

The Prodigal Wife

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-6 Tony: VBS. Baptism. Middle Schl Camp. Peru Mission. Children's Ministry.
- B. Slide7 *International Christian Adoption's* Journey of Hope - Transitional Foster Care Program is in **urgent need** of **foster homes** in the Temecula area.
1. The children in this program are primarily from Central America and are seeking asylum in the US. ICA usually places children 0-12 years old. **Please see ICA staff in the information booth to set up an information meeting.**
 2. ICA is also **collecting items** such as clothing, school supplies, gift cards, and more [see the full list of supplies in the information booth].
- C. Baby Bottle Boomerang/Birth Choice - you gave \$7000 :)
- D. Slide8 **The Laster Family** will be in the **info booth** after service. **They'll be heading back to Bulgaria.**
1. Matt & Jessica have been away almost 2 years. Matt had an opportunity to work in Bulgaria & earn about \$1000.00 per month, that they put toward their support. **Due the visa status he is no longer able to earn money in Bulgaria.** Also they have had some people that committed to support them **but** are no longer able too, **this has left the short \$1500.00 per month.**
- E. Slide9 Rick to Introduce a new ministry: *Care Ministry*. **Not** that we didn't *Care* b4 :)
1. Rick go ahead and explain your new **Ministry focus.**
 2. What **help** do you need **or opportunities to serve** for folks?
 3. Slide10 Why don't you share the **2 ways** they can **get involved.**
- F. Prayer: *Love the theme of this book, the theme of life, the theme of our existence.*
We are the object of *His obsession* & **nothing** can change *that obsession.*

II. Slide11 Intro: The Prodigal Wife

- A. Don't some Christian testimonies bother you?...*I got saved, and I lived happily ever after.*

1. For some of us those are hard to understand, or even stomach.
Especially when many of us struggle with *doubts, failing God, struggles with sin, our minds, doing what we don't want to do*.
 - a) I suggest this story in **Hosea** isn't much different than **yours**. What's hard is Hosea was told up front, we find out after-the-fact.
- B. **Slide12 Hosea**, do you take **Gomer** to be your cherished, covenant wife, and promise before God and these friends, that you will share your life with her in all love and honor, in all faith and tenderness, through joy and sorrow, in sickness and health, in Prostitution & adultery, as long as you both shall live? I doooo...*wait what?*
 1. So far we have this poetic description of **Israel's idolatry** depicted as *marital infidelity* which expands the theme of **the unfaithful wife** symbolized by Hosea's marriage.
 2. Here, **the prophet** depicts **Yahweh** as *the betrayed husband* and **Israel** as *His unfaithful wife*.
 3. This is the most tender & most beautiful love songs in the bible. It is **sung** by **God** to His **unfaithful wife**, Israel.

III. Slide13a **THE PRODIGAL WIFE (2-13)**

- A. (2) Here, Yahweh acknowledges *their estrangement* and *threatens divorce*.
 1. One of the methods of divorce in the ancient Near East was to *speak a legal formula similar to this declaration*.
 2. **However**, if Yahweh is **divorcing** Israel here, there would be *no basis* for the threats of punishment to follow (3). **Or** the renewed commitment in (2:16).
- B. (3) In an *Old Babylonian divorce declaration*, the ex-wife is to *go out naked* following the divorce, *symbolizing* the end of the husband's responsibility to *provide for her*.
- C. (5b) *The ones who give me my bread* - illustrates that **Israel** accepted *the Canaanite understanding that the god Baal was responsible for agricultural fertility*, a notion Yahweh rejects vs.8.
- D. (6,7) Yahweh **builds a wall** around Israel to cut her off from accessing her other lovers, leading her to recognize her need for Him. **What Grace**.
- E. (7) As **Luke** presents *the prodigal son*, **so** Hosea portrays *the prodigal wife*.

1. Slide13b Lk.15:17,18 *I will arise and go to my father.*
- F. (8,9) Israel accepted God's gifts...**but** used them to worship her idols.
1. Do you ever use **your** God-given resources/talents/gifts/time for things that grieve Him?
 2. What are the 2 deepest pangs, of **this sin**?
 - a) It violates God's exclusive claim on our love & reverence.
 - b) It contaminates our loving response to God.
 3. 1st steps to fix an adulterous situation: **repent** to whom you've sinned against (God & spouse). **100% cutting off** of old relationship.
- G. Slide13c (13) It's easy for the church today to **prostitute itself to the world** & still claim to be **faithful** to the Lord.¹
1. James 4:4,5 nlt *You adulterers! Don't you realize that **friendship with the world** makes you an **enemy** of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. 5 Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that **God is passionate** that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him.*

IV. Slide14 **A DOOR OF HOPE (14,15)**

- A. I will/will - **15 x's** in these next **9 vs.** God says **I WILL!**
1. **Allure her** - very tender, *even seductive*, speech (other times in OT, *entice*) **to woo us**.
 - a) We as believers are all guilty of **harlotry**. We have loved **other lovers** more than God. We have found our **pleasures** elsewhere. He has been an **annoying deity** at times. **Yet**, He *speaks tenderly* to us to **come away with Him**.
 - b) **Go with Him** into the wilderness & listen w/your heart.
 - c) Don't think you're too rotten, too ugly. *He knows His wife is a harlot.*
That's the meaning of **mercy**: *God is wooing a wife of harlotry.* [this is the OT *gospel*]
 2. **But note** where He promises to take her *in His 1st promise*, **to the wilderness?**
 3. Reminds us of **the HS lovingly leading Jesus** into the wilderness *for 40 days*.
 - a) We love being **led by God**...**but** do these words come to mind when being led by God...*devil, temptation, desert?* Probably not, **but** that's where the HS lead Jesus.

¹ Warren Wiersbe; pg. 571

b) We love being *led by God*...but what about *into a desert? Trust Him still?*

(1) The disciples were led by God right into a storm. Jesus was led right into Gethsemane to face abduction.

c) Remember, Israel was more *dependent* on God *before* settling in the land of Canaan.

4. Oh and He gives her, *not a vine, not a vineyard but vineyards*...**IN** the desert.

B. Slide15 Here the *Valley of Achor* (valley of *trouble*) *is where Israel was 1st unfaithful to the Lord in the Promise Land. Where Achan* was stoned [after wilderness wanderings, finally in land]

1. During the Jericho raid Did had said *Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. 19 Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury.* Joshua 6:18,19

a) Success, **Jericho** was taken. But *the next chapter* starts with the word **but**.

2. Their next city to take is **Ai**. *We can take Ai w/just 2/3000 men w/our rt arm tied behind our back...kinda.* They lost, got chased back, & 36 men died.

3. Joshua 7:24-26 *Then Joshua and all the Israelites took **Achan**, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons, daughters, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, tent, and everything he had, and they brought them to **the valley of Achor**.*

*25 Then Joshua said to Achan, "Why have you brought **trouble** on us?" (guilty of 36 deaths) **The Lord will now bring trouble on you.**" And all the Israelites stoned Achan and his family and burned their bodies. 26 They piled a great heap of stones over Achan, which remains to this day. *That is why the place has been called **the Valley of Trouble** ever since. So the Lord was no longer angry.**

a) Slide16 *Until...*Hosea 2:15 :) It became *a door of hope*, a valley of hope, better things to come, *repossessing the Promise Land*)

4. **And it can for you.** Name *your* valley of **trouble** you find *yourself* in.

a) Only **God** can give new meaning to old names, & wipe out painful associations w/old places.

V. Slide17a **GOD'S MARRIAGE COUNSEL (16-23)**

- A. Slide17b GOD'S NAME CHANGE (16-18) *usually the bride changes her last name, here God changes His title for himself.*
- B. (16) Play on words here... Call me *ish* (my husband) no longer *baal* (master).
1. Maybe good counsel for some *husbands* to hear this morning? *Be her husband not lord*
 2. Hey *Perfectionist*...listen up, no longer *Master, Husband*.
 3. These 2 words were often used as *synonymous terms*. Like in 2 Sam.11:26 *When the wife of Uriah* (Bathsheba) *heard that Uriah her husband (ish) was dead* (by David), *she mourned for her husband (baal)*.
 4. God says we're not going to use that *title* anymore in Israel.
 - a) If Israel used the generic title *ba'al* for *Yahweh*, this would have caused *confusion* about *which deity* they were worshiping.
 - b) Baal, the chief god of the Canaanites, was considered to be the god of the crops & fertility. These Baal's had become Israel's lovers.
 - c) Do you only know your God as *Master*?
- C. Slide17c GOD'S WEDDING RING (19-23)
- D. Slide18 (19) **Martin Luther** called this verse...a wedding ring *w/6 precious stones* (he also said...)
1. *It is the highest grace of God when love continues to flourish in married life. The first love is ardent* (passionate), *is an intoxicating love, so that we are blinded and are drawn to marriage. After we have slept off our intoxication, sincere love remains in the married life of the godly; but the godless are sorry they ever married.*² [it's love, past the honeymoon]
- E. This is where God renews His wife's betrothal & consummates the marriage again in purity.
1. Wife's betrothal - 3 Times: *I betroth you to Me...* [PTL - Harlots can start over!]
 2. Consummates the marriage again in purity - most daring of statements, and you shall know the Lord (eg. *Adam knew his wife*).

² Martin Luther. "William and Catherine Booth," Christian History, no. 26.

a) Nothing will be withheld from her. 100% fellowship and communion He will give to *His prodigal wife* when she comes home *broken and empty*.

F. Believers, **today** God wants you to *love Him warmly as your husband*, **not** just serve Him *dutifully* as your **Lord**.

1. **Slide19** Come into the wilderness. Listen to Him speak tenderly to your heart. Respond with, *My husband*.
2. He wants your **heart**, not just your **hands**, **because** if He has your **heart**, he has **everything**.