

Therefore...

Hosea 2:2-23

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. (Hosea 2:14)

Big Idea:

Because God loves his people in Christ, the Spirit pursues. . .

I. Limits (vv. 6-8)

In this pageant, Hosea’s tragic experience with Gomer parallels God’s with Israel. Hosea’s tough love for Gomer reveals the way God must, at times, love his rebellious children—by defeating them. In v. 6, Hosea says he will take whatever actions necessary to keep his wife from reaching her lovers, even if it means locking her in the house or blocking her path with thorns. Verse 7 is clearly a reference to divine providence because Hosea could not ensure Gomer would be unsuccessful in finding her lovers. Failure can be the most assuring experience in someone’s life because it can prove that one is a beloved child of God. When a child of God is pursuing a dream or a lifestyle or a goal or a pleasure that is not an ideal plan for him, then denial of that desire is assurance that Christ is active in his life. It could actually be more frightening to gain it because it can mean that God has crossed his arms and said, “Get what you want; I have no plans for your eternal blessing.” The job that would have fed your ego, the relationship that would have satisfied your lusts, the business deal that would have made you financially independent, the ministry position that would have given you significance, that accolade for your child that would have stoked your pride—that success could have been the most tragic thing ever to happen to you because it would have reinforced the delusion that anything can satisfy you more than Christ. In the hand of a sovereign God, denial is a gift and an expression of love.

II. Deprivation (vv. 2-4, 9-13)

When God’s children continue to rebel even after experiencing failure, the Father must take more severe action. The bigger message is that this is what God does to us when we take his gifts, but spit in his face. He does not take these severe actions because he enjoys making people miserable. It is with the pain of a parent and through the tears of a true Father that he cuts off blessings in order to draw our hearts back to him. In these verses, it is the “Lord who declares” that he will expose, stop, ruin, devastate, and punish Israel because they forgot him, not Hosea (13). And it is the sovereign Lord who continues to love us severely like this when we take his gifts but refuse to show gratitude.

III. Restoration (vv. 14-23)

The final “therefore” is shocking to any who are not familiar with the grace of the gospel. When you see a “therefore” in scripture, you must ask what it’s there for. It’s a logical connecting point that link what follows with what precedes. What is so shocking about this “therefore” is that it doesn’t seem to make sense. In view of Gomer’s blatant ingratitude and unfaithfulness, we would expect Hosea to say to her and God to say to us, “therefore, I will judge you.” Instead, he says,

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her,

and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her. (Hosea 2:14)

God now explains his gifts of denial and defeat were entirely for the purpose of restoring his wayward bride, the Church.

Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of “severe mercies” in your own life where God limited you in some way that, at the time, seemed cruel and unloving but later on you were able to see it was out of love? Have you had to practice this in relationship with others? What has that taught you about your relationship with God?
2. Can you think of a time your love and care for someone was questioned by them or unrecognized, leaving you feeling used and angry? What parallels can you draw between these experiences and our relationship with God who gave his son for us? How does God giving you Jesus put any other deprivation into perspective?
3. What is hardest for you to believe about God’s amazing grace in this passage? How might your life change if you really believed God is this gracious?