

Life Lesson 111  
*The Minor Prophets - Hosea*  
Text: Hosea, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:23

After the book of Daniel we come to another section of the Bible library -- the minor prophets. They weren't called "minor" because they were less important, although that's what the word "minor" means sometimes. They were important books, but shorter than the major prophets. Each of these twelve men preached to God's people and told them important messages from God. Those messages are important for us today, too.

The Story

The first of the major prophets was a man named Hosea. He lived before Isaiah and preached for a long time -- at least 38 years. Jeroboam II was king when Hosea prophesied and kept on through the string of kings who reigned only a short time before being murdered by the next king. He preached to Zechariah, Shallum, Manhem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea.

What a wicked time that was in the land of Israel! It wasn't a safe place to be because evil people roamed the country robbing and killing. The people worshipped idols and didn't even pretend to follow the true God any more.

God wanted His people to understand how He felt, so He used Hosea to teach them a painful lesson.

"Go and marry a bad woman," God told Hosea. "Take her from the mean people she lives with and take her to your home. Be nice to her. Love her and treat her as if she were a wonderful, special person."

Hosea did as God said. He married a woman with a funny name -- Gomer. Gomer had lived a rough, wild life. She wasn't the type of person a Christian would want to marry. God gave Hosea particular orders to marry her for a special reason.

For a while Hosea and Gomer must have been happy. They had a little boy. God said to name him "Jezreel."

"I will cause Israel to be defeated in the valley of Jezreel," God said. "When people ask why you named your boy 'Jezreel,' you can tell them that they will be punished for their sins."

Next they had a little girl. God said to name her "Loruhama." That means "unloved" or "she that never knew a father's love."

"Tell the people that I will not be a merciful father to them as I have been. I will allow them to be taken captive by their enemies because they keep on sinning against me," God said.

Their third child they named "Loammi." That means "no relation to me" or "not my people."

"Tell the people that they are known as the children of God. They keep on sinning against me so that I won't be their father any longer. They won't be my people any more," God said.

Three children with three funny names. God used even the names of those children to speak to the wicked people. All they had to do was look at little Loammi and they would remember that God would no longer be a father to them because of their sin. Loruhamah would remind them that they were unloved and Jezreel would always make them think of the defeat they would suffer at the hands of their enemies.

If the people had listened to God and repented, God would have forgiven them. He says in I John 1:9, that “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The people didn’t repent, though. God had another warning for them, and a picture to help them see how their unfaithfulness made Him sad.

Hosea was a good husband to Gomer, the bad woman he had married and loved. She decided to leave him and she ran off with another man. How sad that made Hosea feel! He must have felt betrayed and angry.

“She didn’t deserve to be my wife, but I took her in and loved her and treated her as if she were a queen. Look how she thanks me, by running away with another man!” Hosea must have said.

“That’s just how I feel about my people,” God told Hosea. “They were wicked and oppressed by their enemies. They didn’t deserve My help and My love. I gave them all they had and blessed them richly, just because I loved them. Look how My people have repaid me, by turning to other gods. They have disobeyed Me and have worshipped idols.”

Then Hosea understood. Just as Gomer had broken his heart, God’s heart was broken by the unfaithfulness of His people.

One day Hosea was going by the slave market, and stopped in surprise. There was Gomer, his wife, being sold as a slave. In those days if someone couldn’t pay his bills, the people he owed money to could sell him or her. God told him to buy Gomer back and take her back his wife. Hosea bought her for 15 pieces of silver.

She was already his wife, because he chose her and married her. Now she was twice as much his, because he redeemed her, or bought her back.

That was an important picture to the people about God and His people. We all belong to God because He made us. He has a right to our love and obedience just because he owns us. As Isaiah the prophet said in Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way."

Like Gomer, we have all run away from our good, kind, loving God and have lived bad, sinful lives. Our sins might be a different kind than Gomer's, but we all are rebellious and unfaithful to God.

Hosea bought Gomer back -- even though she was already his wife, and even though she had been so disloyal and so bad.

What would have happened if Gomer had said, "I'm not coming!" Or "I just don't believe anyone would do that for me. I'm staying here."

That would be pretty silly, wouldn't it? Hosea paid for her. Gomer's part was to come down from the slave block and go with him -- and that's what she did.

#### The Life Lesson

Hosea isn't just a story about a prophet. It's a story about YOU. You are like Gomer. God chose to make you and you belonged to Him. He was good to you, and you owe Him your life. Because you chose to go your own way, you are separated from God. How do I know? The Bible says "For ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. That means you, too!

When Jesus died on the cross, He bought you, just as Hosea bought Gomer, his wife.

Do you have to be good enough to be saved? Do you have to do some ritual or believe hard enough?

No, Jesus did everything for you, just as Hosea did everything for Gomer. All you have to do is believe Him and follow Him.

## Review Questions

Are the minor prophets important?

*Yes, they are called 'minor' because they are shorter.*

How many books are in the minor prophet section of the Bible library?

*Twelve*

What was Israel like when Hosea was preaching and prophesying?

*Wicked*

What strange thing did God tell Hosea to do?

*Marry a bad woman.*

Who did Hosea marry?

*Gomer*

What did the names of his children mean?

*Jezreel because the Israelites would be defeated in the valley of Jezreel.*

*Loruhama -- not loved*

*Loammi -- not my people*

What bad thing did Gomer do?

*She ran away with another man.*

What did Hosea do when he saw Gomer on the slave block?

*He bought her back.*

How does Hosea remind us of what Jesus did?

*We belonged to God because He made us, but Jesus bought us back by His death on the cross.*