

BROKEN WEDDING BELLS

ME

I remember my wedding day... Jess, do you? (Discuss our wedding day details)

Exciting stuff! Fun and good memories!

WE

Weddings...

We each have our own stories. Some are sweet. Some are sacred. Some are just downright funny, such as the story of Sheila and Scott's wedding, where Scott Badger stood at the alter and proclaimed to all their friends and family, "I SHOT Badger!"

But, none of our weddings could compare to that of God's prophet, Hosea.

Hosea was a man with a tough job – He was called by the Lord to proclaim a message of repentance to a people who were living aimless traditions, all the while worshiping false gods.

The people of Israel had turned away from their first love – the Lord – and turned to their own lust, their own selfish and sinful desires, and even a false god by the name of Baal.

Hosea, God's prophet, was given the unique privilege of having his own life sovereignly wrecked by and for the glory of God.

AND, hence our story begins...

GOD

Hosea 1: 1 – 3

The Lord calls his Hosea to be His prophet, speaking both the judgment and love of God to His wayward people.

How did this conversation between Hosea and the Lord go?

Maybe something like this... (Act out conversation between God & Hosea)

“You want me to marry a what?!”

Indeed, Hosea had the ceremony with broken wedding bells. Not quite the wife he dreamed of...

ME

I remember becoming a dad... (Discuss my feelings when the kids were born)

GOD

Listening to the account of Hosea's firstborn son...

Hosea 1: 3 – 5

Though there is some discrepancy between scholars on the exact historical reference here regarding the house of Jehu and the blood of Jezreel, it appears and makes sense that it refers to 1 Kings 21, where the wicked King of Israel, Ahab, who promoted Baalism as the national religion of Israel, and his involvement in murdering a man of the Lord named Naboth in order to receive his vineyard in Jezreel.

This would make sense since the whole of the Book of Hosea is set in a time when the people of Israel had chosen to turn their backs on the Lord and worship the false god, Baal.

This normally exuberant and joyful time of having a new child was made by the Lord into a painful object lesson for both the prophet/new daddy and the wayward people whom he was called to set straight.

I can imagine how Hosea's conversing to the Lord might have been after his boy Jezreel came along...

Maybe something like this... (Act out conversation between God & Hosea)

“Lord, thank you for my son, but do I have to name him that...?”

GOD

And then comes the next child...

Hosea 1: 6 – 7

AND this one is probably not even Hosea's child! The name “No Mercy” was given as both a sign that this little girl was not Hosea's, and God was no longer going to have mercy on the Northern Kingdom of Israel because of their idol worship! The Southern Kingdom of Judah, God would have mercy upon because they were not involved in such sinfulness as these folks.

I can imagine how Hosea's conversing to the Lord might have been after this little girl came along...

Maybe something like this... (Act out conversation between God & Hosea)

“Lord, what have you done to me? I am miserable, this is not my kid, I am the laughing stock of the people...”

GOD

And then comes the next child...

Hosea 1: 8 – 9

Boy, oh boy! How exciting to keep having children... EXCEPT, of course, when you find out that the children your wife is birthing are not your own...

This child is named a name which makes it explicitly clear – This child is not Hosea's!

The Lord tells Hosea to name this child “Not my people.” Can it be any clearer than this? Hosea is charged with having yet another child by his unfaithful wife so that the Lord may make it VERY CLEAR through the prophet that the Lord was cutting ties, negating the marital bond with the people of Israel, which He had made at Mt. Sinai, as recorded in the Book of Exodus.

What might this conversation have sounded like?

(Act out interaction of Hosea & God)

“God, this is not my child...!”

APPLICATION

The biggest amazement to me in this whole story is that the Lord chose to ruin and wreck Hosea's life for the good of His people.

Hosea became a prophet, illustrating the very anger of God toward the sin of His people by taking on that anger in a very personal way in his own life, as he lived the picture of the way Israel had sinned against the Lord.

No person during this time period could have had a better understanding of the pain it caused the Lord to be cheated on by His people than Hosea, who was mandated by the Lord to marry a woman with no character, who would be unfaithful, and then have to raise her children, knowing they were the children of other men.

Beloved, in this story we find the very call of Lent – God’s dealings with His people in the Old Testament both foreshadow His dealing with His church and show very depth and holy personality of His character.

In the New Testament, Christ is portrayed as the very husband of the church. Like Hosea’s bride, Gomer, when we become involved in sin, we prostitute ourselves out, becoming an unfaithful bride.

Lent is an opportunity for us to recognize our unfaithfulness, turn away from our waywardness, look again upon Jesus, and run down the aisle toward the grace and forgiveness of our groom!

GOD

Hosea 1: 10 – 11

The Lord promised the Israelites that, when they turned away from their sin and returned to Him, they would find forgiveness, restoration, and even blessing!

Actually, the Lord told Hosea that the people of Israel, who divorced themselves from their master by their sin, would once again be called the “Children of the Living God!”

St. James Church – We easily become entangled in various kinds of sin: pride, gossip, materialism, and so on and so forth. ALL SIN, like that of unfaithful Gomer toward her husband Hosea, is spiritual adultery against the Lord God Himself!

BUT, we are not stuck in our sin! The same Lord who tenaciously pursued after His people Israel that they would turn from their worship of other things and return to their first love, the Lord, pursues us today!

As a matter of fact, He has pursued us to such an extent that He sacrificed His own Son, Jesus Christ, and poured out His anger for our sin on Him!

Like Hosea the prophet, the Lord sovereignly wrecked the life of His own Son for the good of those who would one day know, follow, and love Him!

With such a loving pursuer, will you continue to live in sin?

St. James Church, will you, this Lenten Season, turn away from your spiritual lovers, your unfaithfulness, your sin, and RETURN to Jesus?