

“One Wedding That Had People Talking”

Hosea 3:1-5

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“The word of the Lord happened to Hosea” Hosea 1:1a. Usually, we think of the Word of the Lord coming through the written or spoken word. However, God can also speak through experiences. Ask Hosea.

What happened to Hosea? He got married and had a family. Now, as significant as this was for Hosea, it was hardly unusual. Marriages occurred every week. What made this one special and noteworthy?

Hosea married a prostitute, active not reformed. Why? God told him to do it. Remember, Hosea was a prophet whose purpose for living was to be God’s spokesman to His people. Obedience was not an option. When Hosea was convinced that God was leading him to do something, however bizarre, he had to do it. So, Hosea married this harlot by the name of Gomer.

Three children were born as time passed, but Hosea realized by the time the third one came along that he was not the father of this one, and probably not the second one either. How painful this must have been for Hosea.

“And the Word of the Lord happened to Hosea.” What happened next? Gomer left home. Hosea became a single parent who was, no doubt, subjected to taunts like, “I told you so. What did you expect? Were you crazy?”

The story did not end here. Something else happened. God told Hosea to go to a slave auction. He went, and on the auction block to be sold as a common slave was his wife, Gomer.

So, what did Hosea do? He started bidding and continued until he bought Gomer. In all likelihood, she cost everything he had. He paid in silver and grain. He probably scraped the bottom of the financial barrel to purchase her.

Then what happened? Did Hosea abuse Gomer or shame her in front of the kids? No. Instead, he told Gomer he still loved her, wanted her to come home and promised her that he would be good to her. All he asked in return was that she be faithful to him.

Why did God put Hosea through this? Why did this happen? Was this some kind of sick sense of humor on God’s part? Hardly. God had a reason for it. As a matter of fact, I think He had three reasons.

First of all, I think it was done for Hosea’s benefit. The only way he could fully understand the pain sin caused and the concept of mercy was to experience them firsthand. It worked. The messages that followed were bold and forceful because of this experience.

Secondly, all of this occurred for the benefit of his countrymen. This time they would not merely hear a message from a preacher, but see it. This was one message they would never forget.

Thirdly, I think it happened for our benefit. Few stories in the Bible help us to understand the concept of grace better than this one. Grace implies that someone has been hurt and hurt badly. The pain is gripping and the consequences are real. The offender deserves judgment and punishment, severe punishment. However, the offended offers forgiveness and another chance. The offended seeks reconciliation, not revenge.

This is what grace is. It is what a person needs but does not deserve. It is hope for the hopeless. It is help for the helpless. It is a level of love the world knows nothing about but so desperately needs. It is God at His best when we are at our worst.

What are you going to do with God's offer of grace and another chance? What did Gomer do? We don't know. Scripture doesn't tell us. Maybe the reason the ending is not included is so we can insert ourselves in the story and write our own conclusions. If so, how will your story end?