

Praise the Lord! Amen! Hallelujah!

How does the Lord get inside of us? Yeah He looks for it, do we allow it? Do we allow it?

We're talking about marriage as a metaphor for the new covenant. Back in the Old Testament there's an interesting prophet, back there he was one of the few prophets of the northern ten tribes. Matter of fact he's the only prophet that left a written record from the northern ten tribes. We have other prophets up there but they did not leave a written record. This prophet the Lord chose to allow us to see what it was that He wanted from us. That was the prophet Hosea. It's an interesting story, it causes a lot of consternation because when it came time for his marriage the Lord ask him to go amongst the whores of Israel and to pick a wife from one of their daughters. It's a very problematic story. Bothers a lot of people. Some reject the story because they say God would never do that. Well He did.

Our question we should be asking is why did He do that? He chose the relationship of this prophet, with his chosen wife to be, to be a metaphor for His relationship with the house of Israel and ultimately yourself and me. So he did what he was told to do. He went amongst the prostitutes and the whores of Israel and he picked a girl, I don't know if it were me I'd look for someone with a different name, her name was Gomer. Nevertheless, he fell in love with Gomer and the Lord asked for the privilege of naming the children that this prophet had, Hosea and Gomer because these children again reflect the relationship with God, Christ, the house of Israel. The first child He names Jezreel, which means 'God scatters', because he was about ready to scatter the ten tribes, eventually into all the world. Eventually, to the point where they are now, they're considered the 'lost ten tribes'. The second child was named Lo-ruhamah, Lo means 'no or not' in Hebrew, Lo-ruhamah means 'no more mercy.' The third child is a sad, sad child, that child the Lord says we're going to call Lo-ammi, which means 'not mine,' not my people. You see Gomer has done like her mother, she has had an illegitimate child which is not really Hosea's child, breaks Hosea's heart. He sends the children after their mother, however she runs off with her lovers and more hurtful, she gives them credit for having fed her and clothed her and taking care of her and she refuses to come back.

After an undisclosed period of time, Hosea is out in the marketplace and he looks at the auction block where they auction off slaves and lo and behold, guess who's on the auction block? Yes, Gomer. We know what most men would do under those circumstances, don't we? You had it coming to you. What goes around comes around but because he represents the Savior, he was asked to buy her back, to take her home, and to prove her before he covenants with her again. That is the story that everybody can relate to isn't it? We can all feel that. It's interesting that during this story, that the Savior mentions what it was that He has always wanted from the house of Israel. This is in Hosea 6:6 at first when you read it in English, because it was translated into English and it doesn't really make sense in English, but we will do a little work on the translation. Here's what the Savior said, "here's what I've always wanted," He says, "For I have desired mercy and not sacrifice, and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

This is called 'parallelism'. It's a Hebrew parallelism where He just said the same thing twice. He says that He's always wanted mercy. The problem with the translation is the word 'mercy' is translated from the word in Hebrew called 'hesed' and you look up 'hesed', one rabbi said, "you can't really translate 'hesed' into another language, but I can tell you what it means but you can't translate it into another language. It's when you have two people that are really, really close together and they think about each other all the time, they communicate with each other all the time, and what they want to do more than anything else is make the other one happy." That's what 'hesed' means. It's a husband and wife who communicate all day long, texting, calling on the phone, not that they forgot what their mates voice sounded like, they just want to hear the voice. It's not a long conversation, it's just that you made contact. That's what the Savior said, that's what I have always wanted, that's what I've always wanted, was 'hesed'. We always think what we want from him don't we? Well we need this, that and the other thing. Save now! Save me now! Salvation!" What does He want?! He says he wants 'hesed', that's what he said he wants. He would love to just hear from us all day, everyday. He wants 'hesed'. And He chose Hosea and Gomer, and their relationship to get inside of us, to help us feel! Quite often when we teach the Old Testament, we teach about the God of the Old Testament that He was harsh, mean, cruel even, until you hear Him tell the story. Now He's telling us the story of the Old Testament from His point of view. Notice who is the mistreated one in the story of Hosea and Gomer, because no question about it Hosea is a type of Christ and Gomer is a type of Israel. Who is the victim? I hate to call Christ the victim because He's not really a victim but for the sake of our conversation today, which is the one being wronged? Which is the one being hurt? It's not Gomer. The one being hurt is Hosea.

It's interesting that the Lord's... notice that verse that we just read, He says, (Hosea 6:6) "I desired mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Let me explain that. It looks like you're trading apples for oranges. He says He wanted mercy, He wanted 'hesed' more than sacrifice and you say wait a minute, what in the world does sacrifice have to do with 'hesed'? Simple, let's just ask ourselves a question. Whose love is the strongest? Whenever you think of strong, powerful, love, whose love do you think of? Mother's love. How much a mother loves. What does her love have to do with sacrifice? Well let's see, from the second she gets pregnant, all of her hormones start to change and she goes through unbelievable amounts of discomfort. She begins to throw up, she has all kinds of problems, then the pain as the child begins to grow and then eventually it hurts like hell when it comes out. Correct? And then it throws up, and then it makes messes, and all she has done from the time that she's been pregnant is sacrifice, that's all she's done. But lo and behold, what has that sacrifice done? What does that have done for her and her love for that child?

It's interesting that one of the words for sacrifice in Hebrew is 'korban' which means to draw nearer to, to draw closer to. That's one of the words for sacrifice in Hebrew, so that sacrifice causes one to draw closer to. Knowledge, notice He says in the second half of that parallelism, He says He wanted knowledge of God more than burnt offering. That word knowledge in Hebrew comes from two words 'yada`' and 'da'at'. They both mean understanding by experience, not by knowledge. You gain it by experience. Therefore, to know somebody became a euphemism in the Old Testament for sexual intercourse, Adam knew Eve and they

begot Cain, Adam knew Eve and she begot Seth or Abel, so that the word 'yada`' and 'da'at' became euphemisms for the close relationship of husband and wife, knowing each other and notice that's what the Lord says, "I want you to know me more than burnt offerings." So why does He love us so much? Why is His love so great? It is for that very reason because of his what? His sacrifice. It drew Him nearer to us. Think about that for a moment, so if He wants us to draw closer to Him, what would be the first law He would want to give to help us draw near unto Him would be what? The law of what? Sacrifice. Of course, of course, because when there's a price paid there's something that begins to happen and we begin to feel it.

Here is the real problem, here is what we have to consider. The question has to be asked, what happens if we don't have that 'hesed' with Him? What happens if we don't know Him? Again, Hosea comes to our rescue, here is what the Lord tells us through Hosea. He says, (Hosea 4:6) "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee. Thou shalt be no priest to me saying that thou hast forgotten the law of thy God and I so also forget thy children." Notice, the Savior when He was here speaking to the Nephites, He begged us to study Isaiah. 3 Nephi 23:1 and 3 "...great are the words of Isaiah", "for all things which he has spoken hath been and shall be even according to the words which he has spoken." You don't have to get any further than verse three into Isaiah chapter one before Isaiah reveals the real problem and guess what the real problem is? "The ox knows its owner, the ass its master's stall but Israel does not know. My people are insensible."

So when the Lord wants Israel to know what their problem is through the prophet Isaiah, the problem, the very first thing He says, "your problem is you don't know Me." And then Isaiah goes on to say in chapter 5 verse 13, "therefore my people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge and their honorable men are famished and their multitude dried up with thirst." Wow, my goodness. We leave the Old Testament under those circumstances, don't we? We leave it that way, the house of Israel and finally Judah not knowing their master. It's just interesting to watch Him. When He comes there are two things that were told, they were the first things He did, the first act of His ministry was going to the temple. What time of the year was it? It was Passover. What were all Jews doing in their homes the night before Passover? They were going through the covers with the dove feather looking for what? Leaven, which represented sin, corruption and the kids loved it and as a matter of fact they always left some in the covers so they could find some, then they would take it out in the backyard and stomp on it and get rid of it so there's no leaven in the house. So what's His first act at Passover but to go to His house and do what? Cleans all the leaven out. As He went to that outer court and took those money changers and drove them out and cleansed that outer court. So as all house of Israel were cleansing their house, He went and cleansed His house.

Then, the next thing He did is so fascinating. And it's the only thing we're told, it's the first thing He did, we're told that He went to Cana of Galilee to perform His first miracle. What did He do? He went to a what? A wedding feast! Why? There's all kinds of discussions on the six water spots. They were stone water pots. The fact that they were stone tells us something that it was ceremonial water because stone was used for ceremonial water because it was considered

impervious to putrefaction. And we know that He takes those six stone pots at a wedding feast and turns them into wine. What in the world is that?

Well, I command the podium right now so I'm going to tell you what I think it means. Who's the stone of Israel? Christ. Who's the water of life? Christ. Who at the Last Supper explained that the water represents His blood? (Or excuse me, that the wine represented His blood. Sorry. Thanks for the correction.) It's Christ. Putting that miracle together, what in the world just happened? Christ explained why He is here and why He is kicking off His ministry because He, the pure waters of life has come to the Earth to be turned into the blood of the atonement. Six water pots represented 6000 years of the history of the world, so that His children can wash their garments white in the blood of the Lamb for 6000 years so when He comes to start the 7000th year they are ready for the wedding feast, they're ready to become the bride. So his first miracle was why He came, so that the pure waters of life to be turned into the pot of the atonement so that His children, His wife, His bride to be, can wash their garments white in the blood of the Lamb and be presented at the 7000th year as His bride-to-be. As King Benjamin said in Mosiah 5:15, "so that they may be sealed as His." Because sometimes we forget that the marriage covenant isn't just a husband and wife, it's a husband and wife being sealed to Christ. And He must seal you His. We definitely forget that He's part of the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. When Jeremiah explained the new covenant, we're all familiar with what Jeremiah said, it's already been read today, he says look, I'm going to just read it to you from the prophet Jeremiah starting with verse 31, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord". (Jeremiah 31:31-32)

You see, He felt that the Sinai covenant when He was there and made it with them, He felt it was a marriage covenant and He became their husband, they became His bride. That's why from that time forward, all the time in the Old Testament, when Israel goes after other gods, notice the term that's used, they went whoring after other gods because He already is their husband, they are His wife and when they put something between Him and them, He calls that whoring. Now think about that. Any time we put something between ourselves and Him, anything, anything is referred to as going whoring after other gods.

Remember He wants 'hesed'. That's what He said He wants. He wants to be thought of. Look what He said to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, think about this, "Look to me in every thought; doubt not, fear not. Behold the wounds... in my hands and my feet." (D&C 6:36-37) He has told Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to think of him all day, every day and to focus on the atonement. That's 'hesed'. It's just another way of asking for 'hesed', He wants our thoughts, He wants our feelings, He wants us to include Him in all that we do. "Look to me in every thought..." This new covenant as Jeremiah explained it, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jeremiah 31:33) That is the new covenant. Well where is the law? It is in our hearts, notice what it now says. "And

they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jerimiah 31:34)

Well when the prophet Joseph Smith was reading this, here's what He said, He said, "why in the world would you not have to say know the Lord? Why would nobody have to teach them of the Savior?" because as the prophet Joseph Smith said, the second comforter will do that. They all know Him, they're taught by Him, everyone in the new covenant knows Him personally. No one has to say to another person let me tell you about Jesus, because that person also knows Jesus because they are also in the covenant and nobody has to teach another saying know the Lord. Yes, that's the new covenant. And then when the Lord turns around and is upset because they're treating the Book of Mormon lightly. Notice what He refers to the Book of Mormon as in Section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 84:57), He asked the Saints to repent, repent and do what? Remember the new covenant even the Book of Mormon. What did He just say? What was it He just communicated? That the Book of Mormon is designed for one thing and one thing only, to bring you before the Lord face to face. That's why He refers to it as the new covenant. Remember the Book of Mormon, the new covenant. What's the new covenant for? So nobody has to teach somebody saying know the Lord because the Book of Mormon is designed to help you come before Him face to face.

It's interesting in the new world what the Lord taught about other sheep. In the old world, He said I have other sheep which are not of this fold, them also I must bring and some thought He was talking about the Gentiles and so forth. Then He comes over to the new world and He looks at the Nephites and said, "ye are they of whom I said other sheep I have which are not of this fold." (3 Nephi 15:21) Now one of the things that the Lord never taught in the old world was, how do you become His sheep? That's a really good question. Does baptism make you His sheep? Well let's find out, let's see what did He teach the Nephites that it took to become his sheep so we're going to go 3 Nephi chapter 15, those of you who have your scriptures you will want to look at this, we're going to start with verse 20 and start reading forward of 3 Nephi chapter 15, "And verily, I say unto you again that the other tribes hath the Father separated from them; and it is because of their iniquity that they know not of them. And verily I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." And here it comes, here it comes, now pay close attention "But behold, ye have both heard my voice, and seen me; and ye are my sheep, and ye are numbered among those whom the Father hath given me." Now He continues, in chapter 16, "And verily, verily, I say unto you that I have other sheep, which are not of this land, neither of the land of Jerusalem, neither in any parts of that land round about whither I have been to minister. For they of whom I speak are they who have not as yet heard my voice; neither have I at any time manifested myself unto them. But I have received a commandment of the Father that I shall go unto them, and that they shall hear my voice, and shall be numbered among my sheep, that there may be one fold and one shepherd; therefore I go to show myself unto them." (3 Nephi 16:1-3) Very clear, takes two things to be numbered, you have to see Him and you have to hear His voice. That's what it takes to be numbered according to the Book of Mormon.

Notice that's the same group that is invited to Adam-ondi-Ahman in Section 27 verse 14, there is a catch-all of whose all invited to Adam-ondi-Ahman. It says, "and all those whom the Father hath given me out of the world."

And then the Savior made a major investment. It's interesting when He came to the Nephites, before He would teach them anything, before He said anything other than introducing Himself. We know they were 2500 people there that day and He had 2500 people come before Him and we're told He did it one at a time. He stood there apparently like this until 2500 come forward and feel the prints in his hands, side and feet. Now, if you do a little bit of math on that and take 2500 people and just give each one 10 or 15 seconds and you can be guaranteed some took more than ten or fifteen seconds, that's over ten and a half hours. Ten and a half hours and then He went on and gave the equivalent of the Sermon on the Mount and talked to them and said nothing about the experience until, until He came to the end and then He began to explain why He did that. Why did He do that and watch, this is in 3rd Nephi chapter 18 verse 25, He says, "And ye see that I have commanded that none of you should go away, but rather have commanded that ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see; even so shall ye do unto the world; and whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation."

Do we understand what He just did? The first thing He did when He came to the Nephites was He made an investment of who knows how long it actually took and He was creating an audio-visual aid of 2500 people coming forth one at a time. Notice He said, "it was not an invitation." They were not invited to come and feel and see. It was a what? It was a commandment to come forward and to feel and see and then He says it's a commandment with a caveat. He said, "be careful because you're not trying to keep that commandment you suffer yourself to be led into temptation." That's what He said. And notice because He is the Savior of the whole world, and because He paid for the sins of the whole world, who did He just say this was a commandment for? Who did He say it was for? The whole world! So by the time the Savior leaves the Nephites, there is no question but what that the second comforter is a commandment with a caution that if you're not seeking to keep that commandment that if you suffer yourself to be led into temptation.

Dear brothers and sisters, Hallelujah, what a close personal God. Here's a question I guess we all need to ask ourself? Do we have a God that wants to be closer to us, than we want to be to Him? He's asked us to look to Him in every thought and to doubt, and fear not. Is that too much of an investment to make? Or does that take up too much time and effort? He wants to be part of everything we do, all day, every day. He does. He's asked for it. He wants 'hesed'. He let us know through the prophet Hosea, through a horrible price that that prophet paid, how much He wants to be close to us. I just say, ask yourself the question, do I want to be as close to Him as He wants to be to me? And I'll leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.