

“God’s Faithful Love for His People”

(Hosea)

Introduction

➤ This summer, for our “Summer Sermon Series”, we have elected to preach through all the (12) minor prophets in the Bible – one sermon for each minor prophet. You will find the minor prophets in the last section of the Old Testament (Hosea – Malachi), right after the five major prophets (Isaiah – Daniel). It is important to note that they are called the “minor” prophets not because they are less important – they are definitely part of God’s inspired and inerrant word (2Tim.3:15-17; 2Pet.1:20-21) – but simply because they are shorter in length [some are only a few chapters long, and one (Obadiah) is only one chapter].

The plan for this “Summer Sermon Series” is to preach through the minor prophets in canonical order (i.e., the order in which they appear in Scripture).

➤ So, our passage for this morning is the entire book of Hosea. This is a uniquely difficult endeavor for a few reasons. First, Hosea is one of the longest books of all the minor prophets (Zechariah and Hosea both have 14 chapters). We clearly are not going to be able to study every verse, or even every passage, in one sermon.

Second, the book of Hosea is largely written in a circular (cyclical, repetitious) not linear manner. In this writing style we find the repeated themes (cycles) of 1) sin, 2) judgment, 3) redemption. Consequently, the book of Hosea does not easily lend itself to a sermon outline.

Third, as is common in prophetic books of the Bible, poetic and figurative language runs throughout the book of Hosea. This creates some interpretive challenges.

➤ We also know very little about the prophet Hosea (all we know about Hosea comes from the book of Hosea). We know that he is the “*son of Beeri*” (1:1), but we know even less about his father. We know that he is the (human) author of this book because he is identified in the very first verse: “*The word of the Lord that came to Hosea*” (1:1). From the book of Hosea, we discover that Hosea has a rather long prophetic ministry (from c. 755-710 B.C.) – spanning the last six kings of Israel (from Zechariah to Hoshea) – making him a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah and Micah.

✓ **Illust:** “Hosea had a lengthy period of ministry, prophesying c. 755–710 B.C., during the reigns of Uzziah (790–739 B.C.), Jotham (750–731 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.) in Judah, and Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.) in Israel (1:1). His long career spanned the last six kings of Israel from Zechariah (753–752 B.C.) to Hoshea (732–722 B.C.). The overthrow of Zechariah (the last of the dynasty of Jehu) in 752 B.C. is depicted as yet future (1:4). Thus he followed Amos’ preaching in the north, and was a contemporary of Isaiah and Micah as well, both of whom prophesied in Judah. Second Kings 14–20 and 2 Chron. 26–32 record the historical period of Hosea’s ministry” (*The MacArthur ESV Study Bible*; “Introduction to Hosea”).

➤ Hosea’s name means “salvation” or “to save”, and is derived from the same word as Joshua and Jesus (which mean “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh is salvation”). He is appropriately named, for the book of Hosea – as well as Hosea’s life – is a vivid declaration of the salvation of the Lord. As a prophet for (mainly) the northern kingdom, Hosea prophesied during a time when “Israel” (sometimes called “Ephraim”) was physically prosperous but spiritually bankrupt. Israel repeatedly forsook God by their immorality and idolatry. God called Hosea to declare to Israel God judgment against sin, and God’s steadfast love for them as His chosen people.

Main theme of Hosea:

God’s redeeming love for His covenant people will not be exhausted nor extinguished by their disobedience or unfaithfulness.

“And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord” (Hosea 2:19-20).

➤ Rather than outline the book of Hosea, I want us to see that Hosea teaches us (at least) five great truths concerning God's love for His covenant people.

1. God's redeeming love is UNMERITED.

➤ The book of Hosea opens in startling fashion:

Hos 1:2 ~ "When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, 'Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.'"

➤ God used Hosea as a living (real-life) illustration of His steadfast love and faithfulness [there is no reason to view this as merely an allegory]. To show the unwavering (unconditional) nature of His sovereign and salvific love, God called Hosea to marry Gomer – an unfaithful (sexually promiscuous) woman. This graphically depicts Israel's unfaithfulness to God. For they would repeatedly rebel against God, and worship other gods (e.g., Baal), defiling and depraving themselves in their spiritual infidelity.

✓ Illust: "Hosea depicts Israel's unfaithfulness with a number of images from family and nature. Israel is like: a promiscuous wife, an indifferent mother, an illegitimate child, an ungrateful son, a stubborn heifer, a silly dove, a luxuriant vine, and grapes in the wilderness. Yet Israel's unfaithfulness and obstinacy are not enough to exhaust God's redeeming love that outstrips the human capacity to comprehend" (ESV Study Bible; "Introduction to Hosea).

➤ God called Hosea to do the unthinkable – to marry a woman whom he knew would repeatedly commit adultery – to show Israel's disloyalty and depravity, and to showcase God's sacrificial love and saving grace. For Gomer would have children from other men ("*children of whoredom*"; 1:2) after she was married to Hosea. It is likely that the first child was ("*Jezreel*"; 1:3-5) was fathered by Hosea, while the other two ("*No Mercy*" [Lo-ruhama], 1:6-7; and "*Not my people*" [Lo-ammi], 1:8-9) were fathered by another man (or other men).

To make matters worse, after separating from his wife for all her adulteries (ch.2), Hosea is told to forgive her and reunite with her as husband and wife – even to buy her from the slave market [*"fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley"* (vs.2) was either the equivalent of "thirty pieces silver" (Ex.21:32, the common price for a slave), or less than equivalent showing the deplorable condition of Gomer's promiscuous life (barley was the offering for one accused of adultery; Num.5:15)].

Hos 3:1-5 ~ "And the Lord said to me, 'Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.' ²So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. ³And I said to her, 'You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.' ⁴For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. ⁵Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days."

➤ God used Hosea and Gomer as an analogy of Himself and Israel (and, by extension, Gomer represents us as well). As we read the heart wrenching story, we are dramatically convinced that Gomer, by her infidelity, did not earn or deserve Hosea's love and faithfulness. Furthermore, Hosea is the clearly the epitome of "unconditional love." For though he had every right to divorce her (for breaking their marriage covenant), Hosea remained faithful to the covenant he made. This poignant illustration is intended to be provocative. It is to show the abhorrence of Israel's sin (immorality and idolatry) and the amazing love and faithfulness of God.

Hos 4:1-2 ~ “Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; ²there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.”

Hos 4:7-8 ~ “The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame. ⁸They feed on the sin of my people; they are greedy for their iniquity.”

Hos 5:4 ~ “Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them, and they know not the Lord.”

Hos 8:4 ~ “They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction.”

➤ By extension, Gomer’s prolonged and repeated infidelity represents all unrepentant sinners and all unbelievers. The book of Hosea graphically depicts all those who reject God, all who rebel against His will, and all who are unfaithful to His commands. In a sense, faithless Israel represents the sin of all mankind. In a greater sense, however, Israel represents the faithlessness of the people of God – those who have been called and saved by God. Rather than choosing to love the Lord above all things, and to worship Him alone, they have chosen to love creation over the Creator and to worship other gods.

Rom 3:9-12, 23 ~ “... For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.’ ... ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

Isa 59:2 ~ “but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”

James 4:4 ~ “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

➤ It ought to be very clear, as we read the book of Hosea, that Gomer did not in any way merit God’s sovereign love or saving grace. The same conclusion should be drawn as we understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No one can earn, or be deserving of, God’s love and forgiveness. No one can repay God for His salvation. A person can only be saved by God’s grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone.

Gal 2:16 ~ “yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.”

Eph 2:8-9 ~ “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

2 Tim 1:9 ~ “who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”

Titus 3:4-5 ~ “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit”

2. God’s redeeming love is an expression of His MERCY and grace.

➤ God responded to Israel’s unfaithfulness (i.e., immorality and idolatry) with grace and mercy. By simple definitions, grace is getting what we do not deserve and mercy is not getting what we do deserve. Where mercy is the forgoing of deserved punishment, grace is the receiving of undeserved

reward. Rather than give Israel what they deserved, or withhold from them that which they do not deserve, by His redeeming love God gave Israel both mercy and grace.

Hos 1:7 ~ “But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

Hos 2:1 ~ “Say to your brothers, ‘You are my people,’ and to your sisters, ‘You have received mercy.’”

Hos 1:6 ~ “She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the Lord said to him, ‘Call her name No Mercy ...’”

Hos 1:8-9 ~ “When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹And the Lord said, ‘Call his name Not My People ...’”

Hos 2:16-20, 23 ~ “And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ ¹⁷For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. ... ¹⁹And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord. ... ²³and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’; and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’”

➤ God is both gracious and merciful. Every good thing about us, and every good thing that happens to us, is an act of God’s gracious mercy or merciful grace. This is specifically true when it comes to our salvation. No one is saved – in fact, no one can be saved – by their own innate goodness or righteous, or by their own good or righteous works.

Rom 11:5-6 ~ “So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.”

Eph 2:4-5 ~ “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved”

Eph 2:8 ~ “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

2 Tim 1:9 ~ “who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”

Titus 3:5-8 ~ “[God] saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

➤ What was true for God’s covenant people in the Old Testament is true for everyone: salvation is God’s gracious and merciful gift to those who believe (i.e., those who truly receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior).

3. God’s redeeming love is anchored to His FAITHFULNESS and sovereign will.

➤ As we have seen, God’s redeeming love for His children is an “unconditional” love in that it is completely unmerited and is the expression of His mercy and grace. Additionally, and consequently, God’s redeeming love also a relentless love. It is not based on our innate goodness, or good works, but on the divine character and will of God. The Bible tells us that God is absolutely holy, perfectly faithful, and completely sovereign. God’s divine nature is the immovable rock to which our salvation is anchored (Heb.6:17-19).

God's redeeming love is not based on human faithfulness or righteousness, but on His faithfulness and righteousness. Salvation is God's idea, God's plan, and according to God's will. Therefore, God's redeeming love is bestowed upon those whom He chooses according to His sovereign will (see Rom.8:33; Col.3:12; Tit.1:1).

✓ **Illust:** "In this real-life story, God told Hosea to press on in his love for his adulterous bride, Gomer, despite her gross iniquity. Hosea's unconditional love for Gomer would beautifully portray God's unwavering love for His chosen ones, though they might be marred by great sin. ... God chose His elect not because of them, but in spite of them" (Steven J. Lawson; *Foundations of Grace: A long line of Godly Men*, Part 1; p.221).

Hos 2:16-20 ~ "And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' ¹⁷For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. ¹⁸And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. ¹⁹And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord."

Hos 11:1-5 ~ "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son [Matt.2:15]. ²The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols. ³Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. ⁴I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them. ⁵They shall not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me."

Hos 11:8-9 ~ "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. ⁹I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath."

➤ Was Israel better than other nations? Were the Israelites more moral and religious than other people? Was Israel more deserving of God's saving grace and sovereign love? The answer to all these questions is a resounding, "No." Israel was God's covenant people because God sovereignly chose them to be. God declared them to be "*the apple of His eye*" (Zech.2:8) for His own good purpose and perfect will.

The book of Hosea profoundly illustrates that which is clear all throughout God's Word.

Deut 7:6-9 ~ "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations"

Rom 8:28-30 ~ "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

Rom 9:25-26 ~ "As indeed he says in Hosea, 'Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.''" ²⁶And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

Eph 1:4-5, 9, 11 ~ “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will ... ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ... ¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will”

1 John 2:19 ~ “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”

2 Tim 1:9 ~ “who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”

4. God's redeeming love does not **NEGATE** His judgment or discipline.

➤ God's redeeming love does not negate His judgment or discipline. In fact, we know that it is out of His redeeming love that God (the Father) disciplines those who are His children (see Deut.8:5; Heb.12:6). This truth is illustrated throughout the book of Hosea.

Hos 1:3-9 ~ “So [Hosea] went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. ⁴And the Lord said to him, ‘Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.’

⁶She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the Lord said to him, ‘Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. ⁷But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.’ ⁸When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹And the Lord said, ‘Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.’”

Hos 2:1-4 ~ “Say to your brothers, ‘You are my people,’ and to your sisters, ‘You have received mercy.’ ²Plead with your mother, plead – or she is not my wife, and I am not her husband – that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; ³lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and make her like a parched and, and kill her with thirst. ⁴Upon her children also I will have no mercy, because they are children of whoredom.” (see 2:5-13)

Hos 5:13-6:1 ~ “When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, then Ephraim went to Assyria, and sent to the great king. But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound. ¹⁴For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and no one shall rescue. ¹⁵I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me. ¹‘Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.’”

➤ The names of Gomer's illegitimate children – born out of her adulterous relationships – represent God's judgment on apostate Israel, and symbolizes God's wrath on all unbelievers. God would judge Israel by sending the Assyrians to invade and defeat Israel, and to destroy all their idols (722 B.C.).

➤ Those who reject God in unbelief and unrepentance, God's judgment comes in the form of condemnation (His just and eternal wrath). For those who truly believe and repent, God's judgment comes in the form of discipline (His loving and holy correction).

Heb 12:5-11 ~ “And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶For the Lord disciplines

the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.’ ⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Rom 8:1 ~ “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Rev 3:19 ~ “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”

➤ God calls sinners to repentance, faith, and obedience. Those who truly worship God, will not remain in habitual or unrepentant sin. Those who truly have received God’s covenant (salvific) love, will not remain unfaithful to Him. Those who truly love God will not act as if they do not.

Hos 14:9 ~ “Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.”

5. God’s redeeming love is eternally SECURED in the substitutionary death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.

➤ Everyone who has ever been saved, and everyone who will ever be saved, is saved through faith in Christ (i.e., the Messiah). The Old Testament saints were saved by their faith in the Messiah who was to come, and the New Testament saints (which includes us) are saved by their faith in the Messiah who has come. This was revealed in the incarnation of God’s one and only Son; Jesus Christ.

The book of Hosea is directly referenced (quoted) several times in the New Testament (e.g., Matt.2:15; Matt.9:13; 12:7; 1Pet.2:10), and indirectly referenced (alluded to) many more times.

Hos 2:19-20 ~ “And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.”

Eph 5:25 ~ “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”

2 Cor 11:2-3 ~ “For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. ³But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

Rev 19:7 ~ “Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready”

Hos 11:1 ~ “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”

Matt 2:15 ~ “and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’”

Hos 13:4 ~ “But I am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no savior.”

John 14:6 ~ “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

Acts 4:12 ~ “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Hos 13:14 ~ “Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death? O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? Compassion is hidden from my eyes.”

1 Cor 15:55-57 ~ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Hos 14:1-4 ~ “Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. ²Take with you words and return to the Lord; say to him, ‘Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips. ³Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride on horses; and we will say no more, ‘Our God,’ to the work of our hands. In you the orphan finds mercy.” ⁴I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.”

1 Pet 2:24 ~ “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed”

2 Cor 5:21 ~ “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

➤ The Bible assures that those who have truly received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are saved, and that salvation is eternally secure in Christ by God. As Christians, we can have the unwavering assurance that what God says is true, and all His promises will come true. God – who lacks nothing – is not ignorant about those who will be saved, nor is He powerless to save (or to secure the salvation) those who are His children.

Rom 5:8 ~ “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Rom 8:31-39 ~ “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Conclusion

➤ The book of Hosea teaches us that God’s redeeming love for His covenant people will not be exhausted nor extinguished by their disobedience or unfaithfulness. “*And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord*” (Hosea 2:19-20).

The Old Testament (Hebrew) word translated “*steadfast love*” (*hesed*) is known as God’s covenant love [it is also translated “lovingkindness” (NASB), “loyal love” (NET), “faithful love” (HCSB), “goodness” (KJV), “love” (NIV)]. It is one of the richest and deepest words in all of Scripture. It denotes God’s kindness, mercy, and grace – all in one word. This “*steadfast love*” describes basis for God’s covenant with His people. It reveals that this covenant love is undying, unailing, and unwavering, for it is not based on the performance/obedience of those whom God has saved but on the very promise that God has made.

Jer 31:3 ~ “... I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness [*hesed*] to you.”

Lam 3:22-23 ~ “The steadfast love [*hesed*] of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

➤ It is because of God’s covenant love that those who His children have the eternal security of salvation. For this love is indelibly rooted in His divine character; not in our goodness, good words, faithfulness, or obedience. It is God’s commitment – His covenant – to love those He has redeemed to the uttermost and for all eternity (“*abounding in steadfast love*”).

➤ The question we must answer is one of biblical contemplation:

2 Cor 13:5 ~ “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”

Ps 139:23-24 ~ “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! ²⁴And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

➤ Those who truly love and worship God will not live lives of disobedience or false worship. They will confess and repent of their sins, depending on Christ alone to save and forgive, and they will seek to be faithful to the will and the Word of God. Those who are truly saved will respond to God’s covenant love, with a supreme love for God through His Son Jesus Christ.