

Relationship guidance

- Have you ever been called on to give someone relationship guidance?
 - their relationship is at the least under strain, perhaps in pieces because of unfaithfulness, perhaps with the devastating practical as well as emotional fallout...
 - and you are called on to give counsel... or perhaps invited to pray for people in such a situation, who you may or may not know?
 - feel the weight of the situation, the seriousness for the other person, perhaps the "risk" in giving any kind of advice, or knowing what to pray...
 - should they remain together, should one party fight for that when the other has shattered trust, what is the right thing to do, to counsel?

Hosea's story

- Hosea has been totally deserted by Gomer
 - (adultery picture)
 - the "setup" of 1:2 has come to pass, big time...
- God calls on Hosea to take Gomer back
 - staggering...
 - not "show love again" as if the love was latent, despite the NIV translation...
 - simply "show love", love which has been utterly taken away...
- Hosea's love is called forth by God's love, not merely that there is a parallel in how Hosea feels with how God feels/acts:
 - this is a heroic ask!
- Hosea is to act out how God loves, even before he feels such love for Gomer...

God's refusal to settle for second best

- *Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites...*
- Tension in God's love:
 - (mountain ridge image)
 - he refuses to ease the pain of loving us by compromise, by letting us off, by asking less of us...
 - he refuses to ease the pain of loving us by quitting, by giving up, by loving us less
- Israel has loved idols, chosen them over God
 - suspect that is implied by the raisin cakes thing, as well as the explicit mention of "other gods"
 - though though could simply be "nice food", home comforts...
 - despite their spiritual adultery, God keeps on loving his people
 - more than they yet know, more than any will fully know till the Cross!

Bought at a price

- Bought her implies how far she has fallen, how tightly she is held:
 - not entirely clear why - her debts? slave? prostitute working for an owner? compensation to the "boyfriend"?
 - payment appears to be roughly the 30 shekels Exodus 21:32 suggests as compensation for loss of a slave, partly in cash, partly in kind
- We are bought at a price... the Cross...

Full Picture

- *Hosea/Gomer... God/Israel & Exile... Jesus/Christians & Cross*
 - partial picture... whole picture

Conclusion

- Wonder and worship!