

FIREPROOF YOUR MARRIAGE (& Relationships) Part 1 of 4 9.21.08

The “Gomer” Principle from HOSEA = Unconditional Love

Intro

- My passion for strong Oaks relationships in marriage and life
- Fireproof the film (opening this Friday) and therefore Fireproof the sermon series
- One principle each week from 4 different books of the Bible

This Week

- The “Gomer Principle” from HOSEA – the first of the “minor” prophets
- The word “Gomer” comes from the root “Gamer”, a verb meaning “to COMPLETE” (Strongs)
- Gomer was, or was to become, a prostitute that God told Hosea to marry as an illustration of God loving His people
- The “Gomer Principle” = UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
- If you want to “fireproof” your marriage and/or relationship make it COMPLETE with UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

The Biblical Story: “The Prophet and the Prostitute”

SETTING THE STAGE (1:1)

- Calendar on the wall: c. 760 B.C. – c. 40 years before the Assyrian invasion and conquering of the Northern Kingdom
- Spiritual condition: APATHY FOR GOD and IDOLOTRY amidst relative prosperity. Sound familiar?
- “The spirit was willing, but the flesh was ready for the weekend”
- Hosea was a young preacher to the Northern Kingdom along with the prophet Amos; they were contemporaries of Isaiah who preached to the Southern Kingdom
- Verse 1:1 tells us the contemporary kings of Hosea – 4 in the Southern Kingdom and Jeroboam II in the Northern Kingdom that Hosea preached. Jeroboam II was a wicked, infamous king who had obtained his throne by bloodshed in the battlefield called Jezreel, in the center of the N. Kingdom
- Hosea’s message of repentance was met with everything from SCOFFING (“if God is a God of love how could we be in such a mess”) to IGNORING (he’s just a nice and harmless prophet)

ANICDOTE:

In the U.K. an Anglican clergyman, during the Battle of Britain (1940), saw signs in the public square reading: “All persons must register for the draft except women, children, idiots and clergy” He was offended – not so much that he was included on the list, but that he wished he had at least been put ahead of the idiots!

THE MARRIAGE (1:2)

- Hosea was discouraged.
- God wanted him to get married to a most beautiful young girl – GOMER
- The whole story: she will become a prostitute and be unfaithful
- Hosea undoubtedly wondered – but trusted God (like Abraham in sacrificing Isaac)
- This would be a teaching by symbol and example, of God's UNCONDITIONAL LOVE to his people
- Hosea = a type of God and GOMER = a type of God's "adulterous" people
- God wanted Hosea to learn to love Gomer UNCONDITIONALLY
- This lesson was for ISRAEL, the CHURCH, MARRIAGES and RELATIONSHIPS

THE CHILDREN (1:3-9)

- First a son is born. God wants him called JEZREEL in remembrance of the bloodshed at Jezreel and since Jezreel = "God sows" to remind all that God will sow PUNISHMENT on Israel in the valley of Jezreel when the Assyrians come to conquer.
- Apparently, Hosea discovers that this is a child of HARLOTRY (1:2) – the son is not his and Gomer has been unfaithful. This is not a child of UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, but of CONDITIONAL love on the part of Gomer. Thus, it is that love between two people that has CONDITIONS sows unhappiness.
- Yet, Hosea loves Gomer UNCONDITIONALLY and a second child is born: a daughter. God wants her called LO-RUHAMA = "no compassion" to show that God will not have compassion or forgiveness on the Israel (the Northern Kingdom) in the coming days, but rather have compassion on Judah (the Southern Kingdom). This was not a daughter of UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, but of CONDITIONAL LOVE – with no compassion shown on the part of Gomer.
- And Hosea still loves Gomer UNCONDITIONALLY and a third child is born: a second son. God wants him called LO-AMMI = "not mine" to show that God does will reject his people as His because of their unfaithfulness. This was the third child that was not of Hosea but of CONDITIONAL LOVE on the part of Gomer, bringing no sense of possession to the marriage.
- Thus, we learn that the fruit (children) of CONDITIONAL LOVE is
 1. sowing unhappiness
 2. lack of compassion
 3. lack of ownership

HOPE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP (chapter 2)

- Apparently, Gomer finally leaves the family to go off with her many man friends.
- Yet Hosea apparently has HOPE for a restored relationship through UNCONDITIONAL LOVE which God has asked of him and given to him

- Hosea (the type of God) believes that with a restored relationship with Gomer the children can be “renamed” and so in **2:1** he tells the oldest, JEZREEL, to now call his sister Ruhamah (“compassion”) and his brother Ammi (“mine”) exercising faith in the restored relationship and demonstrating UNCONDITIONAL LOVE toward Gomer’s children in accepting them as his own with compassions
- In **2:2** and throughout the chapter, Hosea PLEAS with Gomer to come back, practicing UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
- In **2:14** Hosea plans to ALLURE her back with KINDNESS
- In **2:15** Hosea remains positive and sees a DOOR OF HOPE for their restored relationship
- In **2:16** Hosea dreams of a day when he will HUSBAND (loving caretaker) and not MASTER (Lord over her)
- In 2:19-20 he plans to remarry her FOREVER, with doing what is RIGHT and JUST and exhibiting COMPASSION. He understands that closeness of relationship comes from UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.
- In 2:23 we have reference to the names of the 3 children
 1. Hosea will “sow” her to himself – i.e. give her UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
 2. Hosea will have “compassion” on her in forgiveness and restoration
 3. Hosea will call her “mine” and build the relationship on God

THE RELATIONSHIP RESTORED (chapter 3)

- Hosea finds Gomer on the slave market, hurting and broken of spirit
- God tells Hosea to take her back (“the Lord said to me...”)
- God reminds Hosea of his love for Gomer (“who is loved by her husband”)
- This is even though Gomer, like God’s people, loves “raison cakes” = like the “Turkish delight” of C.S Lewis’ “Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe”
- He buys her back with 15 pieces of silver and some barley – sacrificing some of himself
- This is in demonstration of the Lord buying back his people in love (Calvary)
- We assume that the relationship was successful from this time on
- UNCONDITIONAL LOVE WINS – the relationship is FIREPROOF

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

- Believes in COMPLETION (Gomer) of God’s plan for the relationship
- Its “children” are
- Sowing of love and forgiveness
- Compassion
- Claiming personal possession (“mine”) as God’s perfect gift
 1. Pursues and never gives up
 2. Always keeps HOPE alive, dreaming of and believing in the power of God’s reconciliation
 3. “Buys back” the relationship with sacrifice, contrition and forgiveness

4. Recommits faithfulness and love, time and time again
5. Believes God has given this relationship and that God knows what He is doing through it all

1. Loves DESPITE the obstacles
2. Loves with no IFS, ANDS or BUTS (non-conditional)
3. Loves SACRIFICIALLY
4. Loves in HOPE of a brighter future
5. Relies on GOD FOR STRENGTH

1. Realizes when we are weak, then HE be strong
2. Realizes our relationship is UNDER ATTACK BY THE ENEMY
3. Realizes our marriage or relationship is ALWAYS WORTH FIGHTING FOR
4. Realizes: NO PAIN, NO GAIN – unconditional love takes CONTINUAL EFFORT

PRACTICE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE and FIREPROOF your marriage or relationship

LET GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OF YOU be your guide and example!

NEXT WEEK: Part 2 of the series – “The Shulamite Principle” from Song of Solomon