

I. **Introduction**

A. What would you give up to serve God?

1. Throughout the Bible, we see God calling upon men to make great sacrifices in their service to him.
 - a. We have Abraham being commanded to leave his father's house and journey to a land that God would show him.
 - b. We have Elijah being commanded to hide in a cave for an unknown period of time while the land suffers from a great drought.
 - c. We have the rich young ruler being commanded to sell all of his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor - as Rick pointed out for us last Sunday night.
 - d. Of course, we have the story of Jesus, Himself, as God calls upon Him to lay down His life on the cross to redeem us from our sins.
2. Sacrifice is a part of what it means to be a Christian.
 - a. We must be willing to surrender ourselves in order to serve our God.
 - b. It was the apostle, Paul, who said:

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that you present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2 NKJV)

- (1) Paul says that is the Christian's "reasonable service" to present ourselves as "living [sacrifices], holy, acceptable to God."
- (2) He goes on to tell us that we are not to conform ourselves to the world's way of living, but that we are to focus our hearts and minds upon carrying out the will of God.

- (3) The point is, Paul tells us that sacrifice is an important part of what it means to be a child of God.
 - c. Throughout the Bible record, we see these examples of men and women being called upon to make specific sacrifices in their service to God.
 - B. Perhaps no one in the Bible record is called upon to make a stranger sacrifice than the prophet, Hosea.
 1. It is his sacrifice that we want to focus upon for just a few moments tonight.
 2. What would you give up to serve God?
- ² When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD." ³ So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son." (Hosea 1:2-3 NKJV)

II. **Story: Hosea's Sacrifice**

- A. When it comes time for Hosea to begin his service as a prophet of the Lord, God tells him, "Hosea, I want you to go out and marry a prostitute!"
 1. Growing up in the home of a preacher, I was taught all of my life the importance of marrying a strong, faithful Christian - especially since it was my desire to be involved in the ministry.
 - a. I cannot count the number of times that my Dad stressed to me the importance of a preacher/missionary having a strong and faithful spouse.
 - b. I have seen preachers who have suffered from the fact that their wives were not as dedicated to the Lord as they ought to have been.
 2. Here God is telling his prophet, Hosea, "I want you to go out and marry a prostitute!"

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- a. What would we think of man who comes to us and says, "I desire to be an evangelist - to preach to people about their sins."
 - b. Then, he turns around and says, "But, it is my plan to marry a prostitute first!"
 - c. That is what God tells Hosea to do.
3. What is more, God tells Hosea *why* He wants him to marry a prostitute - "For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD."
- a. God says, "I want you to marry a prostitute, because I want you to use it as an object lesson about the people's relationship with their God."
 - b. God wanted Hosea to understand just how He felt about the idolatry of Israel.
 - (1) They were unfaithful to the Lord their God.
 - (2) They had left Jehovah God to go out and entertain themselves with the idols of the land.
 - (3) God felt the same heartbreak at Israel's idolatry that a husband feels upon learning of his wife's unfaithfulness.
 - c. God commands Hosea to marry a prostitute for no other reason than he wanted to use Hosea as an object lesson of His own relationship with the children of Israel.
4. Because God had commanded it, Hosea goes out and marries Gomer, who is a prostitute.
- a. In **Hosea 2**, we find that the prostitute returns to her harlotry.
 - (1) A man has come to her who is willing to look past her shameful past and to take her into his home.
 - (a) He bestows gifts upon her.
 - (b) He gives her safety and provision.
 - (2) Rather than being grateful to him, she returns to

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- chasing after men and pursuing harlotry.
 - b. In **Hosea 3**, God instructs Hosea to again go out and to buy back his wife and to love her again.
 - (1) So, Hosea again goes out and buys his wife back out of harlotry at great expense to himself.
 - (2) It is to serve as a reminder of God's mercy if the people will return to faithfulness.
- B. The message that I want us to see tonight is the sacrifice that Hosea was willing to make in order to serve his God.
1. Hosea was willing to give up any hope of ever achieving domestic tranquility in his home life by going out and marrying a woman who was proven to be unfaithful.
 - a. This woman was more than just a lady of "questionable character."
 - b. She was a prostitute!
 - c. She made her way in this world chasing after a multitude of men.
 - d. Even when Hosea married her and carried her away from that kind of lifestyle (and loved her, and cared for her), she still returned back to it.
 - e. When God told Hosea to go back and buy her again, Hosea went.
 2. Why?
 - a. For no other reason than because God told him to do so!
 - b. What is so remarkable about this passage is that the text never once mentions any doubt, debate, or questioning on Hosea's part.
 - (1) "God, did I hear you right? Are you sure that you want me to marry a prostitute?"
 - (2) Even when God told him to go and do it again, Hosea did not argue.
 - (3) Hosea went and did it, because God said to do it.

III. **Application**

- A. God expects his children to be willing to surrender anything that comes in the way of their faithfulness to Him - even domestic tranquility.
- B. Jesus Christ said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26)
 - 1. Brethren, serving God must come first in our lives.
 - 2. It is more important than pleasing:
 - a. Our parents.
 - b. Our siblings.
 - c. Our spouses.
 - d. Our children.
 - 3. If we are not willing to completely sacrifice our own lives in service to God, then we are not worthy to be called Christians!