An Unlikely Story and a Restored People

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Last time I preached, I preached out of the book of Amos, which is all about the justice and the wrath of God.

As he points out different nations and calls them to repentance. Today I'm going to go to his counterpart, Hosea. Hosea is a picture of God's love and his mercy towards his people.
This is a book that we've been walking through in our Crossroads ministry on Sunday mornings. It is a book that is rich and full. If you've not spent time in Hosea, I urge you to go and spend time in Hosea.
The Old Testament presents this cycle of sin that the Israelites are constantly finding themselves in. They're constantly having to turn away from idols, go back to the Lord, repent of what they've done. But they keep finding themselves falling back into these sin cycles over and over and over again. Eventually, it leads to God's judgment coming in the form of Assyria invading and taking them captive in 722.
[1:13] That is where we have been on Sunday nights in Lamentations with Pastor Michael. And that book is written from a perspective of a people who are lamenting what used to be.

Lamenting who they were and what has happened to them because of their sinfulness. And I think we should remember that it is not like that was just sprung on them all of a sudden.
But that God gave them warning over and over and time and time again. And Hosea is one of those times that he gives warning. Hosea is an odd book like so many other places in the Bible.
It's very similar that it is a love story. We know that there's a lot of love stories in Scripture. Jacob loved Rachel. Samson loved Delilah.
David loved Bathsheba. The whole book of Song of Solomon is devoted to the love that Solomon had for his wife. And then you have Hosea and Gomer.
[2:11] And Gomer is a great name for a wife, isn't it? Marriage is frequently used throughout Scripture as a picture of God's love for his people.

And it illustrates the relationship between Christ and the church. And that is once again what we find here. Hosea is a prophet. He's the son of Beery, as chapter 1 will tell us.
And that just tells us that he is not one of the other Hoseas that we see throughout Scripture. I think there's four other times the name Hosea is mentioned. He gives us four different kings.
Then one king from Israel that's mentioned. And because of that, we can very confidently date when Hosea took place. He had a ministry that lasted about 30 years or so.
Started about 760. He happens just after Amos overlaps with Micah and Isaiah.
[3:14] And he's very similar to the other minor prophets. I love these minor prophets because I think that there's such a picture of who we are as a church today. As believers today in the 21st century.

And whereas we see reflections of ourselves all through the Old Testament. I feel that Hosea is a full length mirror where we really get a good picture of who we are.
And we can really examine who we are. It's a funny love story because it's an unlikely wife for a prophet. Gomer is a prostitute.
Not the kind of spouse you expect a prophet to have. I'm trying to imagine the rumors and the gossip and the things that would go on if a pastor's wife was even accused of such a thing.
And for the prophet to have a wife that was a prostitute would have been scandalous and unheard of. He had children that may or may not have been his.
[4:13] That represent God's people as well. And it is this picture of God's love for his fallen unfaithful people throughout this whole book.

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When you look at the first chapter of Hosea. In verse 2 it says when the Lord first spoke through Hosea. The Lord said to Hosea go to yourself. Take a wife of Hortum. Have children of Hortum. For the land commits great Hortum by forsaking the Lord.
So you have immediately where God is talking about and presenting this relationship between Hosea and Gomer. This marriage relationship immediately goes into it being a picture of God's relationship with the people.
When we see the word land there it can remind us of the land of Israel. This promised land. The place where God brought his people to out of the land of Egypt. The land of Israel and the people of Israel they're synonymous.
They go hand in hand. So when we see that we can always be reminded of who he's talking about. Today I want to give you a kind of an overview of the book and give you some insight on the book.
[5:21] But more than that I'd like to settle in on chapter 3. And talk about Hosea redeeming his wife. The Lord redeeming his people. How Christ redeems the church.

Who we are in this story. We've been walking through lamentations. We've been talking about the things that we're broken hearted over. Where our sin has brought us.
The demise of God's people. Them being taken into captivity. But we should never forget that there is hope. And in this book I think we see a lot of hope.
We all walk through trials. We all walk through seasons of life that isn't what we would expect. At some point we've all had to come to terms with our sinfulness.
But there is hope through Christ. There is hope for God's people. There is redemption for Hosea's wife Gomer in this book. Chapter 2 presents Gomer.
[6:19] It talks about how she's walked away from Hosea. That she's engaged in sexual activity with other men. But that she's cut off. That she no longer receives profit from her prostitution.

And she was crediting these false idols. And these false gods. With the things that Yahweh was truly giving her. Because of those things. She's cut off.
Chapter 4 is interesting. Because it goes into more of a legal language there. And it outlines who the Israelites are. Why the Lord is upset with them.
Why he's holding them accountable. Chapter 4 verse 1 says, Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel. For the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness. No stepfast love. And no knowledge of good in the land. Verse 2 says, There is swearing, lying, murdering, stealing, committing adultery. They break all bounds. And bloodshed follows bloodshed.
[7:16] So clearly, there are things that they have done wrong. In verse 2, you see 5 of the 10 commandments broken right there. When you see they've broken bonds, they've broken the covenant that God has made with them.

Through Moses. You see that in Exodus 19 and 20. And they agreed. In Exodus 19. They said, We will do all that the Lord has told us. All that he has commanded.
The Lord has a standard in which he wants his people to live. And they agree that they're going to live to that standard. And they fall. And they mess up. There's something that they deserve. Similar to what a prostitute in ancient Israel would have deserved. Deuteronomy outlines that a prostitute should be stoned for her sexual activity.
And her promiscuity. And in the same way, as Genesis 2 tells us, As a broken, fallen people, our sin demands death. And we deserve death.
[8:19] But this book presents a God who is loving and gracious. This will all bring us into chapter 3.

As we begin to get a glimpse of Hosea and his feelings. And kind of what's going on. The language there changes as well. And most of this book is written in third person.
And chapter 3, just five verses, is written in first person. They're very personal. Hosea is sharing what has happened to him personally.
What the Lord has revealed to him personally. This book just reminds me of the redemption and the salvation that we need.
And I don't think any of us would deny that our culture is falling away. That we are a Romans 1 culture. That we seek the things of the world.
[9:24] We want to be like the world. We go after the lusts of our hearts. And even sexual sin, it's run rampant through our culture.

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It's easily accessible. We worship the false idols of ourself. And social media. And the paycheck. And kids' sporting activities.
And everything else. We invest so little time and effort in the things of God. But there is hope for us. And no matter where you may find yourself right now. Perhaps you have been in church your entire life. Perhaps this is the first time you've ever been in a church.
Anywhere in between. You may be thinking to yourself, there is no hope left for me. The Lord would never redeem me. But that's not what is presented here.
[10:19] That is not what the Lord would reveal to Hosea and to us through his word. We have three headings this evening. That is that God reclaims us.

That God has restricted us. That he restores us. Briefly, I want to look at chapter 11. Before we get into verse 3.
Because while chapter 4 talks about who the Israelites are. Who God's people are. And how far they had fallen. And into the wickedness that they had fallen into. Chapter 11 presents something much different.
And it's a very tender verse in verse 1. And almost as if God looking at his child when they were an infant. And you think back, any of you that are parents.
And you have older children today. Perhaps some of you can relate to this passage. But you have older children. And you can think back to when they were little. I have an 8-year-old. And actually he's a 9-year-old now.
[11:24] Last month has flown by. I can't remember what day it is most of the time. But I have a 9-year-old. And although he's not that old yet. Especially in comparison to many of you and your children.

It's so easy for me to remember when he was just an infant. I can go back to that day so quickly. And here we have kind of a picture like that. In chapter 11 verse 1 it says, When Israel was a child, I loved him.
And out of Egypt I called my son. There's love there. God loves his child, his son, his people, Israel. The more they were called, the more they went away.
They kept sacrificing to the veils and burning offerings to idols. And some of us, we can relate to that. We've seen our children walk away from the things of God.
We've seen our children go astray. And the older that they got, the further away from the Lord they've walked. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim.
[12:25] Just another word for Israel there. Ephraim to walk. I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. And you think about a child learning to walk.

And they would fall. You pick them back up. Help them keep going. They don't understand what's going on. The same way here. I led them with cords of kindness and bands of love.
I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws. And I bent down to them and fed them. So a yoke is a harness that goes over the neck of the cattle.
It's connected to a bit. And he does this very gently. Because it would be very uncomfortable for the cattle to receive that. But he does it gently. As they're getting older.
Like a parent who is helping their child walk. Very gently. You don't throw your child up and make sure that they're standing. No, you hold them up.
[13:19] And you're gentle with them. And you teach them right foot, left foot. And you get them going. And when they fall, you pick them back up again. You care for them. You love them. You invest your time and your efforts in them.

And I can only imagine what it must be like to watch your child then walk away from the Lord. From the way that you raised them. From all the time and the effort that you invested in them.
It would be a difficult, heartbreaking thing. And that is the perspective that God is presenting here. He has a child, a people that he loved.
That he called out of the wilderness. That he did something for. He was tender and loving to them. And what have they done? They've turned away. They've gone after the things of the world.
They want to be like the nations that are surrounding them. They follow the sinful desires of their heart. And we find ourselves in that place so often. But there is hope.
[14:23] So in this book, as I told my Crossroads students, you should not identify with anyone in this book other than Gomer. We are the prostitute in this book.

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Israel is a picture of who we are here. So we are Gomer. We are an unfaithful Israel. But what does God do with us? And we will see that today. So number one, God reclaims us.
Verse 1, chapter 3 of Hosea. It says, So what you have here is you have a parallel between chapter 3 and chapter 1, verse 2.
In chapter 1, verse 2, it says, When the Lord forespoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, Go take yourself a wife of Hortum. Have children of Hortum. For the land commits great Hortum by forsaking the Lord.
And in that verse, I believe that the Lord is telling Hosea, I want you to go and take Gomer as your wife. She is going to be a prostitute. This is going to happen.
[15:40] He knows what he's getting himself into. And in the same way, God, Yahweh, knows what's going to happen. He understands that his people are going to forsake him. He goes and takes them as his people anyway.

In chapter 3, he's telling Hosea to go again and love a woman who is loved by another man. Despite everything that's gone on. Because chapter 2 goes out to spell out all that is wrong with Gomer.
Everything that she has done wrong. All the sin that she's taken part in. And that she's completely rejected Hosea. There's a parallel there.
And even though Gomer has not been faithful, God commands Hosea to go and be faithful to her. To go and love her.
Now there are some scholars out there that would tell you, when it says go again, love a woman, that is not referring to Gomer. And I did quite a bit of reading on this.
[16:46] And we have a theological term when things come up like this. But to go again, love another woman who is not Gomer actually doesn't make any sense. So that theological term would be, that is ridiculous.

That doesn't make any sense. So when you see things like that, that's ridiculous. Isn't that right, Joey? Okay. Okay. Okay. He says sure. So that would be ridiculous.
Because the whole thing breaks down. Because right there in chapter 3 verse 1, he goes immediately, go love a woman, and then immediately equates that to the people, the children of Israel.
And he does the same thing in chapter 1 verse 2. He immediately goes from Gomer and equates that to the land that has forsaken the Lord. The people that have forsaken the Lord. So therefore, we know that that is Gomer that he's still talking about.
Even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisin. So that's also a funny verse.
[17:48] No, we are not prohibited from taking part in raisin cakes. Perhaps a bad hermeneutic would lead us there. There are a couple different references throughout the Old Testament of baked goods being offered to different idols.

I think it's in Jeremiah. There's a baked good that's offered to a queen of heaven or something like that. It's a false god. That doesn't mean a lot to us in our context, but they were obviously partaking in some kind of food tradition that had to do with a false idol.
So you could still eat raisin cakes. But what they were doing was wrong. They were participating in something that they shouldn't be participating in. They're giving tribute. They're loving a god that is not Yahweh.
So he bought her for 15 shekels of silver and a homer and a lycith of barley. And I think the parallel here is clear.
You have Gomer who has loved other men. She seeks the pleasure of other men. She seeks the things that the world can offer her. And as a people, we are full of pride and we seek the world.
[19:00] We want to be like the world. We invest our time and our efforts into the temporary things of this world. And despite all of that, Christ still loves us.

When you read the narrative of Christ and being put on the cross, they take him to be crucified. And as Christ hangs on the cross and he calls out to his father and says, forgive them for they know not what they do.
The people are down below the cross dividing up his garments, casting lots, and mocking Christ. As a people, we mock Christ.

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Every time we enter a sinful situation, every time we return to those images on our smartphone, every time we talk in a way that is gossip or slander against someone else, every time we carry a bad attitude with us, every time we're ugly to our family members or our friends, every time we sin, we mock Christ.
We know that God has called us to a higher standard of living. He's died for the sin of man. But still, Hosea bought Gomer.
[20:26] Christ bought us. When you go to Colossians 2, verses 13 and 14, it says, And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Christ died for us. There's also this picture. There's a biblical concept of a bride price that can come into play here.
Exodus gives rules and regulations for a husband wanting to purchase or buy the rights for his bride. And this is not a barbaric thing, although it sounds odd to us in our culture.
And it's not meant to be cruel or harsh. It is just a way to make sure that the wedding happens the way it's supposed to happen. And to show that he can provide for his wife the way he's supposed to provide.
So in the same way an Old Testament man would provide a bride price for his bride, Christ has purchased us as Hosea has purchased Gomer.
[21:40] Christ died for us. He has bought us. We are his if we have faith in him. And that is a glorious hope here in a book that is pointing out all the flaws of mankind.

And that is a hope that we can rest in, rest assured in. No matter what season that we may be going through in life. No matter how hard the circumstances are that we're walking through.
We can rest assured that Christ died for us. And that we are his. Number two is that God restricts us.
God restricts us. Verse 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.
For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without kings or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. So have you ever been on probation for getting in trouble?
[22:49] You've done something and now someone's paying attention. You were in the wrong and now you have to be accountable for what you've done. If I was to spend way too much out of my budget line or if I was to go and purchase something for my office that I shouldn't, Jeff would be on me so quick.

And after that, he would be watching everything I was doing. Every time I used my credit card, he would be concerned. Why? Because I did something I wasn't supposed to do. Thankfully, that hasn't happened yet.
I don't think. But we do this in life also. This happens to us all the time. We do something. We step out of line and we're put on probation.
We are watched. I do this with my kids. If one of my kids do something they're not supposed to do, after I've told them multiple times not to do it, I'm going to pay extra attention later on to make sure they are not doing it again after they've been in trouble for it.
Make sure they are not returning to that thing. And as harsh as that sounds, as weird as that sounds, that doesn't sound right, it helps protect us. And that's exactly what Hosea is doing for his wife.
[23:54] He's saying that you're going to be mine for many days. You're not going to play the whore or belong to another man. You're not allowed to partake in those things. And so I will be for you. In other words, there's not going to be any sexual relationship between them.

There's going to be a time that they're going to abstain because he's going to make sure that she's not falling back into that sin pattern. And that's true for us. If you've got an issue with drinking too much, you seek repentance, you give that thing up, you probably shouldn't be hanging around bars. You don't need to put yourself in this situation. You need to stay away from it. But also more than that, I think that there's a picture here of obedience. Hosea gave her rules and she needs to follow the rules because he is her leader and he has purchased her.
And in the same way, Christ has purchased us. And when God's word tells us to live a certain way, we are to live a certain way. Our actions display the affections that we have in our life.

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And if our actions aren't in accordance to Scripture, then what does that say about our affection for our God? It's not there.
[25:13] If you're going to love Christ and claim Christ, you have to live in a way that honors him and glorifies him. And that's not to say that anyone is perfect.

By no means, any of us would ever claim to be perfect. But we should be striving towards that. And we shouldn't have long, drawn-out seasons of repetitive sin in our life.
We need to cut those things off. We need to return to the Lord. We need to repent of our sin. Verse 4, it says that, For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince.
So that's no monarchy. Without sacrifice, the Old Testament sacrificial system will end. Without pillar, that's a reference to idols. Without an ephod, that's a garment that the priest would wear. Household gods, again, that refers to idols that are there. And it's referring to a season of time that they are not going to be a people like they were. Because in 722, Assyria will take them captive.
[26:23] Now the hope there is that eventually they will return, as Michael mentioned in his last sermon in Lamentations. But there are going to be a season where they do not live as they have lived previously.

And when we find ourselves in long, drawn-out seasons of sinfulness, we need to return to the Lord and we need to spend time living in a way that we did not previously live. We need to put safeguards in place.
We need to make sure that we are keeping ourselves from the sinfulness of the world and those things that have already caught us in its snare. And those are hard things to walk through.
It's difficult. It's not easy to walk through a season of time where you recognize the sinfulness that you've been associated with and then to go be on probation or be restricted.
It's difficult. But we as God's people should live differently than the world around us. So I ask you, I beg you, to return to the Lord.
[27:29] Whatever sin pattern you have in your life, cut it off. Be done. Return to the Lord. Verse 5 says, 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 His goodness in the latter days.

Number 3, God restores us. God restores us. Isaiah 11 reminds us of God collecting His remnant from the four corners of the earth, bringing His people back together.
There's an eternal promise there. And as God will bring His people from Egypt, from Assyria, from our sin, back into the fold of God, God will gather His remnant, His people.
And they will follow Christ who is seated on the king of His father, David. There's some heavy eschatological references here. That afterward, that they will seek David their king in the latter days. Those are there and they may refer to the end times and the millennial reign of Christ on the throne of David. There's a few words here that I want us to really see here that I think are really important to us understanding the hope that we have.
[28:59] It says that they will seek the Lord and that they will come in fear to the Lord.

They will seek Him and they will fear Him because those are the two things they have not done up until this point. They have not sought God and they have not feared Him.
And I think that is what is wrong with us today. We do not seek the Lord. We do not fear the Lord. He is the sovereign creator of everything.
He keeps the world together and moving forward. Yet we flippantly walk into our sinfulness without second thought.
Because we think surely He won't know about it. Surely He's not paying attention. Surely it's not that big of a deal. We don't seek Him and we do not fear God.
[30:04] But there will come a day that the people will seek the Lord. They will fear Him. The Israelites have been seeking the things of their flesh all their lives and we do the same.

They were unfaithful and we have been unfaithful. A day will come that we will seek the Lord that we will fear God. And it will come for all of us.
The question is is it going to be in this life or will it be in the next? Because you can either seek and fear God now or you can die without Christ.
You can stand in judgment and you will seek and fear God. You will cry for mercy and you will understand the wrath of our God.
It's coming for all of us. Whether we want to acknowledge it, ignore it, whatever. We must seek and fear Him now.

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[31:06] Now, this morning I had the pleasure of baptizing Sierra Montez. She said her favorite verse was Ephesians 2 verses 8-10.

8-9 says, For by grace you have been saved through faith. This is not of your own doing. It is a gift of God. Not a result of works so that no one may boast.
We must have faith in Christ. It's not of us. It's not something we can do. We must put our faith in Christ and trust in the grace that He has saved us. John preached this morning and a couple things he said was, Faith makes pursuing God our number one pleasure.
Where the Israelites and where we have not sought the pleasure of our Lord, we've been seeking the pleasures of the world and all the things that have to do with it.
when we truly have faith in Christ it will make our number one priority our number one pleasure pursuing God. True faith seeks to abandon this life and its temporary pleasures.
[32:19] John also said that we have come to God we have to come to God on His terms through faith without which redemption is not ours. people if you hear just one thing tonight hear this put your faith in Christ Jesus no matter what it is you may be walking through in life no matter what situation you're going through no matter what sin you are currently stuck in Christ can redeem you if you will put your hope and your trust your faith in Him and Him alone for what He has done for us on the cross.

we have a good and a gracious loving God and as hard as these last couple months have been for my family we can constantly look at who Christ is and what He has done for us and know that although my wife hurts Christ paid the ultimate sacrifice for our sin that's something we can all rejoice in Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

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