**Loving Our Neighbors**

**A Love Only God Could Inspire**

**God’s Surprising Love**

* Top Ten Background Facts to Understand Hosea Better

1. Go to [www.faithlafayette.org\hosea](http://www.faithlafayette.org\hosea) to go much deeper into the study of Hosea.

2. In 1440 BC God entered into a “covenant” with His people, Israel, in which He committed to be their only God and they would be His loyal people to represent Him among the nations. The Ten Commandment are a summary of this commitment between God and His People.

3. After Solomon’s reign, in 930 BC God’s people wrongly split into two nations—a southern kingdom called “Judah” and a northern kingdom called “Israel/Ephraim.”

4. The first king of Israel, Jeroboam, instituted a rival idolatrous “religion” against God’s covenant in order to consolidate his power over the people.

5. In his blatant disobedience to God’s covenant, starting with the first commandment to not have another god, King Jeroboam set the northern kingdom on a path of forsaking the Lord for over two hundred years.

6. “Idolatry” or “Spiritual Adultery” is not simply bowing down to idols but is anything we live for other than the one true God.

7. Prophets were God’s “covenant enforcers” to call the king, the priests, and the people to repentance— turning back to the one true God and His ways.

8. To us, prophets seem “bizarre.” For example, Hosea married a prostitute. The reason for the “bizarreness” is that God used his prophets not only to proclaim His word with their mouth but to display God’s message in their life. Prophets were “living parables.”

9. After two hundred years of idolatry, Hosea was God’s final prophet given to the northern Kingdom (750 BC) as a last call to repent before God used the nation of Assyria to destroy Israel (722 BC).

10. Begin with the end of Hosea (14:9)

**Hosea 14:9** - *Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them*

4 aspects of God’s surprising love that should stimulate God’s people to return to Him and serve Him alone

**I. God’s love graciously chooses to commit to an unfaithful people**

A. Hosea and Gomer—An Adulterous Marriage Made in Heaven

B. The meaning of Hosea’s marriage—God, Himself, chose a people who were known to be unfaithful from the beginning of the relationship

C. This is the first time in Scripture where God’s covenant relationship with His people is pictured as a “marriage”

D. God’s command for Hosea to marry a prostitute is only scandalous to those who have forgotten what God has done in His relationship with them

**II. God’s love reluctantly orchestrates painful discipline to a persistently unfaithful people**

A. Gomer’s “sign” children of certain judgment

1. “Jezreel”—God sows/plants

2. “Lo-ruhamah”—no compassion

3. “Lo ammi”—not my people

B. God’s justice demanded that He bring about the destructive “curses” of His covenant and “forsake” His people

C. Observe God’s great efforts to communicate to His unfaithful people—embedding His message in these children

**III. God’s love eagerly promises restoration to His persistently unfaithful people**

**IV. God’s love astonishingly provides The Faithful Spouse/Person, His own Son, on behalf of His persistently unfaithful people**

A. God’s people’s persistent failure to be faithful to Him demonstrates the universal need for a faithful bride/person that would be loyal to God

B. Otherwise, we would all be perpetually experiencing the covenant curses of our relationship with God

C. Notice God’s delight in Jesus, the faithful one (Matthew 3:16)

D. Notice Jesus’ faithful handling of idolatry (Matthew 4:8-10)

E. Notice Jesus’ taking all of the covenant curses on the cross on behalf of God’s people (Matthew 27:46; Galatians 3:13)

F. Now, those who are in Christ Jesus by faith are viewed by God to be “faithful” and are given the power to practically grow in living for God and nothing else