

Who Should Proclaim God's Mercy and Call God's People to Repentance?

Hosea, Day 5

[Hosea 2:1-13](#)

Say to your brothers, "You are my people," and to your sisters, "You have received mercy."

*"Plead with your mother, plead—
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband—
that she put away her whoring from her face,
and her adultery from between her breasts."*

- Hosea 2:1-2, ESV

The most motivated and effective missionary in the history of Christianity was the Apostle Paul. Paul planted churches and spread the Gospel over the entire eastern half of the Roman Empire, enduring hardship and bearing fruit for God's glory unlike anyone else before or since. What motivated Paul to strive and persevere and preach, despite all the many obstacles he faced? He never forgot who he was without Christ and what God's mercy had saved him from.

In 1 Timothy, written later in his ministry life, Paul writes:

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:12-17, ESV)

Paul saw himself as the foremost of all sinners. He knew what he had been without Christ: a wicked man who blasphemed God and persecuted His people. He also knew that it was the grace of God alone which had saved him.

In Hosea 2, we find another shocking passage of Scripture. The language is strong, the imagery vivid and appalling. But if we look carefully at what God is doing here, we will see the richness of His grace at work, even in the face of shocking sin.

Hosea first speaks to his own children and tells them to talk to Gomer's illegitimate children. It seems from verse 1 that Hosea and Gomer must have had more than just the three children named in chapter 1. It seems that Hosea is talking to those children that were truly his and telling them to proclaim to their illegitimate brothers and sisters - children Gomer had conceived in her adultery and prostitution - that they are loved and cherished as Hosea's own children. Thus, verse 1 is a continuation of the good news reversal that closed chapter 1. But note who is called to deliver the good news of mercy: Hosea's children.

Who is called to take the good news of God's mercy to the world? The children of God, who have already received that mercy. Those who, like the Apostle Paul, know the riches of God's grace, are best in a position to proclaim that grace to others.

But the call to proclaim is not always a nice, easy one. Together, all of Hosea's children, his natural and his adopted children, are told to plead with their mother to put away her whoring. These are all Gomer's children, some she bore to Hosea and some she conceived immorally, but they all plead with her to repent and return to her husband in faithfulness. She is not living like a wife, and she is endangering all of her children, for if she continues her immoral ways, she could be put out by Hosea and her children could all be put in danger.

Remember that Gomer represents Israel. Thus, she represents the people of God, the church, in their faithlessness to God. And who is called to call the church to repentance? Her children. In other words, Christians not only have the responsibility to call the world to come and see the mercy of God, but they also have a responsibility to call the church to repentance and faithfulness to the Lord.

Sadly, Gomer is not going to listen to the pleading of her children. Often, the church hardens its heart against its Lord and faithful husband. But what Hosea will do in chapter 3 will display the pursuing grace of God powerfully.

As children of God who have received His mercy and been forgiven of our sin, we are called to do two things: To proclaim His mercy to others who need to hear the good news of the grace of God and to call the church of Jesus Christ to repent of worldliness and idolatry and return to faithfulness to the Lord. These are great privileges we have as children of God, ambassadors for Christ, and citizens of His heavenly kingdom. Let's embrace them and pray that God would use us to bring unbelievers to mercy and His church to greater faithfulness.