

Faithfulness

God often uses earthly things, settings, or situations to help mankind understand spiritual points. Such is the case as God uses Hosea his wife and family to illustrate God's feelings toward Israel and unfaithfulness. Hosea writes, "Bring charges against your mother... for she is not My wife... let her put away her harlotries... and adulteries... I will not have mercy on her children, for they are the children of harlotry. For their mother has played the harlot.. For she said, I will go after my lovers... she went after her lovers, but Me she forgot, says the Lord" (Hosea 2:2-13). The prophet declares that his wife had forgotten him, yet he loved her and took her back. Anyone who has, or who has known someone who has dealt with an unfaithful spouse can easily identify with the pain and grief that is felt by the innocent party. The pain and the anger can feel unbearable. The Prophet Hosea is illustrating in the story Israel's unfaithfulness to God and God's feelings regarding the unfaithfulness.

Clearly, God was angry at their unfaithfulness and yet still He loved them. Moving into chapter three, Hosea speaks of God taking her (Israel) back. What makes the story even more sorrowful is the fact that the wife (Israel) is repeatedly unfaithful. However, the prophet shows God's loving heart in that He continues to be long-suffering and forgiving of the unfaithful wife (Israel) by taking her back. The prophet also points out in his writing that at no time was the husband (God) ever unfaithful. Thus, no fault can be seen nor attached to God who was continually faithful as the husband.

The prophet illustrates the powerful love of God through His willingness to take the unfaithful wife back. "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her back

into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her" (Hosea 2:14). He continues, "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in loving-kindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord" (Hosea 2:19-20).

Today, as the church, we are considered the bride of Christ. We as His church have been betrothed to Him, "Just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). Jesus expects that we will be faithful unto Him. We must learn from the sinful mistakes of Israel (1 Corinthians 10:11) so that we do not make the same sinful mistake of becoming unfaithful. Jesus instructs that if we "remain faithful until death" He will give us the crown of life eternal (Revelation 2:10).