

Hosea chapter 2:2 to 3:5

I heard of many bad marriages before. Common complaints of marriage are communication problems, disrespects, physical attacks, misuse of each other's money or property or lie about money usage, etc. but the worst is adultery. In the Christian circle, adultery is one of the key causes for divorce.

Hosea is a prophet in the Old Testament (around 750 to 722 BC). Hosea was living in the northern Jewish nation of Israel during its final two decades till the Assyrian invaded it. Book of Hosea is part of the minor prophet book due to its length that is not as long as those in major prophet. Hosea's prophecy is revealed as an act of his whole life that is to marry an adulterous wife to reflect the Israelites had committed spiritual adultery by worshipping idols.

1) Adultery and unfaithfulness

It was never right to marry an adulterous wife in Jewish custom, and it is even more unthinkable for a prophet to do so. God made Hosea's marriage as a clear and loud alarm to the Israelites. The Israelites committed spiritual adultery by worshipping idols. Most worshiped multiple gods including Baal. Some might think God was just a god of war, but Baal was the god that provide crops, children, etc. for life abundance. Verses 5, 6 and 13 fully described their wrong worship.

2) Israelites disregarded the covenant and the subsequent punishment

This covenant between God and man is a relationship commitment, and not a legal contract. When the Israelites worshipped idols, they broke that one-to-one committed relationship.

a. The covenant

The covenant was first described in Gen. 15:1-18, and that passed on through the line of Abraham. In Hosea, just as the covenant relationship was broken between Hosea and his wife Gomer (verse 2), so too was God telling the people that the covenant was broken between God and Israel.

b. Punishment

Verses 6 to 13 described the punishment. God blocked all her ways and revenues. She would not get what she desired even though she tried. She would not have the material that she needed.

c. The awakening

God's punishment to offenders has two aspects: hurt enough to think and poor enough to return to God (verses 7 to 13). This is very similar to the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. Thus, there is kindness in intention in God's punishment.

3) God's love upholds the covenant

Verse 14 expressed God's love to His people although the Israelites completely abandoned God: speak words of love to bring her back, lead her, and speak tenderly to her.

a. Provide His people

Verse 15 indicates physical needs will be provided, and hopes will be restored. Verses 21 to 23 also listed more blessings from God.

b. Relationship restored

Verse 16 is very meaningful. The husband and wife relationship will be restored. It will not be a master and slave relationship. It will be a love commitment relationship. Verses 18 to 20 are about the covenant be renewed, and God will give them peace and safety. God's righteousness, justice, compassion and faithfulness remain with them.

In conclusion, spiritual adultery is a very serious offense and extremely hurtful like adultery in a marriage relationship. I met couples with adultery caused divorce before and I know how painful that was. When we worship wealth and other worldly desires like prestige and position, we are worshipping idols and thus committing spiritual adultery in that case just like the Israelites at that time. That type of situation happens more often than we have realized. You must repent if you are in that situation, and go back to God as the only lover. God is merciful and will guide you back.