

# The Humanly “Impossible” Command

## *Hosea 3:1-2*

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**Introduction:** Hosea chapter 3 is the second shortest chapter in the Bible, second only to Psalm 117 (which has only 2 verses). Yet this third chapter of Hosea is perhaps the most shocking chapter in all of God’s Word. Two weeks ago I introduced the Book of Hosea by a look at chapter one. I entitled that message: “The active sermon of Hosea’s marriage.” We noted the theme of Hosea to be: “God’s unconditional love for an undeserving people.” That theme is illustrated by Hosea’s marriage & home life. “Devotion to the Lord is like faithfulness in marriage. Idolatry is like adultery” (Wiersbe). I outlined chapter one simply as the mandate of Hosea’s marriage (:1-2) & the message from Hosea’s marriage (:3-11). I concluded with 3 lessons (or applications): the sin of Gomer, the sacrifice of Hosea, & the Sovereignty of God. If you are interested, you can still view the message on our church’s Facebook page, Sunday night, May 1<sup>st</sup>.

We come this morning to chapter 3. I want to be true to the text but also sensitive to the topic (subject matter). Note with me this morning just verses 1 & 2, where we find the command to Hosea & the compassion of Hosea. Tonight we will continue through the chapter as we consider the conditions from Hosea (:3) & the comparison by Hosea (:4-5). Let’s read our text & then pray.

### I. The **command** to Hosea (:1)

#### A. The **command** of love >

##### 1. This is not **optional**:

- a. Some might suggest Hosea take the “easy way out” – divorce because of her unfaithfulness.
- b. Some might point to Matthew 19:7-9; divorce for “*fornication*” (& cf. Deut. 24:1).

##### 2. This is **obligatory**:

- a. Note that love can be commanded – Deut. 6:4-5 & cf. Eph. 5:25.
- b. Note also that love is more than emotion (cf. “fall in love” with “fall out of love”).

[Consider the 4 Greek words for love.]

#### B. The **cost** of love >

##### 1. Gomer was “*a woman beloved of her friend*”:

- a. “*Friend*” may refer to the man she had been living with immorally.
- b. “*Friend*” can also refer to her husband, Hosea.

##### 2. Gomer was “*an adulteress*”:

- a. She was enslaved to her licentious behavior; “*adulteress*” is here in verb form – literally, “committing adultery.”
- b. She was enslaved to her “lover”; having sold herself to him.

Summary: Hosea is commanded to “show love” to Gomer; to buy her out of slavery.

#### C. The **contrast** of loves >

##### 1. God’s love for Israel; “*...according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel...*”

- a. God’s love is noble, unselfish, generous, & protective.
- b. God’s love is all of grace. It is not based on anything found in her. “God chose Israel in spite of what they were, not because of what they were” (Barrett). See Deut. 7:7-8.

##### 2. Israel’s love for idols; “*...who look to other gods, & love flagons of wine.*”

- a. Israel’s love is selfish, indulgent, & pleasure-oriented.
- b. “*Flagons of wine*” refers to raisin –cake offerings use in Baal worship.

[Same word for love used 4 times in verse one. Consider the wide range of meaning in our English word “love.”]

## II. The compassion of Hosea (:2)

### A. The price of a slave >

1. The “**normal**” price of a slave in O.T. times was 30 shekels; the usual practice of the slave market was slaves standing naked, to “assess” them.
2. The “**negotiated**” price of this slave (an “itemized” list?):
  - a. 15 pieces of silver (shekels) & 1 & ½ homers of barley; a homer was about 6 bushels & barley was food of the poor, usually fed to animals.
  - b. Less than the “normal” price of a slave, perhaps because of her degraded, disgusting condition; she is being sold at a “discount.”

### B. The picture of redemption >

#### 1. **Illustration** by 3 N.T. words for “*redemption*”:

- a. “*Agorazo*” – from “agora” meaning market-place; to purchase there.  
See Revelation 5:9; 14:3-4, “*redeemed*”; & I Corinthians 6:20, “*bought*.”
- b. “*Exagorazo*” – from “ex” (out) + “agora”; to purchase out of the market-place.  
See Galatians 3:13, “*redeemed*” & 4:4, “*redeem*.”
- c. “*Lutroo*” – to release on receipt of a ransom; setting at liberty.  
See I Peter 1:18, “*redeemed*.”

#### 2. **Application** of these 3 N.T. words:

- a. We were all previously in the slave market – enslaved to sin, self, & Satan.
  - (1) John 8:34, “*...whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*” (& cf. Romans 6:16).
  - (2) II Peter 2:19, “*...for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage*.”
  - (3) John 8:44, “*Ye are of your father the devil...*” (& cf. Ephesians 2:1-3).
- b. We have been purchased out of the slave market – removed from it.  
See again Galatians 3:13 & 4:5.
- c. We have been set free – no longer a slave to sin, self, & Satan.
  - (1) II Corinthians 5:17, “*Therefore is any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...*”
  - (2) Romans 6:18, “*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*.”
  - (3) I John 4:4, “*...because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*” (& cf. I John 2:14).

Summary: By Christ’s shed blood, we have been redeemed, removed (from slavery), & released. Yet now we are the servants (bond-slaves) to Christ.

Conclusion: Hosea’s reunion with Gomer illustrates God’s gracious love for Israel. Recall again the theme of Hosea: God’s unconditional love for an undeserving people. This chapter begins with a seemingly impossible (humanly speaking) command. That is followed by the improbable compassion of Hosea in verse 2. There lies in this text a wonderful picture of the amazing grace & love of God. That picture is realized in the N.T. by 3 words, translated as “redeemed.” The question for you this morning is: Have you been redeemed? Have you seen yourself as one standing in the slave market of sin? But then to be purchased – redeemed – out of that slave market? And now do you see yourself as having been set free – loosed- from your slavery to sin, self, & Satan? If not, why not experience that redemption today? If so, will you heed the psalmist who said, “*Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy*”?