

## Remnant Life Church

January 8, 2017

### Follow Through

Hosea 1:1-11

- In most sports follow through, of some type, is important to achieve success
  - In basketball when you shoot you follow through with your wrist to make the shot straight and true
  - In tennis, the swing must follow through or the ball sails out of bounds
  - The same for a golf swing
- Outside of sports follow through is also important
  - Many times, that is about doing something we say we are going to do
  - Or completing a task that we begin
  - Perhaps its a resolution or commitment to something
- For many this is especially true on the job
  - If you are given an assignment or a directive you follow through until it is completed
  - Failure to do means problems or even a loss of the job
- The Bible also has examples of many types of follow through
- Not all of them were pleasant but they were all purposeful
  - What do I mean by that?

#### READ – Hosea 1:1-11

- Hosea was a prophet from the northern kingdom of Israel
  - His name means “salvation”
  - He is from the tribe of Issachar
  - His book is written around 760-750 BC
  - He was one of only 2 prophets from the north included in the Bible – the other is Jonah
  - His prophetic ministry, as told in the first verse, lasted at least 60 years
  - He was a contemporary, meaning he lived at the same time as, Isaiah, Micah, and Amos
- His book is the first in the section of the OT known as the “Book of Twelve”
  - Also called the minor or lesser prophets
  - Not minor in importance but in length as opposed to Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Jeremiah
- Hosea wrote with great intensity about the sin of Israel and how they how abandoned God
  - His time is collectively the darkest in Israel’s history
  - Kings are ascending to the throne through assignation
  - They strengthen their positions by making alliances with foreign nations
  - The most famous of these was Ahab marrying Jezebel, the daughter of a king of Tyre and Sidon – two pagan nations

- Sin was rampant with Baal and Ashtarothe worship, pagan prostitution, calf-worship, the priests were corrupt, and a general state of immorality permeated the land
- Every holy memory of God was replaced by the sin of the present
- Yet even through this God wanted His people to know, “I still love you.”
  
- The story of Hosea is a tragic one that called for extraordinary measures on the prophet’s part
  - We read in the 1:2 that God commanded Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman named Gomer
  - Many have translated promiscuous into the word prostitute but the more accurate is immoral or adulterous
    - Most believe that when they married she was initially faithful
    - But became unfaithful and promiscuous afterward
  - Note: there is nothing to support that this is a parable
    - It is not presented that way nor does it fit with every other prophetic book written in the same way – (Context)
    - God called Hosea to a very difficult task that he needed to follow through with
  
- We read that they had 3 children together; 2 boys and a girl
  - God said that He would name them
    1. Son – Jezreel (God scatters) – 1:4
      - a. Jezreel was the name of a town where Jehu, the 10<sup>th</sup> king of Israel, killed the descendants of evil King Ahab including Jezebel
      - b. While God sanctioned what Jehu needed to do He condemned, through Hosea, the brutality and excessiveness of his actions that included killing King Ahaziah of Judah and 42 of his relatives
      - c. God’s punishment eventually took Jehu’s line off the throne when his great-great-grandson Zechariah was assassinated after ruling only 6 months
    2. Daughter – Lo-Ruhamah (Unpitied or not loved) – 1:6
      - a. God had loved and preserved His people but He would now withdraw His protection over them for a time
      - b. 722 BC – Assyrians conquer and capture the northern kingdom Israel but God continues to protect Judah for another 136 years
      - c. The expression of God’s love is unconditional but our enjoyment of that love is conditional on our actions
      - d. The Israelites, in turning from God to worship idols lost the enjoyment and protection of God’s love
    3. Son – Lo-ammi (Not My people) – 1:8
      - a. The depth of their sin caused God to renounce His covenant with the people – at least for a time

- b. God gave the people what they wanted
- c. King Saul – **I Sam 8**

- Gomer then deserts her family and takes up with a string of men eventually ending up with nothing
  - She is brought to action to be sold as a slave
  - Hosea buys her back and reinstates her as his wife and the mother of his children (**3:1-3**)
- The story of Hosea, Gomer, and their children is a metaphor for the relationship that God had with His people
  - It begins with love and affection as God brings the people out of Egypt and takes them into the promised land
  - The people begin to embrace foreign, false gods and disobey the commands of God
  - Israel is conquered again and again by foreign nations only to cry out to God who saves them
  - Like Hosea, God's love is so great that He continually takes them back
- Hosea focuses on 3 main sins of Israel in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter that are still prevalent today:
  1. **Idolatry (2:2-5a)**
    - a. The Israelites had turned to Baal worship especially in times of difficulty
    - b. Baal was the rain god
    - c. When there were times of famine or drought they would pray to Baal instead of to the creator of the universe
    - d. Pagan worship also involved sensual fertility rites involving prostitutes at the pagan temples
      - i. God said, through Hosea, that they were acting like prostitutes by giving themselves to the false gods
      - ii. In both a symbolic and literal sense idolatry means prostitution
    - e. We must guard against loving the things of the world and allowing these to become the delight of our hearts (**I John 2:15-17**)
  2. **Ingratitude (2:5b-9)**
    - a. The Israelites, instead of thanking God for all that they had, thanked the idol gods and gave them back a portion of it in gratitude
    - b. The idols we thank today include our wealth, our abilities, our intellect, our achievements, etc...
    - c. "Give thanks" is used in a couple different forms nearly 50 times in the Bible
    - d. One of the first steps toward rebellion against God is a refusal to give God thanks for His mercies (**Rom. 1:21**).
    - e. God will not allow us to enjoy His gifts and at the same time ignore the Giver,
    - f. This is the essence of idolatry.
  3. **Hypocrisy (2:10-13)**
    - a. We read that the people still enjoyed celebrating the Hebrew festivals

- b. Rather than worshipping God, however, in their hearts they were doing these things for the false gods
  - c. Many today come to church, say the right things, act in a way that appears to be righteous but in their hearts they are someone very different
  - d. God knows the secret places and thoughts of our hearts
  - e. Like Israel God will not allow that to continue indefinitely
- Like Israel God will still love us and provide a way to repent and be saved
- Israel ignored all this and eventually fell to the Assyrians in 722 who were then conquered by the Greeks who were then conquered by the Romans
  - Israel, and eventually Judah, are handed back and forth as spoils of the conquering nations
- All the while God was watching, and waiting, preparing to send the One who would rescue and set them free again
  - Not physically but spiritually and return them to Himself
- God is doing that today
  - He is watching and waiting
  - Preparing to send the One who will set us free
  - This time not as a child and teacher but a mighty warrior to end the war with satan and sin and take us home to be with Himself!
- Until that time, are you following through with how you have been told to live as a Child of God?
  - Love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind (**Matt 22:37**)
  - Love others as much as you love yourself (**Matt 22:39**)
  - Show God's love everywhere you go (**John 13:34**)
  - Demonstrate the Fruits of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22-23**)
  - Witness to others (**Matt 28:16-20**)
- To commit ourselves anew to do this is an excellent way to start off a new year!