**Hosea — God's Love is Greater.**

**Historical**

Hosea prophesied during a dark and melancholy era of Israel's history, in the days of Jeroboam II around 755 to 715 BC, during the Northern Kingdom's decline and fall in the 8th century B.C. Hosea ministered to the Northern kingdom, calling them to repent and return to a right relationship with God. According to the book, the people's apostasy was rampant, having turned away from God to serve the calves built by Jeroboam to worship Baal, a Canaanite god.

Minor prophets are just minor because the books are shorter; they are just as important and powerful. Hosea (the name means salvation) is one of the 12 minor prophets. This Fall, we will be studying each one of these prophets.

**Six Key Lessons in Hosea**

1. God’s love brings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

God uses allegories and parables to bring understanding. The people heard God's words many times, but they felt the impact of those words when they saw them act out in Hosea's merciful love for his wife, Gomer.

The story of Hosea and Gomer is a love story that transcends the tale of a young man and his wife; it tells of God's love for his people and the response of his "bride." God's love is steadfast and his commitment unbroken, But Israel, like Gomer, was adulterous and unfaithful, spurning God's love and turning instead to false gods. Then, God reaffirmed His love and offered reconciliation after the warning of judgment. His love and mercy were overflowing, but justice would be served. Hosea also bought back his wife from slavery and redeemed her life after she left him and her children for other men.

"A people without understanding will come to ruin." (Hosea 4:14)

1. God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*"I led them with cords of human kindness with ties of love. To them, I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them."* (Hosea 11:4)

*"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* (1 John 4:10)

1. God’s Love wants to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

God wants our questions, our seeking, and to know His love. We need to know God is greater than what the world throws at us. Higher knowledge of God empowers us to endure and thrive no matter what circumstances we may face.

Christianity is a thinking religion.

*"My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children."* (Hosea 4:6)

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of Godmay be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

1. God’s Love and Faithfulness allow us to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*"To the faithful, you show yourself faithful."* (Psalm 18:25)

*"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me." (Isaiah 46:9)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God’s love eliminates \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Idols are anything that presents a challenge to God's sovereignty or to which you turn to answers of meaning, fulfillment, and purpose instead of God.

The Israelites trusted other people and nations over God.

*"When Ephriam saw his sickness and Judah his sores, then Ephraim turned to Assyria and sent to the great king for help, but he is not able to heal your sores."* (Hosea 5:13)

*"Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them*." (Jonah 2:8)

1. God’s Love calls us to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The Greek definition of repentance means to "turn around." Repentance means to turn to God and ask forgiveness for our sins. Sin means to "miss the mark."

*"The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them."* (Hosea 14:9)

"God's kindness leads us to repentance." (Romans 2:4)

**End Thoughts and Practical Application**

**God Shot:** God's love never fails.

**My Shot:** My human nature wants to be its own God.

**Personal Application**—Turn to God and away from those things keeping me from Him.

**Small Group Questions**

1. What stops you from spending time with God?
2. What are some things you turn to for answers, meaning, fulfillment, and purpose instead of God? (Some common ones: career, children, sports, social media, the news)
3. How do you grow in your knowledge of God?

*"My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge."* (Hosea 4:6)

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of Godmay be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (Timothy 3:16-17)

1. What helps you trust God?

You can't trust someone you don't know. (Some ideas that might help: Bible Study is like a trusted friend's recommendation, Remembering God's faithfulness in the past, Reading the Bible, and asking God for more faith. Ask, like the person in Mark 9:24 says, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!)