**Baggage Week 1 - Hosea**

**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:**

(Check Series Road Map)

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

Share a story of when you or someone you know lost something *wanted*, but not necessarily *needed*; preferably baggage.

**Tension (What’s the Struggle):**

Giving in to what the world around us wants us to worship.

**Text (+ Supporting Text):**

Hosea 1:2-3

Hosea 2:1-5

Hosea 3:1-5

Hosea 6:6

**THP**:

Let go of the unforgiveness you’re holding on to.

**Supporting Points (Not Required):**

N/A

**Application (Call to Action)**:

Write down either (1) the name of someone you need to forgive, or (2) an action you need to take towards forgiveness.

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

***THP/Main Points – Bold***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

(Share a story of when you or someone you know lost something *wanted*, but not necessarily *needed*; preferably baggage.)

Just two months ago, during the first week of March, I got to go on my first ever international mission trip. A few other Northview staff members, residents and I were blessed to get to go to Guatemala for a week-long trip.

But, there’s a catch.

You see, as we landed in Guatemala, my thrill and excitement for the trip quickly turned into disappointment and anger. The airline company LOST MY BAGGAGE. And because they lost my baggage, I had to go almost the entire week without most of the things I had packed. I was salty, I’m not gonna lie.

But as I reflect back on this experience, there’s one thing that really sticks out—I didn’t NEED my baggage. In fact, not having it hardly hindered my experience in Guatemala at all; I was still able to have an amazing, life-changing week!

There are things we want, and things we need. I wanted my phone charger, my extra pair of shoes, and my swimsuit. BUT, I didn’t NEED them; they weren’t essential to serve the people of Guatemala and they weren’t necessary to spread the good news of Jesus.

In our walk with Christ, there are things we want to pack, and there are things we need to pack. There is baggage we should carry, and baggage we shouldn’t carry. And so my question to you is, what baggage are you carrying? Is it good and necessary? Or is unnecessary and ultimately weighing you down?

In today’s culture, we are surrounded by so many worldly things that are not of Christ. Cultural and social norms suggest and encourage us to carry baggage that is not necessary. In fact, I’d go as far to say we are encouraged to carry baggage that’s just straight ungodly; things like bullying, gossiping, judging, gaslighting, cancelling, and more.

And with all this in mind, how do we look to do what Paul refers to as “not conforming to the pattern of the world” in Romans 12:2? Well, it’s easier said than done. So, to help us out, I want to unpack this concept through the lens of the prophets.

Now, who were the prophets? Prophets were people that—you guessed it—prophesied in the Old Testament. And to prophesy literally means to say what will happen in the future.

But know that the role of prophets was also so much more than that. Author Christopher J.H. Wright puts it this way in his book, *The Old Testament in Seven Sentences*: “The job of the prophets was to speak God’s word directly to the people around them, their own generation. They tell the people of Israel what God is thinking and saying about the present situation, whatever is going on in their own time.”

Students—that’s YOU! As followers of Christ, YOU are like the prophets in that you are to speak God’s word directly to the people around you in your own generation; you are to tell people what God is thinking about the present situation. The prophets were messengers of the Gospel, street communicators of Yahweh, and mouthpieces of God in a disruptive culture; and YOU are called to be the same!

**Tension (What’s the Struggle):**

And so tonight, I want to start us off by jumping into the book of Hosea.

Now Hosea is the first minor prophetic book we see in the Bible. And what you should know about Hosea is that he was a Northern Kingdom prophet in Israel that found himself in a land of people who opposed his beliefs.

Have you ever felt that? Have you ever felt the pressure and tension of others opposing your beliefs?

You see, the Israelites had failed to destroy the idols and places of false worship left behind by other people groups. And so the influence of non-Yahweh worshipping people, such as the Canaanites, was still very prevalent. While Hosea believed in the God we serve today, the influence of other people groups led some Israelites to worship other gods, such as Baal.

And with the influence of other beliefs came the idolization of materialism, sex, and ridiculous rituals and spiritual practices such as the sacrificing of children…yes, you heard that right!

Because of what was around them, the Israelites were actively choosing to abandon God by being unfaithful to Him.

Well students, I think we do the same thing today. Although we say God is number one in our lives, we still let the world around us influence us to the point that we’re unfaithful to Him. We, too, idolize materialism, sex, and more.

Because the people around us bully others, we do the same. Because the people around us spend their money on ridiculous things, we do the same. Because the people around us watch porn, we do the same. Because the people around us have sex, we do the same. Because the people around us drink alcohol and do drugs, we do the same. Because the people around us choose to worship things other than God Himself, we do the same.

And so again, this is the context of the Israelite people as we jump into the story of Hosea—a God-fearing prophet that was determined to be obedient to God by keeping Him first in his life.

Hosea 1:2-3 says,

2 When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.”

3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Now wait, let’s pause here. Although that was just two verses, there’s a lot to unpack.

First off, God instructed Hosea to marry Gomer. And what did Hosea do? He immediately obeyed God and married Gomer! Now, we don’t know if they knew each other or if they were complete strangers. But regardless, how many of you would be quick to marry someone right away just because God said so? Maybe some of you, but probably not many of you. Yet, Hosea was obedient to God in this instruction.

Next, not only did God instruct Hosea to marry Gomer, but God gave us insight as to who Gomer was. The text explicitly says she was a “promiscuous woman.” If we look back to the original Hebrew text that this book was written in, a more literal translation would be that she was a woman of “harlotry,” which means she was a woman of prostitution. So now knowing this, I’ll ask again…how many of you would be quick to marry someone right away, even if you knew this about them? Probably not many of you. Yet, Hosea was still obedient.

The third thing I want to point out is that God instructed Hosea to have children with Gomer. How many of you would be quick to have children with someone that you knew to be promiscuous? For the third time, probably not many of you. Yet again, Hosea was obedient.

Lastly, God told Hosea what would happen in his marriage with Gomer. The text says, “adulterous wife,” indicating that Gomer would eventually cheat on Hosea. How many of you would marry someone and have kids with them, even if God told you that they would eventually cheat on you? Probably none of you at this point. Yet, Hosea remained obedient.

**Text / Truth (+ Supporting Text):**

Students, here’s the point I’m trying to make—Hosea chose to be faithful and obedient, despite what was around him and despite how crazy God’s instructions were.

And so, Hosea and Gomer get married, they have a son, followed by a daughter, and then a second son. That’s three children in total.

Now, let’s jump back into the story in chapter 2.

Hosea says to his children in Hosea 2:1-5,

1 “Say of your brothers, ‘My people,’ and of your sisters, ‘My loved one.’

2 “Rebuke your mother, rebuke her,

 for she is not my wife,

 and I am not her husband.

Let her remove the adulterous look from her face

 and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.

3 Otherwise I will strip her naked

 and make her as bare as on the day she was born;

I will make her like a desert,

 turn her into a parched land,

 and slay her with thirst.

4 I will not show my love to her children,

 because they are the children of adultery.

5 Their mother has been unfaithful

 and has conceived them in disgrace.

She said, ‘I will go after my lovers,

 who give me my food and my water,

 my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.’

Wait, what’s going on? Well, what we find out in chapter 2 is that Gomer does exactly what God said she would do…she commits adultery. We don’t know if she slept with one other man, or many other men. That’s beside the point. All we know is that she cheated on Hosea.

And so what we just read was Hosea’s reaction to this dreadful sin committed against him. He struggled to forgive her for doing such a thing. And because of his unforgiveness, he cursed her. His bitterness and anger built up some choice words towards her.

But guess what…the story isn’t over yet.

Hosea 3:1-5 says,

1 The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley.

3 Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.”

4 For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods.

5 Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.

Did you catch that in verse 1? The Lord said to Hosea, “Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, EVEN THOUGH they turn to other gods...”

You see, even after Gomer wronged Hosea in one of the worst ways possible, God still called Hosea to LOVE her. And what does God mean by “love her”? To love her was to forgive her.

Because even after the Israelites wronged God in so many ways, He still chose to love them; He still chose to forgive them.

And so students, if there is anything I want you to take away from tonight, it’s this—**let go of the unforgiveness you’re holding on to**.

*\*\*PAUSE\*\**

**Let go of the unforgiveness you’re holding on to**! No matter how bad you’ve been wronged, God calls you to forgive. He doesn’t call you to forget, but He DOES call you to forgive.

God even says later on in the text in Hosea 6:6,

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,

 and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Mercy is literally defined as “forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.”

Forgiveness is difficult, especially when it’s not asked for. But just as God pursues forgiveness, Hosea would choose to pursue forgiveness; even though it was within his power not to!

**Application (Call to Action)**:

And so, like the prophet Hosea, will you pursue forgiveness?

*\*\*PAUSE\*\**

Will YOU, students, pursue forgiveness?

You see, God forgives you of your wrongs—He forgives you of your sins. And so if God is willing to forgive you of your sins, don’t you think it’s only right that you forgive others for theirs?

Friends, it is time to **let go of the unforgiveness you’re holding on to**. Pack up forgiveness, and let go of the unnecessary baggage you carry. Only then can you live a life that is different from those around you; only then can you live a life of being used as God’s mouthpiece that leaves a positive impact on the culture that tempts you to hold grudges rather than letting go of them.

Tonight, I want to give you an opportunity to do exactly that. What unforgiveness are you holding on to? Who are you holding a grudge over?

(Provide notecards and pens at the front of the stage.)

I am going to give you a few minutes to reflect on that question. And when you’re ready, come to the front, grab a notecard and a pen, and write it down.

Now, I’m not saying you have to forgive right away. Sometimes, it takes time. Better yet, sometimes it takes prayer and the seeking out of Godly counsel. But what I am saying and asking of you is to think and pray deeply, and to hold onto that thought or act of forgiveness by writing it down and keeping that piece of paper with you.

Let’s sit and take a few minutes in a time of reflection and prayer. Ask God who you need to forgive, and what steps you need to take towards forgiving them. And when you’re ready, come forward, grab a notecard and a pen, return to your seat, and start writing.

*\*\*Allow 3-5 minutes\*\**

Okay, let’s regather.

Again, students—**let go of the unforgiveness you’re holding on to**. And let God transform you because of it.

*\*\*GENERAL CLOSING & PRAYER\*\**