

Hosea – Part One

Introduction To Hosea

Have you ever wondered how God reacts to you during times of utter failure and sin in your life? In our minds all we may conceive of is an angry God responding harshly in judgment and disappointment while removing Himself far from us. God truly does respond in judgment to sin and to the old man that brings forth that fruit. But the MANNER in which God responds in that judgment is what we truly must see in order to really know Him and be healed. The only place we can thoroughly look into this matter is in the Word of God, and that is the theme of this series of articles based on scriptures found in Hosea.

The Condition of God's People

“The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea, And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry for the land hath committed great harlotry, departing from the Lord” (Hosea1:2).

The Lord describes the people of Israel to Hosea as a land that is ruined by its great harlotry. This picture of Israel that we are confronted with in Hosea is that of a land that has been sown with bad seed based on a heart that continually departs from the Lord. Yet even before the Word of the Lord states the condition of Israel it commands Hosea to take a wife from among them. The fact that “the beginning of the word of the Lord” started with Hosea taking a wife rather than describing the problem is a clue in understanding the way God deals with us.

God Himself initiated this action of love towards Israel in the person of Hosea.

God's Response

“So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, who conceived, and bore him a son” (Hosea1:3).

It is important to notice that God's only instruction to His prophet was to make a union with a harlot from among the people. God's first instruction did not tell Hosea to speak or do any other action besides entering into union. Without any further deeds or discussion, Hosea immediately makes a union with Gomer. And then immediately Gomer conceives seed and brings forth a son. The Word of God does not mention anything else regarding Hosea's action at this time other than these two points. The eternal significance behind these actions is what is all important. In these two actions, union and conception, we find God's response to us in

our defiled state. Here we see the activity of God in His reaction to unfaithful, defiled, and corrupt man. God does not speak words of correction, instruct with terms of reform, or try to teach love and faithfulness to a defiled land. Rather He immediately enters into union with it.

Union

God's response is union... to bring us into union with His Son. God involves Himself in the crisis. God gives Himself for us in the most intimate way. We find God responding this same way all throughout the scriptures, *"For he hath made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"* (II Cor. 5:21). The very basis of the Cross and how it functions is that God sows Himself into death, being made one with us in our hopeless state. Through union God redeemed us. When we were dead in sin, God became sin by joining to us. We may be aware of this principle of union into Christ in relation to our salvation, but are we aware that this same principle of union is the only way we can mature in the Lord, be sanctified as His Body, and find hope when we are totally messed up and off in sin? If God's love was commended towards us in this way when we were yet dead in sin, how much more will He continue with us now until His own Body brings forth of His fruit (Romans 5:8-9)? If we feel rejected, condemned and forsaken by God when in a wretched condition, it is only because we do not know Him yet.

Conception

At this time in the history of Israel, the people were actively giving themselves to foreign gods. They were not crying out to God or seeking Him. At such a time as this God Himself initiated this action of love towards Israel in the person of Hosea. Israel's land was overridden with idolatry and defiled. Although they bore the name of God's people, their lives bore the fruit of foreign seed. The ground of their heart was hard, fallow and full of rocks. In response to their desperate condition, God commanded Hosea to enter into a union with Gomer, a picture that oneness with Christ Crucified could eventually bring them out from their own uncleanness into fruitfulness. God's heart was moved to save His people from the fruit of their own selfish nature and ways. God Himself moved in love towards them even when they were blatantly rejecting Him.

Hosea joining with Gomer was a sign to the people of Israel. This "union" sign was meant to awaken them to the God they did not know. It was a sign meant to reveal the method through which God works. Although the people of Israel had heard the words of God given through Moses and some prophets, His Word had no impact in them. This can still be the case for God's people today. God's wants to awaken us to our union with Christ in a way that will cause His Word to have conception in us. God is not just sowing words of teachings into our ears, but He is sowing His Crucified Self into our hearts to impact our hard and fallow ground and bring conception. We may believe in the Cross and all the teachings of Christ, but if our lives are filled with selfishness and sin, there is proof that we have not yet conceived of that which has been taught. If we are still trying to clean up our land, we have not yet awakened to this great union God has already brought us into that can purge us in ways beyond all human effort.

The First Son From The Union – Jezreel

***“So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.
And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel” (Hosea 1:3-4a).***

The first fruit of Hosea's union with Gomer is a son whose name is “Jezreel”. The definition of the name “Jezreel” is incredibly significant. If the Holy Spirit opened the eyes of our hearts to behold Christ in the meaning of this name, our lives would never be the same. Jezreel means “God will sow”. The great sowing of God happened at Calvary in the Person of Christ Crucified. In His death, Christ joined to us and took us into death with Him that He might crucify the old man. The first action God did after He joined with us was to sow us into His death. There is an order to the sowing of God that is all important. Paul understood this order when he said, “I am crucified with Christ (*sown into His death through union*), nevertheless... Christ lives in me (*partaking of His Life through union*). Most Christians are aware that the sowing of God on Calvary brought them New Life in Christ, but unaware that He first sowed them into His death in a way that crucified the old man and his deeds. The first way God “sows” His people once He joins to them is INTO DEATH (Romans 6:3-11). If we have not been awakened by the Holy Spirit to experientially know this reality, then we will be confused and frustrated, wondering why we remain entangled in bondage to the old nature of sin rather than liberated unto fruitfulness in Christ. In Hosea, the only way for Israel's relationship with God to change from that of a harlot to a bride was through entering into a union that brought forth in them the fruit of being sown into death. For us today, we understand that freedom from bondage to self only comes through union with Christ Crucified and the reality that we have been sown into His death. There is only one cure for every disease, and that cure is death. Only through union into Christ's death will we be healed as Christ comes forth as Life.

And so Hosea joins to Gomer, even as Christ is joined to His Church (Ephesians 5:23). We must consider that Israel, and Gomer as a part of that people, were already the Lord's “redeemed”. So in a real sense Gomer could represent the believer that is filled with the fruit of her own flesh and other sources outside of Christ. By this we should realize that even those who are already born again need a continued application and participation in the work of the Cross. Even as Peter tells us of the continuing process of “Being Born again by incorruptible seed” (I Peter 1:23), we should also realize there is a continuing process of awakening to and applying the work of our death with Christ. When Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ” in Galatians 2:20, he used the Greek verb “am” which declares a past work with continuing effects now. The power of the Cross is meant to flow into each moment exacting and executing the practical effects of a work released thousands of years ago. We must see the Lord “never lets us go” in His “death embrace” that awakens us to the reality that we are dead with Him, that His Life might continue to be our one Source and fullness.

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The Sown God

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18,23, 24) .

The ground of our hearts must be open to the preaching of the Cross so that the Word of the Cross might be sown within. The preaching of the Cross declares not just Christ's death for us, but Christ's death AS US. When Christ died, we died. Paul said, “I AM CRUCIFIED with Christ”. During the time of Hosea, the people of Israel were drawn into Baal worship because it promised great blessings to them, but required no death. Baal was the fertility God of the Canaanites. The people worshipped Baal for increase. But Baal could not be sown into them for Baal never died. They were placing hope in an idol, an impotent method of fertility. Without the SOWN GOD (Christ Crucified), we have no hope for eternal life. Until the land of our hearts are purged at Calvary, they will never yield a harvest of the Son. Other gospels and methods can appeal to us as a form of "miracle grow" to empower our soil with methods that appeal to man's strength and wisdom in attaining a better harvest. But we believe the power of God is found in a SOWN Christ that is embraced and applied. Many want Christ added to their soil, rather than sown into their soil through death.

God told Hosea in 1:2 that the LAND had committed a great harlotry in that it departed from the Lord. A core issue with God's people concerned the manner in which they related to God as His field for sowing and increase. This harlot relationship that Israel had with God involved departing from His ways to bring forth a harvest by embracing union with the way of the foreign nations around them. Even though they were surrounded with the truth of the Cross in every aspect of the worship God had ordained in their priesthood and offerings, they never saw the way of God in it. They never understood that true increase only comes from the death of the sacrifice. With every seed each farmer sowed into the soil, they never comprehended that in their own lives fruit would not come forth until a seed was sown into death. Hosea came to help the people return to God's way. He was a picture of the Cross in action. He was a picture of Christ bringing an adulterous people who had left God back into His way, the way of the Lord, her true Husband.

The Lord's initiating love joined to us so that He might FIRST plant us into HIS DEATH. The old must be put away before the new can come forth. God through His prophet was not trying to coerce His people into reform, but to draw them into participating in the work of His Cross. Hosea is a picture of Christ crucified. Christ crucified is what the scriptures testify of, not the works of the flesh to become acceptable to God. God's order is all important. There is no fruit until a seed is sown. Right before Jesus went to cross He stated, “Unless a seed falls into the ground and dies it will not bring forth fruit” (John 12:24). We see in the scriptures that the planting of the Lord did not begin with the sowing of His life into us, but with sowing us into His death.

(Hosea Part Two Continued in Next Month's Newsletter)

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