

Title: The Greatest Love Story Ever

Text: Hosea 1, 2, 3

Date: February 28, 2016

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our subject is “The Greatest Love Story Ever Told.”

The gospel of God’s love for his people is the greatest love story told because God loves his people in his Son, Christ Jesus our Lord.

God’s love is nothing like the sentimental love men speak of. They speak of God loving all men. They speak of God’s love changing based on our sins. They speak of God loving someone but he is dependent upon the sinner to let him save them. They speak of God’s love ceasing when men die in unbelief. None of that is true!

God loves only in Christ. In Christ, God’s love is sovereign—he chose to save whom he would and gave them to Christ as his bride his church. In Christ, God’s love is unchangeable—God’s love never changes toward his people, though we fell into sin and death in Adam. In Christ, God’s love is redeeming love—Christ accomplished eternal redemption for each of his people, for his bride, the church. In Christ, God’s love is irresistible love—God never fails to draw each of his people to faith in Christ in lovingkindness. In Christ, God’s love is covenant love—David said, “Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.” (2Sa 23:5)

Isaiah 45:17:…Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation:…

Jeremiah 31: 3: The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

In Hosea and Gomer, we see a picture of this great love story.

Hosea 1: 2: The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea.

Hosea means “Salvation” or “Savior.” Christ’s name is “Jesus, for he shall save his people from our sins”

Hosea 1: 2: And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD.

God told him to take a bride from among all these harlots, where children were illegitimate from illegitimate marriages.

Hosea 1: 3: So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

Gomer is a picture of Christ’s bride, God’s elect. Gomer bare him 3 children then left him, divorced him, went after her lovers, probably married and remarried several times.

Hosea 2: 1: Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah. 2: Plead with your mother, plead: for she *is* not my wife, neither *am* I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; 3: Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land,

and slay her with thirst. 4: And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they *be* the children of whoredoms. 5: For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give *me* my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink. 6: Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. 7: And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find *them*: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now. 8: For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal. 9: Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness. 10: And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. 11: I will also cause all her [self-righteous, religious] mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. 12: And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These *are* my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. 13: And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD. 14: Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her....

So the LORD brought Gomer down. She sees her debt she cannot pay. She has sold herself into slavery, stripped naked on the slave block.

Hosea 3: 1: Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

God told Hosea go and love Gomer even though she is an adulteress because that is how God loves his people

Here, Israel is God's spiritual, elect people—Jew and Gentile. God's elect sinned the same as the natural sons of Israel, like every sinner in this world. But God had mercy on his elect because we were Christ's bride Christ redeemed all God's elect like Hosea redeemed his bride, see it in verse 2.

Hosea 3: 2: So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: 3 And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.

SOVEREIGN GRACIOUS LOVE

God's love is sovereign, gracious love. **"The LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD."** (Hos 1: 2)

Like God did with Hosea, in eternity God the Father sovereignly chose a people—he chose whom he would—gave us as a bride to his Son. God chose us by his free grace: Not based on anything in us;

Romans 9: 11:...the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;

1 Thessalonians 2: 13: we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation...

RIGHTEOUS, MERCIFUL, AND FAITHFUL LOVE

Christ entered covenant to save his bride from our sins. In eternity, Christ gave this pledge, his troth, saying, **“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever;[betroth means espouse, engage in marriage] yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.” (Hos 2: 19-20)**

When he said “In righteousness and judgment” it means Christ entered covenant to fulfill the law of God for his bride. We broke the marriage covenant when we sinned and went after our lovers—our false gods, our sins, our religious works—so we are an adulteress. So Christ had to die the death penalty for us, to satisfy justice, in order to make our marriage covenant with him, lawful—in righteousness and judgment.

Romans 7: 2: For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. 3: So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: [Because of her marriage vow, before God, she is still married to her first husband even though she divorced him and married another.] but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. [here is the point] 4: Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

We dare not go back to our first husband the law, because that union is now dissolved.

When Christ says he betroths us to himself in “lovingkindness and mercies” it means at the same time that he established justice for us on the cross, Christ was showing us love and mercy.

Psalm 85:10: Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

That is the righteousness of God which he sent Christ to declare--“that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Ro 3:26)

This eternal covenant could not be broken even when we sinned in Adam. Christ bride was still married to Christ and he still loved us! Do you see how different God’s love is from what false religion speaks of?

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

SUCCESSFUL, DRAWING LOVE

Due to the fact that God loves in Christ, he never fails to draw his bride to himself. God speaks to Christ who speaks to his regenerated church and he tells us what to preach to his lost bride—**“Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.** [These are Hosea’s legitimate children—called by God’s grace. He tells his church] **Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither *am* I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.” (Hos 2: 1-3)**

Our idol ideas of god—these are our lovers. He calls his people to repent, return to Christ

This next word condemns our false conversion, false converts in vain religion, so-called good works—our children born from adultery—**“And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they *be* the children of**

whoredoms. For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.” (Hos 2: 4-5)

Gomer conceived illegitimate children because they were through her new husbands, her new lovers, and not of Hosea, who is her true husband. Most religion has done this! We did this while dead in sins. We left Christ. We looked to other means, other than Christ and his gospel. We bore illegitimate children, dead fruit. But here is the good news! Though we went after our lovers in our days of adultery—before God, we were always still married to Christ.

So the Lord Jesus will bring his bride down to see our need of him—**“Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.” (Hos 2: 6-8)**

All the days of our rebellion, we did not know, Christ was providing for us. We praised ourselves. But in time, Christ takes it all away and strips us of our fig leaves—**“Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. (Hos 2: 9-10)**

1. Christ makes us ashamed of our sins because all our sin is against him. Christ even shows his bride our religion and so-called good works are vanity—**“I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. [Our free will, works religion was all vanity] And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. [Our fruit—our very best righteousness—are dried up, worthless vines because]...she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.” (Hos 2: 11-14)**

Notice, he says I will allure her and speak comfortably to her. The first way Christ said the Holy Spirit will comfort us is this, “When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin...because they believe not on me.” (Jn 17: 8-9) Before we can be saved, we have to be brought to see our need of salvation.

Titus 3:3: For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

UNCHANGABLE LOVE

God’s love in Christ Jesus is unchangeable love—**“Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.” (Hos 3: 1)**

After all the contempt we showed Christ and God our Father; after we betrayed Christ in base immoral, shame, and ingratitude; after we were a no good, rebellious harlot, yet, our Father told Christ go yet, and love her, though she is an adulteress, because God’s loves in Christ is unchangeable, everlasting love. He loves us in the righteousness of Christ. That love has never changed and will never change.

Romans 8: 39: [Nothing] shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Husbands and wives, could your love remain absolutely unchanged for your spouse if they held you in contempt, spit in your face, ran off, married another, and committed adultery? Our love is not worth talking about is it?

Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins,...

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

REDEEMING LOVE

In Christ, God's love is redeeming love. Christ successfully redeemed all his people from the slave block of sin and death and curse—**“So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:” (Hos 3: 2)**

Just imagine how ashamed Gomer was, naked, absolutely bankrupt, on the slave block, in front of all her lovers. Nobody was bidding because nobody wanted her, nobody loved her, she was despised. Oh, but Hosea did! He stepped forward and said, “Whatever the price, I will pay it!” Don't you know, Gomer's heart overflowed in love and gratitude toward her husband. That's what Christ does in us. Christ not only convinces us of sin, but also, of righteousness and judgment—his great redemption wherewith Christ bought us out of sin.

COVENANT LOVE

In Christ, God's love is everlasting covenant love—**“And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.” (Hos 3: 3)**

This is that covenant David was speaking about, the everlasting, unchanging marriage covenant of redemption and grace. It is ordered and sure in all things by Christ. It is yes and amen by Christ. Our marriage covenant—our vows—are a picture of this covenant.

Do you reckon, Gomer ever left him again! No! And Christ's cleaves to us and makes his bride cleave to him!

Jeremiah 24:7: And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

That is the greatest love story ever told!

Amen!