Breaking Your Heart Open

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Texts:
 Hosea 1:2-10, 6:6
 1 John 4:8

Here is the [Zoom link](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/io22dMcrBIs6LvolmcaKqYA6Tn1bwZoJUpnUNtiVe13BsEjTSyCCUIXNleaS-lOM.cpslScbD6v8Btitg?startTime=1658672749000) to Dee’s teaching.

Introduction:

How can it be a secret if everyone knows it? The church was packed, and it was not a special event. Everyone keeps whispering. Why are so many people here? Suddenly a hush comes over the crowd and then a gasp! All eyes were fixed on the door. The pastor enters with his wife on his arm. She still has her pink and green mohawk and matching fishnet stockings. He sits her on the first pew in the front and kisses her on the cheek. Their children with rainbow eyes and skin color come up from Sunday school and sit beside her then the worship team started. I could not resist. I asked the lady next to me, "What was it all about?" Then I heard the story. The pastor's wife was arrested again for prostitution, and he keeps bailing her out. The fool! And then he takes her back again, the fool. Then she runs off. And stays for weeks. And he takes care of the kids, none of which look like him. Fool! One time he had to mortgage the house to get her out of jail. And then she skipped bail and had to do some time. Still, he waited and visited her and got her out. The next time she ran away, she gave her lovers the gifts he had given her and some of his things. You know what I mean? A lot of their savings, his Brooks Brothers suits, her Lexus, and expensive jewelry. One sold her into the slave trade and sex trafficking. She ended up overseas. And you know what he does? The stupid fool. He went to get her again, paid for her freedom, brought her home and loved her! He did not punish her at all. Yes, he did clean her up with *cords of kindness and ribbons of love*. He took her to The SPA for two-week vacation to get to know one another and be pampered. He wrote her poetry and love songs, showered her with gifts. He is a stupid fool. That's what he is.

Just then, the worship team sat down, and the pastor stood up and he said, "Heartbreak is an inevitable and painful part of life. But there are at least two ways for the pain to break your heart: it can break open into new life or break apart into shards of sharper and more widespread pain. Your heart can break open like a flower, blooming and spreading seeds of healing love and the fragrance of Christ or it can break into mirrored glass shards, always reflecting the pain and suffering of the heartbreak. It is always a choice, not if your heart breaks but how it will break: open or into shards.

The title of my sermon today is "Breaking your heart open."

This is the story of Hosea and Gomer, God, and Israel. It's also my story, your story. Between you and God. Our relationship with God was broken in Eden and only healing love can repair the breech. I'm going to share my journey with Hosea in three parts.

* One, when I first got married where we used Hosea as our marriage files. Note: Lawrence only remembers I did not say I would obey and that is the promise I kept.
* The second time I was engaged with the book of Hosea was at school when I was working on my masters.
* And now I'm choosing to be engaged with Hosea again because it was in the lectionary for this week.

Each time I've had different lessons and application to my life. Each time God has showed me something new within the same scripture.

Marriage:

My first experience with Hosea was the overriding theme of forgiveness: forgiveness and tender conversations, acts of kindness. For Gomer there was no shame, no blame, no hiding, no shutdown of communication, like it was with Adam and Eve. It was only gentle love and tender words. Hosea drew Gomer to him with *cords of kindness and ribbons of love*. I identified with Gomer. I was her. I loved the attention I got from men. Being the only child raised by a single mom, there were not a lot of men in my life. Therefore, I enjoyed being the center of attention, the excitement of new people, new places and new things, and great gifts. I got flowers and candy. I loved it. Lawrence said I could not help myself; I was a natural flirt. However, he was very forgiving of my behavior, even to the point my therapist said he had the gift of forgiveness and he needed it with me. He, like Hosea, saw my essence and who I was inside and empowered me to be God's person and grow into my purpose.

His kindness and tenderness replaced my need for other's attention. *Hosea 6:6 For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.* Lawrence had the knowledge of who I was without me sacrificing who I was to please him. He loved the good, the bad, and the ugly me. Hosea was acting out God's love as an experience not just an observation as it was in the desert. Moses' sanctuary explained who God was with every color, piece of furniture, and ritual. Even though they could see the cloud by day and the pillar of fire at night, they had little experience with God except by observation. The high priest was the only one who saw the Shekinah glory and then it was only once a year and extremely dangerous at that. If he had any unconfessed sin, he died immediately. Therefore, God was having Hosea give the Israelites the experience of real love in action, His love in action. He expresses his anger and rants, but always comes back to "I will not act on my anger. I want to be called your husband not your master." God wants love from the heart not the law.

School:

This second time when I engaged with the book of Hosea, I was struck by two things: the suffering, mockery, and pain Hosea must have endured and the fact that he never complained. He followed God's orders immediately without question. When I looked at how he loved Gomer, I could see it was lavishly, faithful and healing. He bought her back but put some boundaries in place. Hosea 3:1-3

And the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days; you shall not play the harlot, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you."

That is two lessons: express your anger but don't act on it and have boundaries in your relationships.

Dr Gary Chapman teaches about the five love languages or how people *perceive* love. We all have different combinations of the five with one being dominant. Hosea and God love lavishly and fluently in all five languages. Looking at Hosea and Gomer and how each of them loved, we can see a difference. When something happens to us, we can either react or respond. Responding is always a positive choice because it is a conscious choice, one that requires thought about what is best for all, not selfish, but self-less. It is our frame that we see the world through. Reacting is a knee-jerk reaction, coming from habit, not thinking, habitually selfish; it's all about me. Hosea chose to respond. He thought about it. He chose to love. He chose to forgive. He chose to let his heart break open. He chose to renew his vows. Hosea, which means Salvation, was familiar with the five love languages for he used them all to woo and save his wife. These languages are the ways we perceive that we are loved. We must study love to show it. Let's review the languages from Dr Gary Chapman:

# Words of affirmation

## Hosea spoke words of love

## He wrote beautiful poetry and songs for her

## He did not shame her or blame her or scold her

## He spoken tenderly

# Acts of service

## He cared for her children, gave them his name

## Cleaned her up

## Took care of her

## Took her back again and again

## He went to get her again and again and again, and again.

## He forgave her without punishment

# Gifts

## The stuff she gave to her lovers were the gifts he gave her

## Oil, flax, and wool

## Life (he could have had her killed according to the law). Our righteousness is as filthy rags and yet God still gives us life.

## He changed the names of the symbols of her infidelity to names of love.

# Touch

## He still had children with her

## He loved her

## He says he touched her tenderly

## He was not ashamed of her, or hide her, or punish her.

# Quality time

## He had her in a place where he could spend time with her for her to know him intimately and deeply and who he was

## He was intentional about the time he spent with her.

Hosea 6:6 *For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings*. This time the knowledge was of Hosea and who he was. Gomer and I are being loved but still running after the god of being right, the gods of power and success, the gods of beauty and bikini bodies, the god of control (the rope), the gods of entertainment and media, and the god of status and privilege.

The other lessons here are: let your heart break open to God and others. Let God be first, love from your heart, experience *Him by tasting and seeing that God is good, and He will give you the desires of your heart*.

NOW:

This time when I engage with the book of Hosea, I am clear that I am the prophet Hosea and not Gomer anymore. *The sin has been loved out of me. Not driven out but loved out and the transition through the pain was really the birth canal to new life*. A prophet is a person who speaks with God and speaks with the people and intervenes between the two with prayers. I do that. I am clear that the spirit of the living God is within me, and I must love as Christ loved to be recognized as His disciple. The gospel is healing love.

LOVE GOD 1 John 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love

LIVING IN HIM Acts 17:28 for in him we live and move and have our being; as even some of your own poets have said"

For we are indeed his offspring. Is that not a fractal? God recreating himself in us?

I am in transition. From Gomer to Hosea, the realization is that the gospel is healing love. It heals the gap between us and God, and it heals the gap between others. II Corinthians 5:18: that we should be reconciled. God was a reconciler, and we are called to the Ministry of Reconciliation. The healing, loving, unconditional, safe, and fragrance of Christ surrounds me. I am a vessel for God's love in and through me. I live in Him, and I have my being in Him. God is continually reproducing himself in me as a fractal. The love is nourished by my being in His presence, having intimacy with him and being rooted and grounded in the word (the vertical aspect of the cross). Then and only then am I able to love with God’s love and be identified by the love like Hosea was.

God is calling you to be a vessel of His healing love. That is the living, Gospel. *Jesus said they will know that they are my disciples by the way they love*. God loves the good, the bad and the ugly. *All of our righteousness is as filthy rags*, yet he still chooses to love us and draws us to him, closer to Him with acts of kindness and Ribbons of love. He bends down to pick us up and feed us. God wants us totally to be His and totally distribute His healing love. The lesson here and now is: God wants us to love him as *He has loved us so that the world not condemn the world*.

So, to sum it up:

* Forgiveness is a gift from God. And our forgiveness is dependent on how we forgive others.
* Two, we must experience God for ourselves, not just being an observer but having an experience with God.
* And three. God is calling us to blossom with healing, love, and to spread his fragrance and to be Hosea and Christ to the world; to love lavishly and fluently in all the languages of love.

Hosea 6:6 *For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.* This time let's run after the knowledge, intimacy, and steadfast love in our life and be a conduit of that healing love to the world.

Amen.