

“When Marriage Gets Stormy”
Book of Hosea
Sermon Series: “Jesus In The Storm”

Introduction: Every marriage will be stormy at times. Sometimes it may feel like a tornado or hurricane is going through your house. Or maybe it feels like an ice storm in the bedroom. Maybe with everything going on right now it feels like a tsunami has hit your marriage.

Why is it the case that marriage is often stormy? I would suggest at least four reasons:

- 1. We tend to be blinded by infatuation early in a relationship.**
- 2. Nobody can meet all of our needs (what we idolize, we eventually demonize, someone can't rescue us or fulfill us).**
- 3. Every marriage is a union of two sinners (if you don't believe in the concept of sin, why is it so easy to hurt the one we love the most?)**
- 4. Life happens (people get sick, deaths, difficulties with children, things break, financial problems, lose jobs, look at things different, we have our own internal struggles that spill over).**

Transition Statement: It may be these things or other things, but the reality is that marriage is challenging and sometimes gets stormy. What can we do when that happens? We are going to go to God's Word, to an Old Testament book named Hosea, to answer that question.

Background of the book of Hosea: This is a book that is beautiful and terrible, simple and complex, all at the same time. Hosea was a prophet who wrote this around 760 BC. It was a time of prosperity. Craig Groeschel says, “Sadly though where there is a time of economic increase, there's almost always moral and spiritual decrease.” Sound familiar? The Lord told him to marry an immoral woman (either God is telling him what is going to happen in the future or she had a bad past, was different now, but was going to return to her former lifestyle in the future) named Gomer (1:2-9). Hosea's marriage to Gomer is an object lesson about God's hatred of sin and unconditional love for His people that teaches us about marriage at the same time. This story is two-fold and intertwined together in that it is about their marriage, which is serving as an object lesson, and God's response to Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness at the same time. It is also a beautiful picture of the gospel. Yet, He never stops loving us or gives up on His covenant with us. Jesus became a sacrifice to redeem us from sin because God loves us so much. We are all Gomer, sinners in need of redemption. Hosea's sacrificial love for her pictures what Jesus did for us, how God lovingly disciplines and restores us, and teaches us how to love

our spouse and other people in a Christ-like way. This story pictures the gospel, it shows God calling backsliders back to Himself, and it instructs us in regard to marriage (remember that it takes two in regard to marriage).

What can we do when marriage becomes a trial? The book of Hosea shows us a couple of possible options that people can take:

1. We can think the grass is greener on the other side and pursue someone that we think will be better (2:4-13). Craig Groeschel says, “We trade the 80% for the 20%.” He also says, “If the grass is greener somewhere else, it is time to water your own yard. If the grass looks greener somewhere else, then you haven’t gotten close enough to smell the poop yet.”

2. We can walk through the valley of trouble together and let God turn it into a door of hope (2:14-15). {Achor means trouble in Hebrew} [like with Jonah, a storm can either drown you or deliver you]

Steps To Take When Walking Through The Valley Of Trouble

1. Function based on the covenant we made with God and our spouse instead of our feelings (2:16-20). This is how God treats us. He gets righteously angry with us, but He is always faithful to the covenant relationship He made with us through grace and unconditional love. Marriage is not a convenience, ceremony, contract with loopholes in it, or two people living together with a conditional commitment, but it is an unconditional covenant between two people and Almighty God (Matthew 19:3-6). There are two very important Hebrew words that are used in the book of Hosea. One is *hesed*, and it refers to God’s covenant love that is loyal, steadfast, and faithful. The other is *ahav*, and it refers to affectionate and passionate love. In Hosea 9:15, God told them that He would not be affectionately loving toward them, but the book repeatedly makes it clear that the Lord will never break His covenant with His people. The application to marriage is that when we don’t feel affectionate love, continue to love with covenant love.

2. Love and forgive as we have been forgiven and loved (2:21-3:1; see also Ephesians 4:32, 5:25). As Christians, we don’t respond in kind but based on grace. God has loved and forgiven us when we deserve judgment, and we are to love and forgive others through the same grace we have been given. The picture is that God gets angry but is merciful and forgiving. **What do you need to forgive your spouse for?**

3. Repent (3:3). God can fix any relationship, but change (repentance) is always going to be required. Gary Thomas said, “Couples don’t fall out of love so much as they fall out of repentance.” **What do you need to apologize to your spouse for? What do you need to change for your marriage to improve?**

4. Turn to Jesus (3:1-2). This story is one of the most beautiful pictures of the gospel in the Bible. Jesus died to redeem us from sin as is pictured by Hosea redeeming Gomer from slavery.

A. Jesus gives forgiveness.

B. Jesus changes us from the inside out.

C. Jesus restores marriages.