

# Commitment: Bound with Christ & Each Other 2

## *Whose Invested in You?*

(Preached 8/20/23)

Please turn to *Hosea 1*.

### LAST WEEK:

- The Biblical word for God's love most often used is "agapeo" which is the action verb form of "agape."
- The words speaks to someone binding/committing themselves to another: heart, soul, mind, & strength.
- Boaz loved Ruth this way: he committed himself to marriage and sharing everything he was and had—which was a lot—with Ruth before she knew who he was!
- The Bible says the same thing about Jesus to us: before we even knew Who He was, Jesus bound Himself to us.
- To marry us, forgive our sins, give us the Holy Spirit, raise us from the dead, give us access to His Father, grant us eternal life, and make us joint-heirs of His Kingdom.
- I submitted to you that we've taken this "style" of love for granted in both our relationship with Jesus and the people in our lives: our spouse, parents, etc.
- I believe we may have placed greater emphasis and pursued other forms of love such as romance, words of affirmation, acts of service, and special gifts.
- Commitment love is the foundation of both our relationship with God and the people in our lives.
- Another "god" may seem to offer things Jesus doesn't whether prosperity, freedom, fulfillment, or what have you. Yet they aren't committed to us!
- A person other than your spouse or parent may build us up, makes us feel better about ourselves, and more...but they aren't invested in us.

TODAY we're going to talk about that some more.

HOSEA is considered one of the minor prophets of the OT and his story is fascinating. His prophetic ministry starts out this way:

**[Hos 1:2 ESV]** 2 When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."

SAY WHAT?! I can't help but wonder if he was sitting on his living room couch when this particular "thus saith the Lord" came through! The Bible doesn't say, but did Hosea reply "is this really You, God?!"

**God tells him to marry a prostitute** and please remember my teaching on this: they weren't just "women of the night" enticing men to pay for their services. Prostitutes back then were religious priestesses who represented pagan gods. They took mind-altering drugs and openly invited whatever gods they worshipped to come live inside of them, like the Holy Spirit lives inside of us.

ONE WITH ANOTHER GOD/ADULTERY. Then they enticed me to have sexual relations and the promise was that, if they did, these men would be "blessed" by close contact with the "god" inside her. They could essentially be BOUND to said god and receive greater prosperity, fertility, etc. Therefore one of the worst sins that a God-fearing Hebrew man could do is sleep with one of them, because it represented him rejected God's commitment to him. **It was adultery** toward God and the Lord actually uses that same terminology elsewhere in the Bible.

So despite what must have been a VERY uncomfortable, reputation-ruining command, Hosea obeys and **marries a prostitute named Gomer**. In the next few years they have 3 kids and in that time, the Lord prophesies about the people of Israel and foretells exactly what's going to happen...there's going to be a lot of turbulence on this flight.

**Prophesying about Israel**, the Lord says that despite His commitment to marry her, forgive her past, restore her reputation, and make her rich and powerful, Israel will "adulter" him and run after other gods. God compares Israel to a prostitute and says her other "lovers" (in this countries like Egypt) will totally take advantage of her. Instead of living up to their promises to bless and fulfill her, they will abuse her and make her a slave.

The Lord goes on to say that despite ALL that, **HE STILL LOVES HER AND REMAINS COMMITTED TO HER**. That He will redeem her no matter what.

Then comes the next bombshell: **all of this is going to be lived out through Hosea's marriage** to Gomer. He is playing the role of God and she is playing the role of Israel.

Sure enough, it happens. **Gomer leaves Hosea** and falls back into her old profession...all of which marriage to Hosea had freed her from. Her lovers abuse her, strip her naked, and try to sell her as a slave. God then tells Hosea this:

**[Hos 3:1-3 ESV]** 1 And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." 2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. 3 And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you."

Gomer doesn't represent women, **she represents someone (man or woman!) who has devalued the commitment of both God and another human being who had bound themselves to her.**

**She represents feeling a lack of fulfillment of other forms of love, and being willing to break covenant with the one she was bound to in order to feel more "loved."**

JESUS COMMITTED! Jesus gave up His station as omnipotent God in Heaven and came down here to dwell in one of the bodies to walk among us. He died on the Cross for us, went to Hell and back for us, beat death for us, then cleared the path to God our Father for us. He's built us this amazing house called the New Jerusalem that I can't wait to see. He's going to come back for us, raise us from the dead, and take us to live in this new house forever and ever.

**There is no One more invested in us than He is.**

- No other god, no human being, and no pet is invested in us like He is.
- No One has proven Himself to us like Him.
- No one loves us like He does. There's no comparison.

If our hearts have become cold toward Him and we've sought "other gods" to fulfill us, **then the way back is to think/reflect on how committed to us He really is.** He loved us this way before we were Saved and knew Him. He binds Himself to us not just when we're living holy lives, going to church, and reading our Bibles **but when we aren't.**

**HE REMAINS COMMITTED TO US WHEN WE REBEL, WHEN WE'RE RUNNING AWAY FROM HIM.**

**He remains bound to us when we try and bind ourselves to things He's warned us about and told us to stay away from.** When I think on these things, my heart swells with gratitude and appreciation for my Lord and I'm drawn back to Him. In that moment I realize that He never went anywhere, but was right here in me the entire time.

**Any desire or entity seeking to drive a wedge between Christ and I has nothing invested in me and has proven nothing.** In the end they will treat me just like Gomer's adulterous lovers treated her.

That part of the sermon was easy, let's now go into the area where perhaps even angels fear to tread. **Let's talk about human relationships** including your spouse and maybe even a parent, if either applies. I would like to focus on marriage, because that's what the Lord does in both OT and NT.

**How long have you been married?** For Becky and I it's been 25 years and that means she has 25 years INVESTED in me, and me her.

## Sometimes I complain!

**I have not been an ideal husband** for the last 25 years. Not at all. I've stubbornly held on to certain habits & thinking that have neglected my wife and left some of her needs unmet. There is no excuse or justification for this, and I'm not pretending or implying there is. I can and should do better.

**Yet I have 25 years invested in her, and she me.** We're committed to each other. Our commitment isn't obedience to a religious command or vows we spoke at our wedding that we're obligated to uphold.

It's what the Lord tells us in the Scripture and that we've been talking about in this sermon series: **it's when two people bind to each other heart, soul, mind, and strength.**

*Just as Boaz bound himself to Ruth, and Ruth to Boaz. Just as Jesus bound Himself to the Church, and we to Jesus.*

**JUST AS HOSEA BOUND HIMSELF TO GOMER AND EVENTUALLY SHE DID THE SAME WITH HIM.**

**All investments come with risks. The greater the investment, the greater the risk.**

**A potential adulterer has little to no investment in you, and therefore little to no risk. Do not be deceived.**

**Let me share a parable.** You and your spouse bought a house and took out a 30-year mortgage. It was and still is a big risk! If you're late on even one payment, the bank has the right to foreclose and take the house back. You could be 10 years into paying, mess it up, and bam! You've lost everything. If you don't pay the taxes every year, twice a year, and on time, the county will take your house and sell it at auction. You would lose it all.

**What's more is the house needs repairs,** must be maintained, and improved. The wiring needed updating, the furnace is old, and there are places of disrepair that need attention. Above and beyond all that, it's just getting older every year increasing the maintenance and upkeep, all of which cost money.

**Buying a home is a big investment, a big risk, and requires work...**does everyone agree? You and your spouse both have jobs where you toil away just to pay for all of this. You also clean, organize, and maintain which is a big job.

**Both of you are heavily invested in it...let those who have ears hear.**

**Both of you also have shortcomings.**

- Sometimes you blow your money on things you shouldn't, the mortgage payment isn't made on time, and you get a threatening letter from the bank.
- There are several improvements and repairs that need to be made to the house that you just haven't bothered with.
- There's a roof leak, for example, and your contractor friend said you need to address that ASAP or the damage will get worse and you'll get black mold. You haven't.
- There are also times when you feel you work harder to maintain your house than your spouse does, which has been a source of contention.

In the midst of all this, **there's an attractive co-worker that you've been talking to.** You're only talking and there's nothing going on, but...this person *really seems to SEE you.*

- When you talk to him about things he doesn't "check out" like your husband does.
- When you talk to her about things she doesn't interrupt you like your wife does.
- Unlike your spouse, this person remembers your birthday and other special days, and acknowledges them without being prompted.
- When you share your insecurities and pains in life, they respond with patience and kindness vs. apathy like your spouse.
- They see your gifts, talents, and skills and admire them...whereas your spouse seems to be your #1 critic and often points out your faults.
- When you said you were thinking about quitting your job and going back to school, the coworker encouraged you and made you feel like you would succeed! Told you to go for it!

- Whereas your spouse rolled their eyes and pointed out you couldn't afford it.
- When they bought you a gift, you were amazed at how much they KNEW YOU. Your spouses gifts are clearly this last minute thing that bring you no joy.

**Your coworker really seems to see into you, know you...who you really are.** As a matter of fact, there's a voice in your heart that believes this person knows you BETTER than your spouse.

**Next thing you know they need somewhere to live, and ask if they can rent a room in your house.**

**WOULD YOU ALLOW THEM TOO?**

Next question: **would you allow the monthly rental price to be them being good to you?** Instead of money, to just do/say all the good things I mentioned above, and then some?

**What if the same person started giving advice** and encouragement on how and where to spend your money? They recommend a new car, a 5 star vacation, or a big addition to the house? Or going back to college for a 5 figure sum? What risk do they have when you invest in any of those things? What risk does your spouse have?

A NEW CAR! What if they wanted a share/ownership in your investment but weren't willing to pay anything? Or very little? Suppose a new car is \$40,000 with a monthly payment of \$800 with you and your spouse paying \$400 each. Your attractive coworker who makes you feel good wants full use of the car for nothing, or maybe \$10 per month? Would you do it?

PARABLE SYMBOLS REVEALED. Now it's time to reveal the symbols of the parable.

- The house you & your spouse invested in is your marriage.
- It comes with a long-term commitment like a mortgage.
- For how many years you've been married, that's how many years you've both paid into/invested in it.
- It needs improvements and repairs...and sometimes its taxing.
- Sometimes one spouse puts more work into it than the other.
- The attractive co-worker can be a desire, a temptation, or an actual person.

## **So let's do a quick review:**

- ON ONE HAND...
- You have legitimate needs that aren't being met.
- Your spouse should be doing so, but isn't doing a good job.
- Your attractive co-worker is meeting some of those needs and it's making you feel good...great, actually.

### ON THE OTHER HAND...

- Your spouse has stuck with you however many years you've been married.
- They're home every night, with the exception of business trips.
- They've toiled for years on the factory floor, the office, the shop, the barn, the store, or at home to contribute to your home and family.
- They're the parent to your children & grandkids and are helping to raise them.
- They live with you: not just your good side but your bad.
- They've stayed with you despite your bad & through your bad.
- They have years and perhaps decades of investment in you.
- They share the risk in every "investment" so might not always be encouraging of risky ones.

### **The attractive co-worker has nothing invested.**

- They haven't lived with your bad side for years.
- They're not home with you every night.
- They aren't raising your kids and sacrificing for them.
- Even if they work full time, it's hasn't been for you.
- It's easy for them to encourage you to invest in the stock market, go back to school, or take a vacation so you can recharge because they have no risk whatsoever.

### **Yet have you been allowing them to rent a room in your "house"?**

Has the rent payment been the nice things they say and do and that they seem to "know" and "see" you?

**If you were to leave your spouse and run off with this person, what are they risking? Nothing...because they've invested nothing.**

**Yet you and your spouse risk everything because you have invested IN EACH OTHER, your home, and your family.**

RAISIN CAKES. The Bible tells us why Israel would leave God, and why Gomer left Hosea. Other gods and lovers seemed to fulfill whatever wants, needs, and desires they felt they

weren't getting from the person who was actually committed to them. In Hosea's book, God refers to these desires as "raisin cakes" which were an expensive delicacy back then.

***The Lord was committed to Israel, and Hosea was committed to Gomer.***

The Lord never needs to change or make improvements on Himself, but I'm sure Hosea did.

The Book of Hosea seems to show that once Gomer and Hosea were reunited, **she didn't stray from Him again**. How come? What changed?

Hosea 6 has the answer for us:

**[Hos 6:1-3 ESV] 1 "Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. 3 Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth."**

All the rest of Hosea is written from the viewpoint of God, **BUT THESE 3 VERSES ARE WRITTEN FROM THAT OF ISRAEL/GOMER** who now realizes the true depth of His love/commitment to them.

VERSE 3 is the highlight: when Israel says "let us press on to know the Lord" the "knowing" is marital intimacy. In other words, they took His love for granted before and now it's dawning on them how dedicated He is to them.

The rest of the verse shows they realize **the depth of His dedication**. That unlike other gods/countries who cannot be depended on, the Lord can. We don't like Winter, but we KNOW that Spring is coming and the ancient Israeli's compare God to Spring.

CONCLUSION:

- Let's never undervalue the covenant/bond Jesus has formed with us. No One is more committed to us than He is!
- Let's never stop meditating on this, and expressing our thanks to Him.
- Your spouse, parents, or whomever doesn't love you as well as Christ does, that's for sure. There is no doubt they've done sins of commission and omission toward you.
- Yet are they committed you?
- If they answer is yes, then let's take the time to reflect on their commitment and express gratitude toward them.
- Is there a desire or temptation in your life right now, threatening to drive a wedge between you and Jesus? Between you and your spouse?
- The first step away from it is to recognize that, even if it comes in the form of a person, said person isn't invested in you like Jesus or your spouse. There's no risk for them.