



**“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (Hosea 11:1).**

## **God Loves You**

**Central Truth:** The prophet affirmed God’s love to His people.

**L436. Date:** January 1986. **Text:** Hosea 11:1-12.

**Topic:** Love: Of God; God: Attributes of.

The bumper sticker sounded a little smart, but its sentiment was true. It read, “God loves you whether you like it or not.”

Hosea teaches us the great truth of the love of God. His experiences of an unfaithful wife and illegitimate children amid continuing love provide a living object lesson.

Hosea married a lovely young lady in Israel. For a while their home was a delight. Then her interests turned to other lovers. After three children were born, she forsook her husband and family to become a public prostitute. Hosea kept loving her. He kept informed of her circumstances. When she ended up on the auction block to be sold as a slave, he bought her back to himself. He took her into his own home and restored her to a place in the family. He did all of that because of love!

That pictures God's love toward the sinner. God loves you totally and personally. Though your sins grieve God, they do not stop Him from loving you. His warnings of judgment and His promises of mercy are alike the proof of His love. You should respond to God with confident faith because of His great love for you.

Jesus is God's love gift, presented for your salvation. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (I John 4:10).

### **I. GOD LOVES YOU BEFORE YOU KNOW HIM**

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (Hosea 11:1).

For generations there had been no open vision from God as Israel waited in Egypt for the fulfillment of His purposes. Many of the people must have forgotten Him except in the religious traditions of the patriarchs. Then God came on the scene in the person of Moses to tell them He had not forgotten them. The exodus of Israel from Egypt was a telling witness of His love for her. *“Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth”* (Deuteronomy 14:2).

God means it when He says, *“I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee”* (Jeremiah 31:3). His “everlasting love” does not change with circumstances of life. He promises, *“The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee”* (Isaiah 54: 10).

You can trust Him. He loved you while you were yet in your sins and unconcerned about Him. He loved you, gave Jesus to die for you, and offers you the benefits of His love now (Romans 5:8).

## **II. GOD LOVES YOU IN SPITE OF YOUR SINS**

That is hard to believe, but it is blessedly true. At the time ancient Israel was sacrificing to the Baalim and burning incense to graven images, God loved them and sought them out. When He rose up early to teach them, and they turned their backs to Him, He loved them just the same (Jeremiah 32:33).

*“There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him”* (Romans 10:12). As He loved Israel in spite of her sins, He loves you in spite of your sins. What grace!

*“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). Jesus' ministry with publicans and sinners (outcasts from polite society) brought great criticism. He replied, *“They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”* (Matthew 9:12, 13). God calls to every wayward person, *“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding.”* Wise men respond, *“Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God”* (Jeremiah 3:22).

### III. GOD LOVES YOU AND SHOWS IT BY SUPPORTING YOU

He is pictured dealing with Ephraim as a loving father with his child. He took her by the arms and taught her to walk. He healed her though she did not know it was He (Hosea 11:3).

Such love is astounding to us. Yet, it is no surprise. God deals that way with all His covenant people. *“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms”* (Deuteronomy 33:27). He comforts us with the words, *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”* (Isaiah 41:10). *“Even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you”* (Isaiah 46:4). No wonder we read God's words, *“I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee”* (Jeremiah 31:3). You can rest confidently in a God who loves you so much. His support is the best proof you can have of His love.

### IV. GOD LOVES YOU AND CALLS YOU TO HIMSELF

Lovers want to be together. So God said, *“I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love”* (Hosea 11:4). God delights in your fellowship! He is pleased when you seek Him.

But what if you are a sinner? He calls you to himself just the same. His invitation is never based on your merit. He invites, *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”* (Isaiah 1:18).

The invitation of love is not addressed to a select few, but to the whole human race. *“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else”* (Isaiah 45:22). Have you heard the invitation and responded to it? Jesus expressed it in these words, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”* (Matthew 11:28-30). Blessed is the person who hears and responds to that call of grace.

### V. GOD LOVES YOU THOUGH DISCIPLINE COMES

Discipline will surely come upon unconfessed and unforgiven sin. It is

not a sign of God's rejection of the person but of His wrath against sin. *"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* God chastens us *"that we might be partakers of his holiness"* (Hebrews 12:6, 10). Discipline given in love is a blessing rather than a punishment.

Ancient Israel went into captivity to Assyria (722 B.C.) and ancient Judah went into captivity to Babylon (586 B.C.). God's purpose was not to destroy the nation but to purify her. It was hard, but it was helpful.

*"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby"* (Hebrews 12:11).

The devil will tell you God disciplines you because He hates you and delights to punish. The truth is that God loves you too much to permit you to go in a wrong way, so He disciplines you to profit you as proof of His love. Never doubt the love of God, whatever circumstances come your way.

## **VI. GOD LOVES YOU AND WILL NOT LET YOU GO**

God lamented over the sufferings Israel would have to endure in order to cure her of the sin of idolatry. He suffered as she would suffer, saying, *"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? . . . Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together"* (Hosea 11:8).

Sin grieves the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30). God suffers in love as we suffer. He will not let us go. Hallelujah! His love is greater than our sins.

God sent the prophets to warn of sin and call to repentance *"because he had compassion on his people"* (II Chronicles 36:15). *"Their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant. But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away"* (Psalm 78:37, 38). He is *"a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth"* (Psalm 86:15).

He loves YOU! Believe it. Rejoice in it. Trust Him with all your heart, and you will not be disappointed.

## **VII. GOD LOVES YOU AND SO TEMPERS HIS JUDGMENTS**

*"I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee"*

(Hosea 11:9).

A human being is subject to temper tantrums when his preferences are violated. He lashes out to punish, and anger often makes his punishment too severe. Little children have been crippled for life, or severely abused, because of that human fault.

God never disciplines in anger, but always in love. So those under His discipline can testify, *"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness"* (Lamentations 3:22, 23). He defers His anger (Isaiah 48:9).

We have found Him to be *"longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (II Peter 3:9). It is safe to trust a God like that!

## **VIII. GOD LOVES YOU AND WILL RESTORE YOU**

Speaking of wayward and faithless Israel, God said, *"I will place them in their houses"* (Hosea 11:11). After the people had been displaced by the sins of their backslidings, God promised to restore them through discipline and enable them to be settled in their homes again. What an illustration of love.

Remember how Hosea bought Gomer back from the slave market and took her into his home again. That is how God deals in love with an unforgiven and inexcusable sinner.

God has illustrated His restoring love repeatedly in Holy Scripture (Micah 7:18, 19; Isaiah 57:16, 18; Jeremiah 4:21-23; Joel 2:18-29). Perhaps it is seen best in Hosea who teaches the convicted sinner to say, *"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. . . . He will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight"* (Hosea 6:1,2).

You are loved! You are loved whether you are aware of it or not. You are loved whether you want to be or not. God loves you. God loves you, even when no one else does. God loves you in spite of your sins. God loves you with a totally unselfish concern which is devoted only to your best interests. You can trust yourself to God who loves you like that. Trust Him. Trust Him with all your heart. Trust Him now. Trust Him alone. *"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee"* (Psalm 31:19). *"None of them that trust in him shall be desolate"* (Psalm 34:22).

## Questions

1. What is love when applied to God's love for us?
2. How can God love us in spite of our sins?
3. How does God show His love toward us today?
4. How is God's call to sinners a sign of His love?
5. How can His discipline be a sign of His love?
6. What does Jeremiah 31:3 say about the love of God?
7. How did Jesus' earthly ministry prove that God loves us?
8. How could God love us when people do not?
9. How is His love an encouragement for you to trust Him?
10. How can you show the love of God to others this week?