

## "MAJORING IN THE MINORS: EXPLORING THE MINOR PROPHETS" FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 30

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE: "UNFAITHFUL HEARTS. UNFAILING LOVE"

### OPENING PRAYER

Gracious Lord, you appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness." (Jeremiah 31:3). You remembered your love and your faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen your salvation. (Psalm 98:3). Even today we praise and thank you because "great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth." (Psalm 57:10-11). In the glorious name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

### CONNECTING QUESTION

Are you named after someone? If so, who? What does your name mean?

### SCRIPTURE READING

Read Aloud & Meditate on God's Word: Hosea 1:1-8; 2:13-23; Matthew 21:33-46

### WATCH VIDEO

Video Presenter: Julia Riedel

### EXPLORE THE TEXT

*Invite the Holy Spirit to lead as you work through the questions in this guide. Cover what your time allows and encourage everyone to finish the guide on his or her own.*

1. Hosea, a prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel, delivered God's message during a time of political turmoil and spiritual decay. His name comes from the same verb as "Joshua" and "Jesus" meaning "to save or deliver." (ESV Study Bible) As you read through Hosea, consider how his actions point to those of Jesus.
2. God used prophets to proclaim his Word, and at times they were asked to provide living object lessons for the people to see and experience the ramifications of their sin. What did God ask Hosea to do in Hosea 1:2-3? What point was God making about Israel's relationship with himself? (See Deuteronomy 31:16; Isaiah 54:5-8; Jeremiah 3:20, Hosea 3:1-5)
3. What do the names of Gomer's three children mean in Hosea 1:4-8? How would God change the meaning of their names? (See Hosea 1:11, 2:23). Have you ever felt stuck in the past, finding it difficult to move forward? What does God desire for you? (See Ephesians 4:22-24.)
4. What hope is given in Hosea 1:10-2:1? Despite the nation's continued unfaithfulness and rebellion, how does God's love and mercy break through? (See Genesis 22:15-18; Hosea 11:1-4; Hebrews 8:8-12; 1 Peter 2:9-10.)

5. Name what God will restore in Hosea 2:14-23. What do you need God to restore most in your life – security, joy, hope, loving relationship with him, purity, peace, forgiveness, acknowledging him, being faithful to him, other. How do you think that will happen?
  
6. What steps did the Israelites need to take to return to their covenant relationship with God? (See Hosea 6:1-3; Hosea 14:1-2). How are we to return to the Lord when we have wandered away from him? (See 1 John 1:5-10; Luke 15:17-21; Acts 3:19.)
  
7. “In Hosea, we see the love of God, wounded, rejected, and finally triumphant.” (Derek Kidner) Have you ever considered how your actions, response, or rejection of the Lord may affect him? (See Romans 2:4 in several translations).

### **UNFAILING LOVE AND REDEMPTION**

“Hosea and Gomer’s love story is the story of God’s love for Israel, but it is also your love story. God loves you so much that he paid the ultimate price – Jesus – to buy you back from sin’s slavery and to bring you home. Though we have broken God’s heart as Gomer broke Hosea’s, the lover of our souls seeks not to punish us but to dress us in robes of purest white. He, like Hosea, says to each of us, ‘I will make you my wife forever showing you righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion.’ (Hosea 2:19 NLT) (Jennifer Rothschild – “66 Ways God Loves You.”)

Think and pray about how this love story applies to your life (from Pastor Tim):

- **Personal Reflection:** Reflect on areas in your own life where you might be “going after other lovers”—chasing after idols of materialism, status, or control.
- **Community Application:** How can the church act as an agent of reconciliation and peace in the community, reflecting God’s justice and love? How can you be a part of that?
- **Spiritual Renewal:** Renew your personal commitment to God, embracing His merciful invitation to return to Him and be restored.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

We praise you Lord God, for your faithfulness, even when we wander away from your goodness and mercy. We praise you for your never-ending and unfailing love, that is not based on our faithfulness, but only on yours. Thank you for not giving up on us! Thank you for buying us back and redeeming us through the extraordinary cost Jesus your Son paid by going to the cross. In the redeeming name of our Savior we pray, Amen.

*Our Father...*

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