

God's Surprising Love

A Love Only God Could Inspire

By Brent Aucoin

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Hosea 1:1-11

Preached On: Sunday, July 13, 2014

Faith Church

5526 State Road 26 E

Lafayette, IN 47905

Website: <http://www.faithlafayette.org/church>

Online Sermons: <http://www.sermonaudio.com/faithlafayette>

This morning some of you may be wondering who is this guy up here and you have no idea who I am. If you're relatively recent to our congregation here on the East side, I'm typically on the West side. I am Pastor Brent Aucoin and I oversee our 9:30 and 11:00 services over on the West side so a shout out to the West side. Love you guys. You guys can shout out too. Shout out to the West side and say, "Hey, Faith West." Great. Good to see you easterners today.

This morning I want to start out with a picture I'm going to show you up here of a common occurrence in the summer at least among pastors. It's a wedding. I want you to determine what is wrong with this picture. I think you can handle it. At a wedding, what is wrong with this picture? Is there anything wrong with this picture. (laughter) Is there anything shocking about this picture? There are two things: a tornado on a right and a tornado on the left. I mean, the photographer should tell them that a storm is coming. This couple also so enthralled with their kiss, they don't see what's behind them. It's a bad sign, isn't it, at a wedding? Maybe not. Maybe you can interpret this as the storm is behind us, sunny days are ahead. However you want to interpret this, that's fine. But normally we do not plan or welcome storms at weddings. We just don't You didn't plan on that at your wedding. You don't welcome it at your wedding. If storms and weddings come together, it's not because you intended that or planned that. That's a given.

Let's push this a step further this morning: what if you did welcome and plan, not a physical storm but a stormy relationship? You purposely welcomed and planned a stormy relationship. How shocking is that if you entered into a marriage knowing, planning, choosing that relationship to be like a tornado ravaging that marriage? Those of you who are married now, do you remember when you first set your eyes on that one you are married to right now? She was a princess and he was a knight in shining armor. Now you're thinking ogre and Shrek and Fiona. But you didn't go in thinking Shrek and Fiona. Those of you who are single right now and you're entertaining thoughts of marriage, let me see if I can nail it in terms of who you're planning to marry. You're dreaming of a spouse who will be unfaithful to you, right? Is that what you're dreaming of? No, you're dreaming of a spouse who will have children by other people. Of course, you're not. If you're own father and mother told you to go down to the red light district and find a spouse there, the red light district, go marry a prostitute, go marry a pimp. You'd turn

your mother and father in for child abuse right then and there. I know you would. It's shocking but is it so shocking to our senses that we can't ever imagine it because if it is, we do not know our God.

Let's unpack that for just a moment. Please turn to Hosea 1, page 640 in the front section of the Bible in the chair in front of you. Hosea 1. Our annual theme is "Loving Our Neighbors." We've tackled that from all kind of perspectives and today we start a new five week series on "Love Only God Can Inspire" from the book of Hosea. As I read Hosea, we're coming into the middle of God's plan, a redemptive plan. We're not starting in Genesis; we're not starting in Revelation; we're not starting with even Jesus Christ. We're starting somewhere in the middle and I have to give you some background information to get you up to speed. I'm going to give you the top ten factual things that you need to know in order to understand Hosea in a more indepth way.

1. The first thing is this, if you need to go more indepth, go to faithlafayette.org/hosea. I put some Bible studies there for you. We're actually doing Bible studies in our Faith groups on the West side. I'm going through this in our small groups there so there is about a series of six written Bible studies right now that you can peruse, study at your own pace as you listen to this five week sermon done by a series of pastors here over the next several weeks, five weeks to be precise.

2. In 1440 BC, a long time ago. Everyone say "long time ago." Faith West, say "long time ago." I hear you. No, I don't. In 1440 BC, God entered a covenant with his people, Israel. He committed to be their God and they were to be his people. Kind of like a marriage, husband wife, although marriage is not used right here in the imagery. He gave them a contract, the Ten Commandments. The first one was "have no other gods before me. I am your sole husband," so to speak. No other gods. "I am the one and only true God and I want to be your God."

3. About 500 years later, 930 BC, God's people wrongly split into two nations: a southern nation called Judah; a northern nation called Israel or in Hosea you'll see the term Ephraim quite a bit. A divided kingdom.

4. The first king of that northern part of that kingdom was a guy named Jeroboam who instituted a different way of coming to God than God wanted, the different way that God had ordained back at 1400 BC with the Mosaic covenant, the Ten Commandments. He made a different way. That's a bad thing. Everyone say "that's a bad thing." There's only one way.

Let me read to you what he did. 1 Kings 12, "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and lived there. Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now the kingdom will return to the house of David,' in the south. "If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord," turn back south, "and they will kill me," that's a bad thing, he's having a bad day. "So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to the people of the north, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem,'" you come and just stay around the northern

parts, “O Israel, these are your gods,” the golden calves are your gods. “He set one in Bethel,” which is the southern edge of the northern kingdom, “and the other he put in Dan,” to mark off his territory and his rival way toward God's way.

Fascinatingly enough, just recently I went to Israel. That is not King Jeroboam there, that is my son who is standing at the northern part of Dan and that is the framework of the altar, a simulation of the framework of the altar that was actually right there. What would happen is they would offer illegitimate sacrifices on that supposed altar there and then go up those steps to the high places on the right, that's where the golden calf was. Notice also in the Old Testament that you hear these words going over and over, “My people prostituted themselves under every green tree.” What do you see right there in the middle of that high place? A green tree. So that is the actual place of what I just read.

5. In his blatant disobedience to God's covenant starting with the first commandment, “Have no other gods before me,” King Jeroboam set his people's foot on a path toward destruction. Once you choose a different way other than God's, there is no other way, it will lead to a certain destination. If you choose a different way, guess what? You get the end of that way and there is no life apart from God. They chose a different way and he set his kingdom on a path toward destruction and God continually tried to help them over the next 200 years.

6. Idolatry or spiritual adultery. You say, “Brent, I don't know about that. I mean, I don't bow down to golden calves. I don't rip off my jewelry and melt them down and make a little calf that I bow down to over my fireplace. I just don't do that.” You understand what the calf represented? They were going after material prosperity and all of their false gods represented some kind of material prosperity and fertility in the land. They were worshiping the things of this world and wanted them rather than wanting God. All of us, the fundamental problem of the human heart is idolatry whether you're bowing down physically to something else or not.

7. Prophets were God's covenant enforcers. They were the equalizers, the enforcers who called God's people, the king and the priests, back to the way. Everyone say “the way.” The prophets called the people back to God's way.

8. To us, many times the prophets just seemed so bizarre. They do crazy things that I don't understand like we're going to read today and this is why I read the New Testament and give me Paul to read rather than the Old Testament, I don't want anything to do with the Old Testament. But the prophets seem bizarre to us and here's the reason why: Hosea even married a prostitute here and that was bizarre but the reason for the bizarreness is that God used his prophets not to just proclaim the word but he used his prophets to embody the word. They were living parables so when they're doing strange things, they're embodying the word of God so that the people see the message. Not only hear it but see it with their eyes as well and we're going to see that with Hosea.

9. After 200 years of idolatry, Hosea was God's final prophet given to the northern kingdom. For 200 years God endured his people going after other gods. For 200 years

and finally the final prophet that God was using to wake up their senses, "I'm going to use Hosea in a dramatic way here. Maybe they will hear this." So after 200 years, Hosea was God's final prophet given to the northern kingdom in 750 BC as the last call to repent before they were destroyed.

10. We began with the end. What? We began with the end. You told me to turn to Hosea 1 and now we're going to the end of Hosea. Don't turn there, just listen. I'm going to read Hosea 14:9 for you, "Whoever is wise, let him understand these things." Who wants to be wise? Who wants to be wise? Thank you, a few of you don't. "Whoever is wise, let him understand these things." Hosea ends with a call to everyone to listen. By using this phrase "whoever is wise," he's casting it, he's kind of saying this is not just applying to Israel, this is applying to every one of God's people throughout all times. Wisdom, learn God's ways and hear the message here.

So that's the context we need to put around Hosea. Hosea 1, are you ready? This is a fascinating story. Here we go, "The word of the LORD which came to Hosea the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," we're not going to get lost in the names, we're not doing that, "and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, 'Go, take to yourself a beautiful pure virgin.'" No, "Go take yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the LORD.' So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. And the LORD said to him, 'Name him Jezreel,' great name for your first child, "for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." The child was named Jezreel because God was going to break Israel in the valley of Jezreel so we'll have to kind of unpack that in just a moment.

"Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter." Please notice that this time it's not mentioned as Hosea's child. The problem with adultery is that you don't know whose child this is. So the next child, the illegitimate child, "Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter, And the LORD said to him, 'Name her Lo-ruhamah,'" another great name for your next child which means no compassion, "for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them. But I will have compassion on the house of Judah," the southern kingdom. That would last a little while longer.

Verse 8, "When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah," I can't even say the name, "she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said, 'Name him Lo-ammi,'" choose that one for your third child, "for you are not My people. Lo-ammi in Hebrew means not my people, "and I am not your God. Yet," yet, yet, somehow, some way, "the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, 'You are not My people,' It will be said to them, 'You are the sons of the living God.'" He gives the third child a name "not my people" and then he says "some day you're going to be my people again."

So let's unpack all of this. All of this this morning, God's surprising love, four aspects. Four aspects of God's surprising love that should stimulate God's people to return to him and serve him alone. We're going to unpack that a little bit more today. First consider this, 1: God's love graciously chooses to commit to an unfaithful people. God's love graciously chooses to commit to unfaithful people. First consider Hosea and Gomer, an adulterous marriage made in heaven? "Brent, you're blaspheming." I didn't make this marriage, God did. Let's talk about this. God's command to Hosea to marry a prostitute has clearly had an impact through the ages. Since 750 BC, this command came to Hosea and every since then the shock value has persisted. We're still talking about it today. God's seemingly scandalous instruction to Hosea generates the most frequent questions concerning Hosea. After all, I'm supposed to marry among believing families and I'm not supposed to be unequally yoked. How could God command Hosea to do this? Isn't God hypocritical for saying to go and marry a prostitute? And sometimes we Christians on our high horses and our theological scaffolding here, we attempt to save God from his seemingly scandalous instructions. We attempt to explain away the scandal. "Well, the text doesn't really mean that Gomer was initially immoral. I don't think so because God wouldn't do that. You know, Hosea and Gomer were probably both pure virgins. They followed proper courting procedures. They had 12 weeks of premarriage counseling, you know this. They had a beautiful church wedding and a honeymoon in the Bahamas and really it was only after establishing a household in the suburbs of Samaria with a white picket fence that Gomer got dissatisfied with Hosea because he left his prophetic underwear all over the house and then she decided to go after a man who would pick up his underwear." That's the whitewashed version of this story.

I'm going to say to you this though: attempting to make this marriage seem less scandalous scandalizes God's love. Folks, it's not God who needs saving in this story. For the record, technically speaking, God did not violate his own law when he commanded Hosea to marry a prostitute. God's law required the Israelites to marry among themselves, not among the idolatrous nations. Hosea was an Israelite, Gomer was an Israelite. Case closed, law met. They fulfilled the law so let's not get sidetracked by whether or not God is righteous or not. If we begin questioning whether or not God did right in this way, we start down a path of minimizing the depths of God's love. Again, is not the one who needs saving in the story.

Who does Gomer represent? Don't answer that just yet. Let's go back to the beginning of where God began to intersect with his people. Let's go back to Joshua 24:2 so back to the time of Moses, right after Moses. Joshua says this to a new generation of people, "From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods." From the beginning, Abraham and his clan and his family worshiped God, right? No, no, not at all. From the beginning, they were unfaithful people.

2. Exodus 32:1-9. When God set up his covenant with his people, when he says, "I'm your God and you're my people," at that moment in time when Moses was up on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments, "Now when the people saw that Moses

delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make us a god,' throw off all your jewelry and let's make this god thing that we will worship. "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." As we kind of think about this, at the precise moment where God first established his covenant with his people, his people were committing spiritual adultery.

Back to Hosea and Gomer for just a moment. Gomer was most likely a known immoral lady. Hosea was asked by God to go and love her, love that immoral lady. Not just love her, love her like a wife, you commit yourself to her. Hosea in this story represents God. Who does Gomer represent? Now you can answer this. Who does Gomer represent? Please tell me. All of Israel and all of us. The message that Hosea displays in his marriage to Gomer in adultery is that God himself, God himself chooses a people who were known to be unfaithful from the very beginning of the relationship. That, my friends, is the shocking element of this story, not Hosea and Gomer so much. God chose you and God chose me.

Before we apply this even more, let me say just one more thing and then we're going to apply it some more. This is the first time in Scripture where God's covenant relationship is described in marriage imagery. We're used to this in the New Testament: the church is the bride of Christ; the wedding imagery there. We're used to that but in the Old Testament God's relationship with his people was described as a covenant, a commitment and that's not a hard stretch to go from that to it's almost like a marriage. It is like a marriage so covenant terminology 1440 BC with Moses but then finally God says in Hosea, "It's really like a marriage. I've married you and you've been unfaithful to me." That's the first time in the Old Testament where this marriage imagery is used.

God is saying, "I chose you Israel to be my people and to be my bride," and the shocking thing is that God explicitly chose a known unfaithful bride. Why did he do this? Shocking. Shocking. Let me press this just one step further: God's command to Hosea to marry a prostitute is only scandalous to those who have forgotten what God has done for them. If Hosea and Gomer is scandalous to you, what do you think God has done with you? Please, dwell on that. If this is shocking to your senses right now, is this your view of yourself? "When God chose me, he really got a bargain. When God chose me, he really needed what I would do for him. When God chose me, he was really impressed with me. When God chose me, I was his gift to all of you." If in some way we have an inflated and bloated view of ourselves, then I assume that the marriage of Hosea and Gomer is rather shocking.

Folks, from birth, from birth, do we understand that we are constantly living for someone else, something else other than our Creator? That is the fundamental problem and please contrast this with the way that you picked your spouse. Contrast this: the way you picked your spouse. Those of you who are married: you picked your spouse because there was something lovable about your spouse. I know you did and I did too. God didn't do it that way. Say "God didn't do it that way." Why did he choose us? Not because his bride would be faithful. Not because his bride would be delightful like you all try to do. Not because his bride was going to give him joy. Not because his bride would never leave

him. God chose his bride because he loved them. Because that's the shocking feature about all of this.

Folks, that is why also there is no purer love than God's. No purer love than God's. He is the only lover of your soul and the only one worth loving but all of us are loving, many times, other things other than God. We chase after other lovers who will not love us like God. We'll name some of those in a little bit but we chase after other things that are not God just like the people of Israel did. But it's imperative for us to begin to understand this type of love where God chose you not because of anything within you. You need to know this love more and more and how do we know this love more and more? We find it here in the Scriptures. We're reading about it today so let me ask you: how much time have you spent knowing your God more this week in his word which is his love to you as you read about it? Are you committing yourself to be around God's people? In church, in ABFs, in small groups where the word of God is being fed to you so that you understand more and more his love, the only one worth loving in return? Are we getting there?

Secondly this, 2. God's love reluctantly orchestrates painful discipline to his persistently unfaithful people. Where am I getting that? Well, what's going on with the children in this story? The children in this story: Hosea went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim and she conceived and bore him a son, again, this says that it is Hosea's son and the Lord said, "Name him Jezreel for basically I'm going to wipe out Israel in the valley of Jezreel." Verse 6, "Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter." This one is not in any way mentioned to be Hosea's. We don't know if it is Hosea's. That's the problem, again, with adultery. "And the LORD said to him, 'Name her Lo-ruhamah,'" which means no compassion. Like an illegitimate child, like many times, unfortunately, wrongly, those children born of adultery are not considered to be one's on which you would have compassion on. Because Israel has prostituted herself and gone after other gods, her children that she bears, "Not my children. I'm not going to have compassion on those children." Finally, a third child is born, not my people, name her Lo-ammi, not my people. What's going on with all of this? God orchestrated these children to be signs. Signs of God's promise of certain judgment to his people. For 200 years, God reluctantly sent prophet after prophet after prophet to warn them, "Call them back to me. Do you not see that you're chasing after gods that cannot satisfy you? I am your husband." And they didn't listen and they didn't listen and they didn't listen.

So now God just like when you go out and have adultery, there is a potential to give birth, God brings forth a birth. It's judgment to try to get his people to come back. They won't listen to anything else. They won't listen to anything else. The first one is named Jezreel, God sows, God is about to sow destruction. God is about to sow destruction to his people at the valley. Israel would be conquered from the north, that's where the Jezreel Valley is and I stood there not more than three weeks ago. Three weeks ago I stood in the valley of Jezreel also called the valley of Armageddon, the final place where the battle of good and evil will take place. That's where Israel was also wiped out then. Jezreel, God sows. God sows destruction. He was going to discipline his people there.

The second one is this, naming Lo-ruhamah which means no compassion on an illegitimate child. The sign: Israel, you are illegitimate, you are unclean, you are sons of an adulterer, you're not sons of the living God because you're not functioning that way. No compassion. "I've got to turn you over to your lovers and let's see if they have compassion on you."

The third one was Lo-ammi, not my people. Not my people. Not my people. At the marriage ceremony where God wed his people on the Mosaic covenant in 1440 BC, he said, "I'm your God. You are," say it. "I'm your God, you are my?" People. Now he's saying, "I really haven't been your God. You've been whoring yourself after other things. You really are not my people." This are the words, it starts with a "d," this is the "d" word. God is doing what with his people? What's the "d" word? Discipline is a good word but that's not the one I was thinking off. Divorce. "I'm your husband, you're my wife. I'm your God, you're my people. I haven't been your God, you're not my people." For a time being, God had to divorce his people. Shocking but it's the only thing they understood.

And turn them over to their lovers. Please notice, God's justice demanded that he bring about all the covenant curses. This was all predicted in Deuteronomy that God was going to bring about the marriage covenant curses here up on his people and he would have to turn them over. "You love that thing? Go after it. Let's see if it satisfies you. And when you recognize that it won't satisfy you, then come back to your genuine lover." God's justice demanded that he bring about discipline there.

Now, can we just observe the lengths that God goes through embedding this entire message in a parable thing to shout out, "Turn to me. I am the only one worth loving here. I have loved you when you were unlovable. Turn back to me and I will continue to love you like that." God's message is screaming out, "I'm the only one worth living for and loving. There is no other lover who will satisfy you."

Pause for a moment. I've said a lot. What lovers are you chasing after today that God may have to turn you over to until you realize they really don't love you like God has? Let me apply that to our current situation. We're right here July 13th. In about four weeks, what happens? School. Back to school. Back to church. Or even more important: back to school, back to God, our lover. I'm all for summer and vacations, we love those things. We love the rest and refreshing but I hope this summer we haven't developed the concept or the habit of living for something else and those will continue over into the Fall. Fall is like New Year's for us because that's when everybody goes back to school and maybe you're rehearsing in your brain, "I'm already thinking about what the Fall is going to be like," and maybe I hope you're thinking this, "This Fall is going to be different. I'm going to live for something else other than what I have lived for in the past."

Who are the lovers you may have lived for in the past? Let me give you some examples. Let's call lover 1. The lover of pleasure. She's a beautiful lady. She talks sweet. She gives you some sweet things initially. She'll keep you up late on Saturday night. She'll keep you in bed on Sunday morning. But she won't be there for you when you need her during

trials, during hardships. She'll keep you from church. She'll keep you from God. But she will not ultimately love you like your God has and will. Lover .

Lover 2. Her name is fear of man. She will cause you to be seemingly nice and comfortable. You don't have to reach outside of your comfort zone. You don't have to go out there and love any people. You don't have to get into awkward situations. You can just be left alone in your little corner of the world because you love the fear of man. But when it comes time for you to have a need, when it comes time for a trial in your life, guess what? You've isolated yourself. You have isolated yourself from God's love and the love of people and you're alone. She won't love you like God loves you.

Lover 3. Possessions. Maybe this Fall you're thinking about, "Oh, I get a new job promotion and I can buy more stuff." Tell me, folks, has that new car ever loved you? Does that new car keep you warm in bed at night? Tell me that? No, no. What if God turns you over to your new car? That wouldn't be too comfortable lying in bed with your Mercedes or whatever it may be.

Lover 4. Prestige. Maybe you're living for academics. Maybe you're living for sports superstardom. Maybe you're living for promote me on the job lists. Prestige.

None of those things love like God. None of them do and they won't. God is asking us to recognize that we are Gomer. We are the Gomers of this world. We're not Hoseas. And begin to turn away from things that we're loving and turn back toward him who is the pure lover of our souls.

The surprising thing about God's love is this: 3. God's love eagerly promises to restore his persistently unfaithful people. I mentioned this to you: the third child, the living parable, not my people, but after he says the third child will be like...before he can get the words out "divorce," the very next verse he says, "But you will be my people again." Eagerly, eagerly promising restoration because he loves his people. All of the discipline is reluctant and he loves his people and wants his people to obey and serve him alone and he says, "I'm going to make a way to restore my people once again so in the exact place where I said you're not my people, the valley of Jezreel where I'm going to destroy you, is the exact place I'm going to also prosper you one day." Great. The very last phrase of this chapter is, "Great will be the day of Jezreel." God will sow again. God will plant again. It will be a planting of salvation. A planting of restoration. He eagerly promises the restoration of his people.

Who loves like this? You tell me. Who loves like this? And your answer is? No one but God. The fourth surprising characteristic, let me kind of set this one up. The most surprising aspect of God's love is not found here in the Old Testament in the story of Hosea and Gomer. Shocking in many ways but the Old Testament left by itself is like a corpse with no head. We can't stay right here in Hosea. The most surprising aspect of God's love is not found here, it is really found by considering the question: how can God marry somebody like you and me? How can he marry somebody like you and me? Unfaithful. God loves purity. God loves holiness. How can he marry somebody like you

and me? That's the question. And on what basis could he then divorce you and me and then restore us once again? How could God do that and still be a holy God?

So 4. God's surprising love: The, capital “t,” faithful person, the faithful bride, the faithful one who he delights in. On behalf of the unfaithful. Let's unpack that for just our remaining time here. Notice this. God's people, Israel, and us consistently and persistently show the need for somebody, a faithful person, that would be loyal to God. A faithful one. Otherwise, we would all be perpetually under the covenant curses that God had to pour out on Israel. “You're not my people. I'm divorcing you.” That is our natural state of being. We are alienated from God because we are not faithful. This would be the natural state if something is not done. What basis does God have to marry us and wed us, restore us and bring us into his family as sons and daughters, not illegitimate children? What basis?

Please notice this: God did delight in somebody. Who did God delight in? You say the name: Jesus. Matthew 3:16, “After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'” He didn't say that of you and me, yet. This is the one. This is the faithful bride. This is the one who was also never living for something other than God. Notice Jesus is faithfully handling idolatry. When the tempter came to him, “the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and said, Live for this. Live for the praise and the glory now. Live for all of this glory right now and worship me.” Christ said, “No, I will only worship my God alone. I will only do that.” He was the one who was faithful and fulfilled the covenant marriage instituted by Moses back in 1440 BC.

Not only that, remember Israel was divorced from God, covenant curses poured out on them? Jesus Christ took those covenant curses for us when he did not deserve it. Notice, he took them all. Matthew 27:46, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out on the cross when he was being crucified, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” “You are not my people, Jesus,” God the Father says to his Son who is bearing the penalty of sins and at that moment in time, God the Father forsakes Jesus, the Son. Galatians 3:13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. “Everyone who is hanging on the tree is cursed.” Christ took the curses for us. He was divorced from his Father so that you and I may not have to be if, if we are found in Jesus Christ by faith. Those who are in Jesus Christ by faith are viewed by God now to be his beloved because Christ is the beloved who took the curses and was the one who lived faithfully. And those of you who right now have trusted Christ as your Savior can be said to not be illegitimate children but are children, sons of the living God, because of Christ's faithfulness, not your own. And God gives you the strength and the power to begin to love like Christ has so that you are more like Hosea now than you are like Gomer if you are following Christ's footsteps.

That's why this Fall we need to be thinking right now, how are we going to be loving like Hosea this Fall? Loving the unlovable by the strength and power of Christ, the one who loved us when we were Gomers and is transforming us from being Gomers to being more

like Hoseas. I hope you will consider what needs to take place and the steps remaining between now and the Fall to thoroughly repent and make sure we are more like Hoseas than the Gomers of this world. If you're saying, "Brent, I don't know anything about what you're talking about. I don't know anything about the kind of love you're speaking about," then please come and talk to us. I want to introduce you to not Hosea, but the God who commanded Hosea to love an unfaithful people so that he could bring salvation and if you place your faith and trust in Christ, your Savior, you also will be a legitimate child of God and be embraced by his family.

Let's pray.

Father God, thank you so much for the story here. Thank you so much for your reaching out to love your people in surprising and shocking ways so that we might know you more and be your people. Help us, Father, to live in light of what we've heard. In Christ's name. Amen.