stemming from Hosea

Connected, but one will be the root of the other

**What do we mean by the heart of God?**

He does not have a “heart” but rather His nature

Google Searches

Coffee good? Coffee Bad?

Is alcohol consumption sinful?

Is being gay wrong?

How much do I have to give?

How many times should I pray?

When is divorce biblical?

What’s wrong with these questions?

We have missed the heart of God- His nature

We come from the viewpoint of how far am I allowed to go?

How much is still okay?

Not what does God desire truly…

Eph 5:15-17

15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Know what HIS will is

Just because you could, doesn’t mean you should

Challenge that is us- piggyback off of the homosexuality sermon and challenge you this morning

Present the heart of God- Get to difficult love

The heart of God is BEST found in the prophets

Look at Hosea

We know he takes a wife- not necessarily a prostitute initially, but she becomes an adulteress

Gomer has to be continually swooned and bought back by Hosea

It is an analogy of God and Israel- commonly know this

But lets look at God’s nature here

Look at Hosea 2 with me

2:1 Say to your brothers, “You are my people,” and to your sisters, “You have received mercy.”

2 “Plead with your mother, plead, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—

5b For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.’

6 Therefore I will hedge up her[d] way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths.

8 And she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal.

13 And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned offerings to them, and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers and forgot me, declares the Lord.

14 “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her.

19 And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. 20 I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.

So I ask you, is it really just the awful job Hosea was given to truly love unconditionally and actively search out his erring wife when she was not coming back to him seeking forgiveness?

Or is it God’s nature to desire reconciliation?

Hosea’s job was to be a reflection of God’s love, and he was forced to do that, but isn’t that our job too, that we are to do voluntarily?

Aren’t all of our decisions supposed to point to God?

**Here’s the question… Could Hosea have left Gomer/divorced her by law?**

Thank goodness we aren’t in Hosea’s position! Good thing we have the option for divorce if our wife were to do this!

1 Cor 10:23 23 “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.

By Jewish law, Gomer is put to death/Hosea can divorce/ Hosea shouldn’t “hurt himself again”

What does God truly desire though?

Hard subject around divorce- God hates divorce, I will state it clearly

Never intended, look at His nature, divorce overcomes man’s weakness

It may be lawful, but not desired by God

We have the exceptions, and even then, just because it is fulfilled does not mean it is desired

Cases when the other will not come back, one burns in their own passion, God overcomes and allows

Reconciliation first and often ALWAYS

THAT is the nature of God

Here’s the thing, this sermon isn’t on divorce

This is just our catalyst to see God’s Heart

We often stop here with Hosea, cool analogy

God molds His prophets into feeling/experiencing something that represents God’s nature

What I mean, look truly at Hosea the man

He is told to love, and he does

But he is described to love as the LORD LOVES ISRAEL

He loves unconditionally, he loves truly!

How many of us could? Go in off the first command, add distance? Not really want to fight for her back? Not truly love her the second, third, fourth time cause we know its going to hurt?

Hosea isn’t just completing the actions, He LOVES AS GOD LOVES

He loves a difficult love, and God desires us to pursue this difficult love

I tell you Hosea’s love is more pure and undefiled than most modern day Christians

More than myself, and I don’t mean to be harsh, I intend to encourage you

**The main message of Hosea has nothing to do with Adultery or Divorce**

**The message is to show God’s Desire for Difficult Love**

Uses an extended metaphor to show what the Love we have should look like in 1 example

And I challenge you to love your spouse as hosea, be forgiving, desire reconciliation

I challenge you even more to yearn for difficult love!

For difficult love is the most Godly form of love we can obtain

It is the key to deciphering the law of the Lord, it is the key to Ephesians 5

It is selfless, truly selfless, and sacrificial in nature

It is a love that seeks God’s nature

It is a love that Humble the giver and does not lead to an enjoyable life

And that’s okay because that’s what we desire

Turn to Hosea 11

The Lord’s Love is irrepressible. Hosea’s love was irrepressible.

I struggle in human words to try to describe/define this love

However, by reading the prophets, especially Hosea, the idea, an idea stronger than we can define is so clear

It helps put into context all of the NT teachings

I want to make a few applications and examples instead of trying to define it

1. Difficult Love for God HAS to be our goal
   1. It is the love that shifts from “what am I allowed” to “what does God desire”
   2. Alcohol consumption
   3. Gambling
   4. Fornication/Immodesty
   5. How much time in devotion?
   6. It is a love that abhors sin to the point that we aren’t asking those questions
   7. Difficult Love gives of itself
2. Difficult Love for our brethren
   1. Number one indicator that its not here?
   2. Small quarrels or issues that are non-salvation based
   3. 1 Cor 8,9,10
   4. The type of love that doesn’t allow your own opinions cause division
   5. The type of love that seeks out your brother in trials (This morning)
3. Difficult Love WILL NOT GIVE UP ON THE LOST
   1. Doesn’t care about how much you have to give
   2. Your rejection/embarrassment/your social status/church status
   3. Remember the homosexuality sermon?
   4. It is a love that does not give up on a fallen brother

That last one hits so close to home

We read of distancing from a fallen brother, that is true!

But when that is our first reaction, we miss the heart of GOD!

Read Hosea 11 with me

When Israel was a child, I loved him,

and out of Egypt I called my son.

2 The more they were called,

the more they went away;

they kept sacrificing to the Baals

and burning offerings to idols.

3 Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;

I took them up by their arms,

but they did not know that I healed them.

4 I led them with cords of kindness,[a]

with the bands of love,

and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws,

and I bent down to them and fed them.

8 How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel?

How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.

Praise the Lord that He has not given us up!

Desire difficult love that humbles yourself like the Lord bending down

Desire…. That we will NOT give up on those who are lost!

How are you doing? Have you sown to the Spirit? Do you have a selfless love?

Are you reaching the lost? We ask that question, but ARE YOU?

Invitation for love