

1. There's a fairly new Christian song out by Casting Crowns called Crazy People. It highlights people from the bible that in today's society would be considered crazy for the way they obeyed the Lord.
2. And then it invites us to be one of those crazy people who obey the Lord regardless of the circumstances.
3. The story I am about to read to you reminds me of that song.
- 4.

TEXT: **Hosea 1:2-11** When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD." **3** So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. **4** Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. **5** In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel." **6** Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. **7** Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God." **8** After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. **9** Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God. **10** "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.' **11** The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

TITLE: **Down But Not Out**

INTRO:

1. I read almost this entire chapter to you today because it tells one of the strangest stories in the bible. The setting of the story is the land of Israel many centuries before Jesus.
2. The people of the land of Judah and the land of Israel have committed one of the greatest sins a person can commit. That sin is not murder, or lust or being a thief or some other kind of sin. While those sins are bad there is one that is worse. That is **the sin of rejecting a loving God and savior and trusting in other things more than God.**
3. The people have committed this great sin and are worshiping all kinds of idols and doing everything contrary to how God wants them to live. So in order to try and turn them from this lifestyle of wickedness, God sends a prophet by the name of Hosea to speak and preach to the people and point out the error of their ways.
4. The strange part of Hosea's message is the manner in which God asks him to preach the message. It's not strange that God asks Hosea to use his own life

as an illustration of the unfaithfulness of the people and the love that God has for those people.

5. But it does seem somewhat strange when God asks Hosea to marry what the bible calls an adulterous woman. Someone who commits adultery is someone who has sexual relations with a person who is not their spouse. The implication here is that this woman is living in a regular state of adultery.
6. Some scholars believe it is possible that this woman is a prostitute, possibly what was called a shrine prostitute. These prostitutes would stand at the gates of pagan temples and offer their bodies for money as a way to please the so-called Gods the people would worship.
7. That prostitute or adulterous woman represented the people of Israel, and how unfaithful they had been. Hosea's love for this prostitute represented the love that God had for the people of Israel.
8. Now you talk about a sermon illustration. That is what I call a sermon illustration. The idea was that every time people saw this relationship, they would be reminded of the message Hosea was preaching, and the repentance God was calling them to.
9. It is believed that Hosea was probably in his early twenties when he married this woman. Can you imagine how his parents must have felt? Can you imagine how they must have responded? Imagine him bringing this adulterous woman home and saying hey mom and dad I am in love.
10. I can only imagine that his parents objected profusely, they may even have thought he was crazy, but he was not crazy. He was simply obeying the will and plan of God for his life.
11. I believe there is a valuable lesson we can learn here and that is that **God's plans are not always logical, they are not always likable, and they don't always seem reasonable to us.** To be honest, sometimes God's plans seem strange and out in left field but yet they are still God's plans.
12. God doesn't only ask us to follow him when everything makes sense to us or we understand it all, he also asks us to follow him when things don't make sense and we don't understand it all.
13. God's plans for our lives are not always comfortable and don't always feel good, but yet they are God's plans none the less.
14. So Hosea follows the plan of God and marries this adulterous woman. And before long they begin to have children. Now it is not strange that they would have children but what is strange are the names that God directs Hosea to give to the children.

15. Not only are Hosea and his wife a part of this illustrated message, but their children are a part of the message as well.
16. In verse 3 Gomer the wife of Hosea gives birth to a son, and in verse 4 God tells Hosea to name the child Jezreel. Now the name **Jezreel** literally means **God will scatter**. God will disperse, spread out and break up. This was a foretelling of what would happen to the nation of Israel when God would scatter them and take them into captivity because of their sin.
17. In verse 6 Gomer gave birth to a daughter and God tells Hosea to name her Lo-Ruhama. **Lo-Ruhama** means **not my beloved**. It signifies you are no longer my number one. You were my number one, you were at one time intimate with me, but you have turned away from me, you are no longer close to me.
18. In verse 8 & 9 we see that Gomer has another son. This time God tells Hosea to name him Lo-Ammi. **Lo-Ammi** means **not my people**. In other words you don't belong to me anymore. Even worse I don't claim you anymore. God was saying to the people of Israel, I can't even call you mine anymore because you don't act anything like me, you don't want anything to do with me.
19. What a powerful message the names of these children would represent. Again the idea was that every time people saw Hosea's children and heard their names it would be a reminder to them of God's message. It would be a reminder of the fact that they had slipped away from God and were in danger of losing their very lives and the freedoms they had so liberally enjoyed.
20. I understand that the people of Israel are being rebuked for their sin; I understand that Gomer is an adulterous woman and that she represents the sinfulness of the people and whatever suffering she endures has been brought upon herself.
21. I understand that Hosea is just simply obeying God and however difficult this task is God will reward him for being faithful, but what I have difficulty understanding is how negatively affected these three innocent children must have been by being thrust into a situation they had not helped create.
22. They must have been embarrassed by the fact that their mother was a prostitute. They must have been self-conscious by the fact that their names had extremely negative meanings.
23. You have to understand times were different back then. I would venture to say that many people today don't know or fully understand the meaning of

their name, but during this time in history everybody would have understood the meaning of the names of these three children.

24. I can imagine the kids at school saying God doesn't love you, you don't belong to anybody, your nothing but a broken up, scattered, spread out mess. Your life is meaningless.
25. You see your name has meaning, and while I don't fully understand how it happens there is something about your name that can define you.
26. A couple years ago my wife and I were in a store, and there was this large rack that was filled with name plates and descriptions or characteristics that were associated with that name.
27. My wife called me over and said you have to see this. She randomly pulled out a name and had me read it. Then she said think of somebody you know with that name and see if the description matches their personality. I must have pulled out a dozen or more names and every time it was a near perfect description of that person.
28. These three children were given very negative names. Scattered, not loved, not my people. I can't help but ask, did they grow up feeling that way. Did they grow up feeling as though their life was a mess, that they were not loved and that they didn't belong?
29. I don't know for sure how those three children felt, I don't know if they grew up thinking they were strange or weird or out of place, but I can tell you for sure that some children in our world today grow up in homes and environments and they feel as though they are not loved and that they don't belong, and that their life is a scattered mess.
30. I can also tell you that I know that those same children grow up to become teenagers and adults and many times unless something miraculous happens in their life as adults they still feel like their life is a mess, and they wake up feeling as though nobody loves them, and they feel like they don't belong, like they stand out no matter where they are.
31. I know for a fact that many adults in our world today are plagued with unhappiness and frustration, many Christians are plagued with discontentment and annoyance and they live in a constant state of upheaval all because they don't feel like anybody cares, don't feel like anybody wants them, and can't see how their life could ever be whole again.
32. Many people in our nation are bound and hurting because they feel unloved, and they feel unlovely, and they don't know how to change how they feel.

33. The good news today is that **there is hope.** You can have a chance at restoration. You can feel loved, and you can feel whole.
34. I want to share with you three sources of pain that can cause us to feel unloved and unwanted and I also want to share with you the remedy. Now you may or may not have been affected by the specific sources of pain I am about to mention, your pain may have been caused in another way, but you can benefit from the remedy I am going to share.
35. The first source of pain in your life.

Difficult Childhood.

1. One year, the Wednesday after Christmas we were in my small group and someone asked another person how their Christmas went, and the person responded it didn't go very well. We dealt with constant dysfunction the entire time.
2. Somebody else spoke up and said our holiday was pretty much like that too. There was nothing but drama the whole time. Before long almost everybody in the room had a horror story of a holiday gone bad, or a situation that was caused by something that happened 35 years ago.
3. You don't have to raise your hand but how many have discovered that the family unit that was designed to provide safety, and comfort and love often times winds up being anything but that.
4. Different generations show love in different ways. I once met a man in his 50's who still remembered that his father never once told him he loved him or gave him a hug.
5. I once met an adult lady who said she lived her entire childhood with a jealous mother who thought that the father loved the child more than he loved the mother.
6. The current statistics say that **1 out of 4 girls will be sexually abused by the time they reach age 18.**
7. **1 out of 6 boys will be sexually abused by the time they reach age 18.**
8. **30-40% of victims are abused by a family member. Another 50% are abused by someone outside the family that they know and trust.**
9. Some of you may have grown up in an era where you didn't talk about things like that, but I must tell you ignoring it won't make it go away.
10. If you are here today and you suffered as a child, you need to know that it wasn't your fault. You didn't do anything wrong. And just because that

person robbed you of your innocence doesn't make you unlovely or unlovable.

11. Some of you had a difficult childhood and that childhood has left you feeling unworthy, scattered, and feeling like you don't belong. I want you to know you matter to me and you matter to God. God can restore your self worth and your confidence.
12. That source of pain does not have to be your slave master for the rest of your life.
13. The next source of pain.

Difficult Adulthood

1. Some of you here escaped the potential horrors of a difficult childhood. You grew up in a loving family with minimal dysfunction. You felt loved, you felt like you belonged, and you felt a wall of protection around you only to enter into adulthood and get slapped in the face and have the rug pulled out from under you.
2. You married who you thought was your knight in shining armor only to find that he wasn't much more than a sorry excuse for a man wrapped in aluminum foil.
3. Maybe you married your beauty queen only to find that beauty is only skin deep, and that an ugly attitude goes all the way to the bone.
4. Some of you ladies thought you were placing yourself in the arms of a wonderful protector and provider only to find he was an abuser and attacker.
5. Some of you men thought you were getting a wonderful helpmate and companion, only to find that she was more interested in helping herself than helping the family.
6. Others brought a load of childhood, family dysfunction to that marriage hoping that marriage would be the answer to your problems, only to find out it made your problems worse.
7. Maybe you thought you were in love with Mr. or Ms. Right only to be rejected and turned away.
8. There might be somebody here today and you are in your 30's, 40's or maybe even in your 50's and you can't escape the hold of a domineering parent who wants to control every part of your life even though you moved out years ago.
9. Maybe there are others here today who made a financial mistake years ago and you find yourself still paying for that mistake each and every day.

10. As teens and young adults we all want and fight for that freedom only to find that often times that freedom comes with a lot of baggage and attachments.
11. Maybe the junk of your adulthood has left you feeling alone, hurting, and feeling like a failure. Maybe you feel as though your life is going nowhere and nobody would ever want to go there with you, if so, you need to know that you are not alone, you are loved, and you do belong.
12. You may have experienced a great deal of pain; you may be experiencing difficult pain in your life right now, but that pain doesn't have to define the rest of your life.
13. A third source of pain could be

Separation from God.

1. Hosea 1:2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD."
2. We mentioned earlier physical adultery, but here in Hosea 1:2 God points out that the people of Israel have committed Spiritual Adultery. Spiritual adultery is when we allow anything to interfere with or take the place of God's authority in our lives.
3. In other words spiritual adultery is when we allow anything to become more important to us than God.
4. There are times when this spiritual adultery is intentional. There are times when we are enticed, and we knowingly allow something or someone to become more important to us than God.
5. Other times this spiritual adultery is not intentional. We did not intend to allow this thing or person to take the top place of priority in our lives, but we wake up one day and realize God isn't first in our life anymore.
6. Either way the result is that we are separated from God. God is not in his rightful place and therefore we cannot be in our rightful place.
7. The last part of this verse says verse 2 because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD."
8. That word departing gives me the idea of a person saying goodbye, see you later, hasta luego. Do you know that nothing will make you feel more unloved, out of place, and out of sorts than being separated from God?
9. Nothing, no amount of money, no human relationship, no job, no car, nothing can fulfill you like being close to God.

10. Maybe you are here today, and you have just turned your back on God. Maybe you have just out and out sinned and separated yourself from God. You need to come back to him. You're going to continue feeling alone and depressed until you come back to him.
11. Maybe you are here today, and you have just recently noticed that you have allowed some things to get between you and God. Maybe as you evaluate your priorities you realize God has somehow gotten moved down a few notches on the importance meter of life. You didn't mean for it to happen, but it happened anyway.
12. You need to come back to God. You need to wipe out the distance between you and him by calling out to him right now.
13. You see it doesn't matter what is causing or has caused the lack of love, the lack of fitting in, or the lack of order in your life.
14. It doesn't matter if you had any control over those circumstances or if you didn't. What matters is what you do from this point forward.
15. You can't change what somebody else did to you, you can't change what type of home environment you came from, you can't change the mistakes you made in the past, but you can make the decision to not let the past control your future.

The remedy for your past is a future with Jesus.

1. Hosea 1:10-11 "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.' 11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land."
2. I can't help but read these verses and get excited. Yes, the people of Israel are messed up. Yes, they are in sin. Yes, Gomer is an adulterous prostitute, yes Hosea will suffer because he is obeying God, yes, the children have suffered because of the names they have and the environment they live in, but what verses 10 & 11 tell us is that God is going to wipe all of that out of the way.
3. Verse 10 lets us know that where the Israelites have once been sparse, they will now be numerous.
4. Before they were not my people, now they will be called sons of the living God.
5. Before they were scattered, now they will be reunited, and they will be together again.
6. I have to ask you this morning. If God can do that for a nation, why can't he do it for you?

Conclusion:

1. If God can love, and reunite, and redeem millions of people and wipe out their past, why can't he do it for you?
2. The answer is he can do it for you. The answer is your past doesn't have to control you. The hurts from your childhood and your adulthood don't have to control you. Your past sin doesn't have to control you. Your present state of separation from God doesn't have to continue. You too can be redeemed and reunited with a living, powerful, personal, God.
3. But the choice is yours. You will only stay bound to your past if you choose to be bound to your past. If you make the decision right now, you can begin a journey toward freedom.
4. As we conclude this morning, we are going to assume two things.
5. The first assumption is that it is always a great idea to take every opportunity to draw closer to and run to the Lord in prayer.
6. No matter where you are in your relationship. Your relationship with the Lord may be better than ever. If so. Praise the lord. Go to him anyway.
7. The second assumption we are going to make is that all of us have been hurt in one way or another at one time or another.
8. There's no use in pretending we have never been hurt. So because we have all been hurt, we serve a loving father who delights in providing healing for us.
9. Let's go to the Lord in prayer right now.
10. Make groups and pray for one another.
11. Victory in Jesus.
12. Baptism.