

“When Marriage Becomes A Trial”

Hosea 1-3

Sermon Series: “Trials”

Introduction: Every marriage will be a trial at times. We don’t realize it before we get married, but this is inevitable. Why is this the case? I would suggest at least four reasons:

- 1. Every marriage is a union of two sinners.**
- 2. Life happens.**
- 3. We tend to be blinded by infatuation early in a relationship.**
- 4. Nobody can meet all of our needs (what we idolize, we eventually demonize).**

Background of the book of Hosea: This is a book that is beautiful and terrible, simple and complex, all at the same time. Hosea was a prophet, and the Lord told him to marry an immoral woman named Gomer (1:2). Hosea’s marriage to Gomer is an object lesson about God’s hatred of sin and unconditional love for His people that teaches us about marriage at the same time. John Phillips says, “Sin not only breaks God’s law, it also breaks God’s heart.” Yet, He never stops loving us or gives up on His covenant with us. Jesus became a sacrifice to redeem us from sin because God loves us so much. We are all Gomer, sinners in need of redemption. Hosea’s sacrificial love for her pictures what Jesus did for us, how God lovingly disciplines and restores us, and teaches us how to love our spouse and other people in a Christ-like way.

What can we do when marriage becomes a trial? The book of Hosea shows us a couple of possible options that people can take.

- 1. We can think the grass is greener on the other side and pursue someone that we think will be better (2:4-13).** Craig Groeschel says, “We trade the 80% for the 20%.” He also says, “If the grass is greener somewhere else, it is time to water your own

yard. If the grass looks greener, it is because you are not close enough to smell the poop yet.”

- 2. We can walk through the valley of trouble together and let God turn it into a door of hope (2:14-15).**

Steps To Take When Walking Through The Valley Of Trouble

- 1. Function based on the covenant we made with God and our spouse instead of our feelings (2:16-20).** This is how God treats us. He gets righteously angry with us, but He is always faithful to the covenant relationship He made with us through grace and unconditional love. **Marriage is not a convenience, ceremony, contract with loopholes in it, or two people living together with a conditional commitment, but it is an unconditional covenant between two people and Almighty God (Proverbs 2:17, Matthew 19:3-6).** There are two very important Hebrew words that are used in the book of Hosea. One is *hesed*, and it refers to God’s covenant love that is loyal, steadfast, and faithful. The other is *ahav*, and it refers to affectionate and passionate love. In Hosea 9:15, God told them that He would not be affectionately loving toward them, but the book repeatedly makes it clear that the Lord will never break His covenant with His people. The application to marriage is that when we don’t feel affectionate love, continue to love with covenant love.

- 2. Love and forgive as we have been forgiven and loved (2:21-3:1; see also Ephesians 4:32).** As Christians, we don’t respond in kind but based on grace. God has loved and forgiven us when we deserve judgment, and we are to love and forgive others through the same grace we have been given.

- 3. Repent (3:3).** God can fix any relationship, but change (repentance) is always going to be required. Gary Thomas said, “Couples don’t fall out of love so much as they fall out of repentance.”

4. Turn to Jesus (3:1-2). This story is one of the most beautiful pictures of the gospel in the Bible. Jesus died to redeem us from sin as is pictured by Hosea redeeming Gomer from slavery.

A. Jesus gives forgiveness.

B. Jesus changes us from the inside out.

C. Jesus restores marriages.