

Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 7, 2026

Text: Hosea 5:15-6:6 (Old Testament)

Other Texts: Romans 4:13-25 (Epistle); Matthew 9:9-13 (Gospel)

“God’s Love, Repentance, and Restoration”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from the one true God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The primary duty of a prophet was to speak to the people the Word that the Lord gave to them. However, there are many instances when God called His prophets to back up the Word they spoke with “prophetic actions.” Jeremiah was commanded to not marry and have children, to not attend or participate in any customary funeral rituals, and to reject all invitations to feasts and celebrations to symbolize the widespread death and total lack of joy that God’s judgment upon their sins would soon bring.¹ Another time, he was to walk with a yoke tied upon himself as a sign that God had determined that Judah will be completely subjugated to Babylon.²

Ezekiel was also to act out signs. One example is when he had to build a model of the imminent siege of Jerusalem and lay on his sides for 430 days even as he ate a diet consistent of the severe rationing which would occur during the siege.³ And then there’s Isaiah, whose ministry put him in the midst of the Judean royal court itself. Yet, God commanded him to go naked for three years predicting the Egyptian and Cushite captives of Assyria in order to warn Judah’s king and leaders to not put their trust in Egypt or Cush, but in the Lord.⁴

These are not all of the times such action prophecies occurred, but they are some of the most prominent and, for the prophets, demanding ones. But remember, no prophet *chose* to do these on their own. None were selected as “sermon illustrations,” but every one of them was directly commanded by God Himself. And with that in mind we come to Hosea who was also commanded to live out an action prophecy. One that, perhaps, was not as physically demanding compared to others, but certainly had to be one of the most personally, emotionally difficult ones that God required: “Go. Take for yourself an immoral wife and children produced by sexual immorality.”⁵ And in obedience, Hosea married Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim.⁶

God’s expectation is chastity, that is, virginity before marriage and complete faithfulness within it. Gomer was neither of these. She fornicated before the marriage and was an adulteress during it.⁷ For despite her marriage vows, Gomer got deeply connected to another man. And *everyone* knew it, which is why it would be wondered if the three children born during that time were really Hosea’s. Whether she finally physically abandoned Hosea or not is uncertain, but it is

¹ Jeremiah 16:1-9.

² Jeremiah 27:1ff. The specific command is found in v. 2.

³ Ezekiel 4.

⁴ Isaiah 20:1-5.

⁵ Hosea 1:2. *The Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV)*.

⁶ Hosea 1:3.

⁷ See Hosea 3:1.

obvious that emotionally, as well as physically, she loved another.⁸ One can only imagine the anger, the shame, and especially the incredible hurt and sorrow that Hosea experienced. Endured.

Yet, while not denying Hosea's extreme personal pains, that really isn't main point. For God did not do this to Hosea "just because." As with every action prophecy, this one too was done to back up the Word of God that Hosea was commanded to preach and write. And God Himself made clear what the action symbolized. "Go. Take for yourself an immoral wife... because the land has been committing flagrant immorality, turning away from the LORD."⁹

There it is. God, like Hosea, is a good, providing, protecting, caring, loving husband. Israel, like Gomer, was an immoral adulteress, breaking the Sinai covenant vows by chasing after other gods, openly violating the commandments, all due to following the selfish desires of the sinful nature. Like Gomer who lived two lives, one as wife for Hosea, the other as lover for another, so too Israel. For even as Gomer carried through on basic wife and mother obligations, while her heart, and at times body, was someplace else, so Israel gave lip service to Yahweh, mechanically carrying out the religious and ceremonial duties, while their hearts, and at times bodies, were someplace else. Instead of remaining faithful to the Lord, they brought in the worship and ways of the nations, desiring another than the Yahweh their God. Of them the Lord said, "Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away."¹⁰ Hence Hosea's pain over Gomer's faithlessness and betrayals is reflective of God's pain with Israel.

And it continues to be His pain with the visible church. For the Church is the Bride of Christ, yet not all who claim to be Christians truly are. "You will recognize them by their fruits"¹¹ and again, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."¹² Just as Israel of was a large group with only a small remnant of actual believers, so sadly that reality continues in visible Christendom. The holy apostle Paul writes,

For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?¹³

So we must ask what partnership, fellowship, accord, agreement, or shared portion does the Church of Christ crucified and risen have with the unbelieving world and the powers of darkness that rule it. How can those claim His name, tolerate, support, or participate in the murder of the unborn, the ill, or the aged, speaking of "quality of life" instead of its sanctity, for it is a gift from our Creator. How can we those who have been redeemed from their sins by the bloody sacrifice of the incarnate Lord have "pride" in open wickedness. And so it is as the ways of the world are brought into the church; and the light is dimmed, hidden under a bushel, and the salt loses all saltiness. Far from being the faithful bride, such "churches" are real Gomers, fulfilling Revelation 17, being the great prostitute, the adulterous wife, the false church.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Hosea 1:2 (EHV).

¹⁰ Hosea 6:4b. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ Matthew 7:15.

¹² Matthew 7:21.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

As Israel of old, so the visible church today. As believers of old, so believers today. We too have darkness within us. It might manifest itself differently between us, differences men and women, between ages, between individuals, though most of us have felt temptations power in most ways at one time or another as “one common sin infects us all” as the hymn says.¹⁴ Our idolatrous nature in the dark recesses of our hearts and minds is all too ready to be unfaithful to the Lord Christ. So what must we do lest we, as individuals, join the ranks of the great prostitute.

I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me.

God will not remain with sinners. Grace can be abused and, consequently, rejected, lost. We as a church body, as congregations and, especially, as individuals must continue to acknowledge our guilt before God. This, of course, is confession. Confession of our corrupted nature, confession of the rotten fruit it brings forth. So also it is confession of the good fruit that did not grow and the lack of bounty in the good fruit that did. This ongoing confession before the Lord remains true because we remain sinners this side of glory. It is not mechanical, for the recognition of our guilt before God breaks us. Or at least it should.

But God does not leave us in the mire of sin, guilt, and death. Instead, the recognition of the terminal illness of our sin and its horrific spiritual symptoms lead us to seek God’s face in the person of the Great Physician, our dear Lord Jesus as we heard in today’s Gospel.

Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.¹⁵

God has let us face distress because of our sins, perhaps in painful consequences, possibly in shame and humiliation, but certainly in guilty consciences. But it is for the very reason that we would desperately seek Him out so that He heals us through the forgiveness of sins which Christ won by the cross and then give us the Holy Spirit to bind us up, removing the infection of sin, making us spiritually healthier, restoring us to live before Him as His people.

“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”¹⁶ The knowledge of God revealed in Scripture, so that we follow His Word and not the world. Faith in Christ and the forgiveness He has won that brings forth a steadfast love for our Savior and our God; a love that is fully sacrificial. For we sacrifice ourselves for Him by witnessing to others of His love and bearing the cross that such faithful witnessing brings. Sacrifice ourselves by living, not for ourselves, our desires, our happiness, but having all joy in Christ we live for others, serving them as the commandments show.

¹⁴ *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB) 562:1.

¹⁵ Hosea 6:1-2.

¹⁶ Hosea 6:6.

God commanded Hosea to return once again to Gomer, “love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress.”¹⁷ Despite marrying her already, he paid the bride price again, a picture of how our God who created us paid the price to redeem us, the death of Jesus. Not surprisingly, Hosea required her to be faithful to him, bearing the fruit of repentance, promising her that he shall be there for her as a faithful and loving husband. So too, we must not continue in sin, but repenting of it, we bring forth the fruits of repentance, turning away from sin to a life of love and loyalty to our Savior. Which also includes forgiving others who have sinned against us, even terribly so and being willing to reconcile in true love. Not ignoring the hurts, not sweeping them under the rug, but also, like our God, not withholding forgiveness or holding grudges.

The Bible is silent as to whether Gomer truly repented or not, but I do not think such is unlikely. After all, while it shouldn’t need to happen, yet as Jesus pointed out to Simon the Pharisee, the one forgiven much, loves much.¹⁸ Perhaps Gomer finally was brought low and then Hosea forgives her and restores her. This could lead to her using him again. Or it could lead to her being the most loving and faithful wife from then on. Let us hope that such was the case for Gomer. And in the power of the Holy Spirit, let it be the case for us, that we would be the most loving and faithful disciples of our faithful Lord Jesus who loves us eternally. Amen!

¹⁷ Hosea 3:1.

¹⁸ Cf. Luke 7:47.