

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

Return: Hosea

Sermon Summary: This sermon from the book of Hosea uses the prophet's dramatic marriage to Gomer, a prostitute, as a living illustration of Israel's unfaithfulness to God and God's relentless, pursuing love. Pastor Matt emphasizes that we are living in urgent times—closer to Christ's return than to the beginning—and must live with corresponding urgency rather than spiritual complacency. Just as Hosea redeemed Gomer at great cost after she abandoned him for other lovers, God continually pursues His people despite their spiritual adultery with idols.

Key Points:

- We must live with urgency because we are closer to Christ's return than to the beginning of human history
- The reality of our unfaithfulness: like Gomer and Israel, we are spiritual prostitutes who abandon God for false loves and idols
- Modern idolatry includes worship of comfort, success, approval, money, possessions, and status
- Sin doesn't just affect us—it splatters and causes collateral damage to those around us
- The cost of redemption: God paid the ultimate price through Christ's death on the cross to redeem unfaithful people
- Salvation is free to us but costly to the giver—no works required beyond confession and belief
- The invitation to return involves genuine repentance (not just sorrow), seeking the Lord, and breaking up unplowed ground in our hearts

Scripture Reference:

- Hosea 1-3, 10, 14 (primary focus)

Stories:

- The story of Hosea and Gomer: God commands Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer and have children with symbolic names. Gomer later abandons Hosea and their children to return to prostitution, but Hosea redeems her at the cost of 15 shekels of silver and nine bushels of barley
- The hockey illustration: Golden Knights pulling their goalie in the last two minutes of playoff games, demonstrating how urgency changes behavior when time is running out
- The Mexico mission trip paint incident: A five-gallon bucket of lime green paint falling and splattering everywhere at the border crossing, illustrating how sin affects everyone around us, not just ourselves
- The gospel conversation: Two weeks prior, the pastor shared the gospel with someone who asked "What else?" after hearing Romans 10:9, revealing our tendency to think salvation requires our works
- The thousand-acre farm analogy: Illustrating the foolishness of only cultivating ten acres while leaving 990 acres unplowed, representing areas of life where we fail to seek the Lord

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening question

1. Describe a time when you realized you were treating something in life (work, success, entertainment, a relationship, etc.) with more urgency or importance than your walk with God. What tipped you off that your priorities were out of order?

Point 1 – The reality of our unfaithfulness (We are Gomer)

2. **Hosea 1:2; Hosea 2:5** – Read both verses. List the specific reasons Gomer gives for leaving Hosea. Then compare them with the reasons Israel leaves God (see Deuteronomy 8:10–14). In what concrete ways can modern believers pursue God’s good gifts in a way that functionally replaces dependence on God Himself?

3. **Hosea 1:3–9; Hosea 4:1–2** – God uses the children’s names (“God scatters,” “No mercy,” “Not my people”) as a living indictment of Israel’s unfaithfulness.

If God were to “name” visible aspects of your last 7 days based on your functional loyalties (time, thought life, money, attention), what two or three “names” might honestly appear and why?

Point 2 – The cost of redemption (God’s pursuing love)

4. **Hosea 3:1–2; 1 Peter 1:18–19** –

Identify at least two ways in which the price God paid in Christ exposes how seriously He takes (a) our sin and (b) our value to Him. How should that reshape the way you view “small” sins you are tempted to excuse?

5. **Hosea 2:14–15; Hebrews 12:5–11** – In Hosea, God leads Israel into the wilderness to “speak tenderly” and restore her; Hebrews says God disciplines His children for their good. Looking at your own life, identify one difficult or “wilderness” season. With these passages in view, what specific evidences can you now see that this hardship may have been God’s pursuing love rather than His absence?

Point 3 – The invitation to return

6. **Hosea 10:12; Hosea 14:1–4; 2 Corinthians 7:9–11** – Hosea calls Israel to “break up your unplowed ground... it is time to seek the LORD,” and Hosea 14 describes returning with words of repentance; Paul distinguishes godly grief from worldly grief. Using these three passages together, identify two clear indicators that repentance in your life is genuine (not just feeling bad) and one “hard patch of ground” (an area you’ve left unplowed—neither overtly sinful nor actively surrendered) where you specifically need to begin “seeking the LORD” this week.