

I know that we have heard a lot about the word covenant, but it seems that this is usually in connection with the life of Abraham. It is very important to remember, not only that the nation of Israel had a covenant with God, but the church does as well. This covenant is extremely important; God holds it very, very sacred. It is essentially our bond with him, and we must also hold it sacred. Throughout the Bible we see God becoming furious with those who are covenant-breakers. To make us understand its importance to him, he speaks of it to us in terms of the most sacred earthly covenant that we could relate to: marriage. And unfaithfulness, or the breaking of the covenant, is equivalent to adultery. What God hates is the unfaithfulness; this can apply to more than just sexual situations. This lesson is illustrated so well in the story of the prophet Hosea, and is familiar to many of you.

In the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, there is found what I think is a very fascinating story. A child has been born, but as it is unwanted by its parents, it is simply thrown out to die. It is hard to believe this kind of heartless cruelty, but it happened again and again in these times. Anyway, the child was found by God, who happened to be walking by. Filled with compassion and love, God takes it and cleans it up, dressing it in fine clothes and providing for its every need. It grows up strong and healthy, under God's care, and soon develops into a mature young woman.

Now comes the interesting part. God enters into a covenant relationship with her; reading from verse 8b... But as we read further, we see that she rejects the love of God, pursuing other lovers, not even for hire, but to satisfy her own desires. She is utterly faithless, with the city of Sodom described as favorable to her. Who would think that after all God had done for her that she would turn against him? We find that God punishes her and then offers to accept her back; again, the same theme of sin, punishment, and restoration that is found in the book of Hosea.

If you have read this, you will know that this is somewhat of a parable describing God's relationship with the nation of Israel. You can see the many parallels between the real life story and Ezekiel 16. We can see just how much God hates covenant breaking, and the faithlessness that is associated with it. This is true especially for us today, in the covenant of marriage, and in our commitment to God as Christians. If we are found faithless, we can return to God before it is too late; but if we do not, we expose ourselves to his eternal fury; that of some one who gave their love freely, but was scorned and rejected.