

INSIGHT

When you became a Christian you entered into a marriage (covenant) relationship with Jesus Christ. We are called to be faithful to Him and put no other before Him. When we sin we are being unfaithful to Jesus. Spiritually, we are committing adultery. God's heart is broken when we prostitute our souls to other lovers (i.e. idolatry, immorality, jealousy, cowardice, fits of rage, etc.). The Lord clearly illustrates this to us through Hosea the prophet. Hosea is commanded to take an unfaithful wife who will commit adultery and prostitute herself to other lovers. She will bear children of unfaithfulness conceived in sin. This unenviable task is a wake-up call to Israel and to us. God loves us so deeply! How do you think it makes Him feel when we chase after other lovers (sin)? What does it do to God's heart when He sees us committing adultery? How would you feel if the tables were turned?

Perhaps the greatest pain one can experience is to love someone deeply, to commit themselves wholeheartedly to another only to have them chase after someone else. Have you ever experienced the pain of unfaithfulness? Have you ever loved someone deeply only to have them leave you for another? How did it make you feel? It crushes and devastates the heart! Then you can begin to understand the hurt that God feels and how His heart is pained when we sin. You can also begin to appreciate how great and awesome God's love is, because despite the devastation He feels because of our adulterous ways, He still loves us!! God is always faithful and welcomes us with open arms when we return to Him! ***"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you"*** (Hebrews 13:5). Imitate the faithfulness of the Lord!

The Heart of God God's Greatest Desires

Key Text: Hosea 11:8-9

"...My heart is changed within me; all my compassion aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim. For I am God, and not man - the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath."

Theme:

The heart of God is filled with compassion and clearly He does not treat us as our sins deserve (Psalms 103). Despite Israel's unfaithfulness, it was always God's desire to see her repent and return to Him. How does He do this? Well, He is God - the Holy One among us! His holiness is shown in His ability to forgive even though we don't deserve it.

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. **Give thanks to the Lord!** Thank God for not treating you as your sins deserve, and remember that when dealing with others.
2. **Appreciate the Lord's compassion!** God's compassion is not human - it is holy. Imitate His holiness and share it with those who do not know the Lord!
3. **Understand all sin is adultery toward God!** When we sin we are committing adultery against our faithful husband, Jesus Christ.
4. **Repent with great eagerness!** Hosea 14:1 says "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall!"

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

God's Great Desires

Introduction

1 Timothy 2:3-4

God wants everyone to know the Truth and be saved.

I. God's Great Desire to Forgive

Ephesians 5:2

1. Jesus gave Himself up for the Church.

a. The ultimate expression of His love for us and His desire to forgive us of our unfaithfulness.

II. God's Great Desire to Deliver Us

Ephesians 5:3-11

1. God desires to deliver us from our sinful ways.

2. God calls us to live in the light.

III. God's Great Desire for His Bride

Ephesians 5:25ff

1. The Church is the bride.

2. His desire is to prepare her (you and I) for the great wedding day.

IV. God's Desire Fulfilled at the Wedding Day

Revelation 21, 22

1. God is preparing the bride for her husband (*Rev. 21:1-2*).

2. The bride is beautifully dressed (*Galatians 3:26-27*).

3. After the wedding - celebration! (*Rev. 21:3-7*).

4. The bride eagerly awaits her husband (*Rev. 22:17*).

V. Conclusion

God's desires show His faithfulness and love for us. Likewise, let our desires show our faithfulness and love for the Lord!

Revelation 22:12

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Warm-up:

What was the worst job you ever had to do in school, work, or at home? Why was it so unpleasant?

See To It *Hosea 1:2; 3:1-3*

1. How would you feel about taking a spouse like Gomer to be your own? Why?
2. What did the Lord want Hosea to do? Why do you think He wanted him to do this? What was the purpose?
3. How would you feel if the Lord asked you to marry Gomer?
4. If your spouse committed adultery and left you, how would it make you feel? Would it be easy to take them back if they returned? How would you be able to take them back?
5. How did God view the Israelite's sin? What were they committing?

Seeing It Closer:

1. How are you like Gomer?
2. How is God like Hosea?
3. How do you feel when you realize God is affected by your sin?
4. Are you eager to be a more faithful spouse to the Lord? Why?

Getting To It:

Encourage each other to become a more faithful spouse to the Lord. Pray that we may all grow to be more like our loving husband - Jesus Christ.