



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hosea 2:16-23

“Israel and God’s Eternal Love”

TRANSCRIPT

Hosea chapter 2 verse 16 through verse 23,

"It will come about in that day," declares the LORD,

"That you will call Me, Ishi

And will no longer call Me, Baali.

Now I think just for our purposes of reading, *Ishi* is a Hebrew word that means “my husband.” Actually the *Is* is a term that means “man,” but in certain contexts it means husband, and that’s the context here. *Baali* means of course “my Baal.” The little *i* on the end is the Hebrew first person singular suffix, and so *Ishi* is “my husband” and *Baali* is “my Baal.”

Baal is a term that meant “lord” or “master.” And in fact, the verb that is related to this noun is a verb that means “to possess or own,” and so it was a term for Lord, and it was a heathen term, and as is frequently the case in spiritual things, the influence of the heathen world was seen, and even Israelites occasionally spoke of their God as Baal, that is, Lord or Master.

But that was very offensive to God and is very offensive to God, because it is a form of, mixture of that which is truth with that which is error. And so, the LORD God did not like to be called Baali, my Baal, because it tended to identify him with the Baal. Baals were local territorial gods, and all of the little communities had their god, and he was called Baal-Sidon or Baal-Ashdod, or whatever the case may be, just like we would say "the Baal of Waxahachie" [laughter] or "the Baal of Coppel" or "Baal-Mesquite" or something like. Well, you can see why God was offended by that type of thing. They were little territorial gods who were supposed to have authority in a localized area.

The 17th verse says,

"For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth,

So that they will be mentioned by their names no more.

"In that day I will also make a covenant for them

With the beasts of the field,

The birds of the sky

And the creeping things of the ground

And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land,

And will make them lie down in safety.

"I will betroth you to Me forever;

Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice,

In lovingkindness and in compassion,

And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness.

Then you will know the LORD.

"It will come about in that day that I will respond," declares the LORD. (that word "respond" is a word that means, essentially, to answer, and so the idea lying back of it is that there was some intercession made to him, and so he is answering the implied intercession) And it will come about in that day," declares the LORD, "that I will answer.

I will respond to the heavens, and they will respond to the earth,

And the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine and to the oil,

And they will respond to Jezreel (or they will answer Jezreel).

And I will sow her for Myself in the land

I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion,

And I will say to those who were not My people,

'You are My people!'

And they will say, 'Thou art my God!'"

Perhaps you have remembered that few Sundays ago in the exposition of the first chapter of the Book of Hosea, Hosea married the woman who was a prostitute, or with a prostitute-kind of heart. And there were three children born: Jezreel, which means "God-sows" or "He sows" (God-sows is better); Lo-ruhamah which means something like "she has not obtained compassion;" and then Lo-ammi, "not my people." So you can see that there is a reflection of this in "I will sow her for myself in the land" (reference to Jezreel), "I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion" (a reference to Lo-ruhamah), "And I will say to those who are not my people" (a reference to Lo-ammi, or not my people). So, there is a reconstitution of the proper relationship to the Lord that is referred to here at the end of the chapter.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let us now bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures. We are thankful for the way in which they minister to us in our need, and we do have great needs, Lord. And we thank Thee for the way in which the Scriptures have, through the application by the Holy Spirit met our needs, showing us our sin and guilt and condemnation, revealing to us the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ has satisfied with us the claims of holiness and justice, and has rendered a propitiation to our great

Father in heaven for us. And we thank Thee that by virtue of what he has done, we have, by Thy grace, been introduced into the possession of eternal life. How blessed we are.

And Lord, so often, we fail to appreciate the really great and significant things of human life, for we still are so affected by the principle of sin. We rejoice in the representative Savior, our substitute, the representative sufferings which he has accomplished for us, and in the possession of a righteousness which he won for us in the blood that he shed. And who can measure the depths of the suffering of the Son of God when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" And that for us, Lord, we express to Thee our gratitude. We sense that it is so insufficient in response to the greatness of our debt and the greatness he has done. Forgive us for our hardness of heart and lethargy of spirit, and by Thy marvelous grace make us to be the kinds of servants that Thou wouldst have us to be. Enable us Lord to have an impact in the age in which Thou has placed us, in deliver us from living this life out and failing to put the things of our God and Savior Jesus Christ first.

We pray for this church, for its leadership, its elders, its deacons, for its members, its friends, and the visitors today and their needs. We ask, Lord, that all of these may have the sense of Thy presence with them and Thy hand of blessing upon them. Bless the outreach of the Chapel over the radio, through the tape ministry, and through the publications ministries, we pray, Lord, that Thou wilt carry on this work as a gift of love and gratitude to Thee. Bless the work of their hands, and may many respond to the gospel through these ministries.

We pray for our country. We ask Thy blessing upon the President. We especially remember those in the calendar of concern, and some who are in the hospital now, we bring them before Thee, too, and pray that Thou wilt encourage them and comfort them and supply their needs and restore them to health and strength.

And then Lord, in this meeting, as we sing and as we hear the word, may the Holy Spirit work in our hearts, in the hearts of each one of us for the needs that we particularly have, for the glorification of Thy name.

We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Message] Last night, it was about 1 o’clock and I was looking for a quotation which I had looked for before, and I had a few moments of time and so, I was searching for this quotation which I have not found yet [laughter] and was looking through some notebooks of lectures of mine and still could not find the quotation.

But while I was looking, I came across one of the strips of Mr. Schultz’ *Peanuts*, in which Schroeder, who is the object of the affection of Lucy, is playing his little grand piano, and he’s bent over his piano as he usually is, and Lucy is leaning on the other side of the grand piano with her arm on the end of it.

And she’s looking at Schroeder, who’s not looking at her – he never pays her any attention – and she says, “Do you know what love is?”

And he sits up and says, “Love. Love, noun. To be fond of, a strong affection for, attachment or devotion to a person or persons,” and then looks back at his piano and continues to play, and she looks at him.

She’s speechless for once, and then finally she turns away with a disconsolate look and says, “On paper, he’s great.” [Laughter]

Well, the subject this morning is “Israel and God’s Eternal Love.” The Bible has a great deal to say about love. It traces the ultimate blessing of the redeemed to it. The Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 5 and verse 8 says that “God commends his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Even the world has picked up on this, although with characteristic misunderstanding thinks of love with largely sexual and sentimental terms. Christians also think superficially about love. They tend to be influenced by the world in many things, and they’re influenced by the world here. I think it would probably shock you to realize

that very few Christians have ever studied what the Bible says about love. It's remarkable how often we get our doctrine from the world, about familiar things like this.

The Scriptures speak about two kinds of love, two kinds of divine love. The Scriptures speak of God's general love; that is, his goodness and his kindness toward his creatures. It is a non-redemptive kind of love. In fact, the historian of the Christian church, Luke, in the writing of the Book of Acts in chapter 14 and verse 17, speaking about God says, "And yet, he did not leave himself without witness in that he did you good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." And this morning, as we sang hymn number 19, and in the second stanza we sang, "I sing the goodness of the Lord that filled the earth with food." God is very good to his human creatures, and he manifests his goodness in many non-redemptive ways.

But the Bible also speaks of God's special love. Now the special love of God is immutable. It is his love that is sacrificial. It's the love of which the Bible speaks when, in the words of the Apostle Paul concerning Jesus Christ, he says, "He loved me and gave himself for me." Or, it's the love of God through Christ as expressed by the apostle in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 2 where the apostle writes words like these, "Walk in love as Christ also has loved us and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." In other words, it is his love for us as believers, his redemptive love.

Now this kind of love is different from the other kind of love. The other love is his general love for the world. It's non-redemptive. This is his special love. It's discriminating as well as redemptive. It's the kind of love of which we read when Paul says, "Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated."

Now, we don't understand the Bible ever unless we understand why the apostle wrote something like that. Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated. There is a special, discriminating love of God. Unfortunately, we often get our doctrine from the world and not from the Bible. In Romans chapter 8 and verse 32 the Apostle Paul writes, "He who

spared not his own son but gave him up for us all, how shall he not freely give us all things?” In other words, the Apostle argues if God gave Jesus Christ for us all, he surely will give us all things. He that spared not his son but gave him up for us all, how shall he not also freely give us all things?

I wonder if you’ve ever thought of that. I wonder if it has ever come home to you that if Christ has died for us, then Paul’s argument is, one of his great “much more” arguments, one of his *apb* [indistinct] arguments, how he shall he not with him freely give us all things? In other words, if he gave the best for us, he surely will give what is left. If he gave the greatest thing he could, he’ll give the rest. Now that has great reference to the doctrine of the atonement, God’s special love.

If that “us all” is a reference to everyone, then how can we say that everyone is not converted? Because if he gave him up for us all, universally, how shall he not give with him also freely give us all things. In other words, the faith to respond to the message. Has that ever occurred to you? Have you ever thought about that text in that light? He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also freely give us all things?

So if I were to believe in the universal redemptive work of Christ on the cross, I would find it very difficult then to understand how the apostle would write something like this, because you see, if it really true that he gave himself for us all in his death on the cross, and everyone is not saved, and of course, we know from other texts in the Bible not everyone is going to be saved, then what it reduces to is this: God loved each and everyone to have Christ to die for them, but he didn’t love them enough to give the Holy Spirit to bring them to faith in Christ.

He didn’t love them enough to give the gospel to them, because not everyone has had the privilege of hearing the gospel. As a matter of fact, he didn’t even love them enough for Jesus Christ to pray for them. For as we read in John 17, our Lord said, I don’t pray for the world. I pray for those who those who believe.

So isn't it strange that we should think about the love of God, and we as Christians have never really reckoned with the things the Scriptures say about the love of God. So, that's your assignment for this week. Go home and reflect on Romans 8:32. He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.

Now of course, I don't have any difficulty with that, because obviously if "us all" means all of us who are believers, then that's precisely what he's done. He not only gave Christ in love to die for us, he's given us the effective work of the Holy Spirit to bring us to faith in Christ. And not only that, but since he's given the most, he certainly will give the least. If he's given the greatest thing, he surely will give the rest. And frankly, I find that text one of the most comforting texts of the Bible. He's given the Lord Jesus Christ for me, and everything else is less. And how shall he not also freely give us all things.

So the gospel has come to me. The Holy Spirit is come in conviction of sin. The work of the Holy Spirit has come in faith, and by virtue of God's grace, I have been justified. Oh, I still have the sin principle dwelling within me. I'm still the same old person, except in God's sight, there's a new work that has begun. It won't be completed until I'm in the presence of the Lord, but sanctification has begun as a result of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we can look forward to the future with hope and anticipation. So, the Scriptures speak of the love of God, the special, redemptive love of God for his people.

Now, the Bible of course doesn't tell us who the people of God are. Last night, when I was searching for this quotation, I ran across another little statement. Roland Hill was told once by one preacher, that he ought not to ever preach to anyone but the elect. And he said he would be happy to do that if someone would simply put a chalk-mark on the coats of all of those who were elect, and he would be very happy to stop preaching to all of the others and preach only to the elect. But in the meantime, since we don't have any infallible chalk marks around, Mr. Hill said he would preach to everybody. And

that’s what we’re called to do, to preach to everyone. And so, we’re a sweet savor of life to some, and a sweet savor of death to others, as Paul has said.

So, the love of God. What a magnificent doctrine it is. But, it’s not the same doctrine that the world preaches.

Now Israel the nation may look forward to a special outpouring of divine love. That’s one of the things that Hosea will ring the changes on over and over again. Hosea presents Yahweh as leading Israel from her sin and backslidden condition through actually a lengthy period of divine discipline. They are scattered to the four corners of the earth in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and then ultimately through the disciplinary judgment of the dispersion and all of the curses set forth in the Book of Leviticus to a new beginning of covenant love, in the Day of the Lord.

Now, I don’t know whether you noticed this or not. I didn’t call attention to this when we were reading the Scriptures, but three times in this passage we have the expression “in that day.” In verse 16, “and it will come about in that day, declares the LORD.” Verse 18, “In that day I will make a covenant for them.” And then in verse 21, “and it will come about in that day that I will answer, declares the LORD.”

Now taking those three occurrences of “in that day,” words that undoubtedly refer to the Day of the Lord in the future when God winds up his program with reference to the Nation Israel, we’ll look at these verses now, and the first thing that I want you to notice in the 16th and 17th verses may be entitled this, “From Mistress to Marriage Bond.”

Because you see, Israel has been an apostate nation. Israel has committed spiritual harlotry. Israel has gone after other gods, just as its possible for us as individuals who know the Lord to go after the world, to go after things instead of the Lord God. That is, to commit spiritual harlotry. And so Israel is looked at in that way.

Now, the flowering of the marriage covenant is going to be set out, because he’s just said in verse 14 and 15, “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness, speak kindly to her, then I will give her her vineyards from there, and the

Valley of Achor as a door of hope, and she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the days when she came up out of Egypt.” And so the flowering of this marriage arrangement is now going to be set forth.

And God says first of all that the time is coming in that day when you will no longer call me Baali – my Baal, my lord – but you are going to call me Ishi, or my husband. Now this is the term that is found in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 23 where in one of the opening statements of the Book of Genesis, we read these words, “The man said, (this is concerning Eve) ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman (*ishba*), because she was taken out of Man (or *ish*).”

And then in chapter 3 and verse 6, in the temptation account we read, “When the woman saw the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, (I always thing about the rural preacher who said every time that Adam used to take his children by the entrance to the Garden of Eden, he would say, “Tak a good look in thar, boys, that’s whar ye ma eat us out of house and home.”) [Laughter] Now, we read here in verse 6, “And she gave also to her husband with her (her *ish*) and he ate.” So, *ish*, then, is a very interesting word. It’s the word that marks out man as the counterpart of the woman. In other words, it’s a very intimate, personal name, and it points to the unqualified giving of one’s self to the other.

And so the Lord God says, the day is coming, Israel, when you’re no longer going to call me “my Baal.” You’re going to call me, “*Ishi*, my husband,” and that conjures up all of the associations of true marital fidelity and love. And furthermore, he says in the 17th verse, “I will remove the names of the baal from her mouth so that they will be mentioned by their names no more.” So no longer will they be using those syncretistic terms that make Jehovah just a god like the gods, but they’re going to be speaking of me as *ish*, *Ishi*, my husband, and not my Baal.

For you see, God is very, very jealous of his uniqueness. He doesn’t want to be classed with any other gods. He will not allow anyone to take away his glory. That’s not

because he’s selfish. That’s not because he’s self-centered. That’s not because he’s fulfilled when we call him Yahweh. No, no. That’s because he’s the Supreme God, and for anything less than that to be acceptable to Him is for Him to deny Himself. He must defend his uniqueness, because that is truth. Truth. And so he will not allow his name, ultimately, to be Baali. Ishi; he is unique. He’s the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, from Mistress to Marriage Bond.

Now, the prophet in verse 18 through verse 20 speaks of from penal discipline to eternal union. In that day I will also make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky and the creeping things of the ground, so there is further description and detail of the covenant love. He will make a covenant. In other words, there will be a sovereign ordering of the creation for his own in gift of grace. He’s going to reestablish the covenant relationship with Israel centuries before. He’s going to fulfill those great promises of Ezekiel chapter 34, and one can sense right in this scene a likeness with the opening scenes of the Bible: the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the creeping things of the earth.

And further, God is going to abolish the bow. He’s going to abolish the sword. He’s going to abolish war. He’s going to make them to lie down in safety. So Israel the nation may look forward to the future as a time of peace and of reordering the whole of creation in the way that it was to be from the beginning.

But now something even more personal. He says, “But I will betroth you to me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice.” And then in verse 20, I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. Three times, he uses this significant word, “I will betroth you.” That expresses his eagerness, his warmth, as through the prophet he is expressing what he is going to do. Can you not just imagine the God in heaven, sitting upon his throne, the triune God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit eagerly anticipating the day when he will fulfill his magnificent promises of grace to the Nation Israel and display himself to the whole of this universe of which we are a part.

Now, I’d like for you to notice the elements of this promise. And first of all, there is the eternal marital union. That word, incidentally, translated “betroth” – the Hebrew word, *aras*, is a word that referred to the final step in a conclusion of a marriage. In other words, the betrothal was the legal consummation of the marriage, even though the individuals may not have begun to live together yet. To betroth to an individual was to be married to them legally. And when this agreement was consummated, there was also a bride price that was brought with it; something like a dowry.

Now in this case, of course, God three times says that he is going to betroth Israel to him, and he’s going to betroth Israel to him forever. Now, it’s been my privilege for many years to marry young people, and one of the opening vows, usually given below the platform here in Believers Chapel, those are betrothal vows. That’s what they are officially. And the marriage vows are usually recited later.

Well, the betrothal vow will go something like this, “John, will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy state of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health, and with God’s help, forsaking all others cleave only unto her so long as ye both shall live?” So long as ye both shall live?

Well, of course we cannot speak of an eternal union between two individuals, because we don’t live in that kind of environment yet. But a marriage is to be a permanent thing. It’s a reflection of the eternal relationship. And so when God says to Israel here, I will betroth you to me forever, it’s, “Look, I am betrothing you to me so long as we both shall live.” But he is the living God, and being the living God, he is forever and ever and ever. And we too, being in possession of eternal life, live together in the knowledge of God forever and ever and ever. And incidentally, even if we do not come to know the Lord, we still exist forever and ever and ever.

So, when we read here, and I will betroth them unto me, or you unto me forever, he’s talking about an eternal marital union. It will not be broken this time. And so he

looks forward to the future and the confirmation of the unconditional covenants of the Old Testament: the covenant made with Abraham, the covenant made with David, the covenant made with Israel and with the redeemed called the New Covenant. So, that covenant is going to be an unconditional, eternal bond between the Lord God and the Nation Israel.

But he also brings his bride price. That was customary. In fact, David was promised a certain woman if he should bring 100 foreskins of the Philistines. That was part of the bride price – a terrible kind of price, but nevertheless it illustrates the point.

What is God's price that he brings to this marriage here? Well, he expresses it. Did you notice? He said, "But I will betroth you to me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to me in faithfulness." He brings five magnificent gifts to this marriage relationship. And the first is the gift of righteousness. It is the saving help of God for Israel. I will betroth you to me in righteousness. In other words, the nation as a nation will one day know the experience of justification by faith; that's what they may look forward to.

That's what we look forward to, the consummation of that relationship already established. We are justified today if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we inherit the full accomplishment of that in the future. Paul speaks of that in Galatians chapter 5.

But now as we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that moment we are justified – we are declared righteous – we have a righteousness that is acceptable to the Lord God in heaven. Have you believed in Christ? Do you have that righteousness? Is it something that you really know deep down within, you have a standing with God that is acceptable to him?

William Cunningham used to say, "The righteousness of God is that righteousness that requires him to require." Well, that's what we have when we believe in Christ. We

have his righteousness. And Israel as a nation – that is, that generation of the future – shall enter as a generation into the possession of that righteousness. It’s one of the parts of the bride price that Yahweh brings to the consummation of the covenant.

But also justice. The proper ordering of life. No sacred rights with social wrongs any longer. Jeremiah says, “Even the stork in the sky knows her seasons, and the turtledove and the thrush observe the time of their migration, but my people do not know the ordinance of the Lord. But the time is coming when they’ll not mix together the things that do not go together. Sacred rights and social wrongs.”

Now, the prophet of the Old Testament who most emphatically speaks about things like this is the Prophet Amos. And Amos, in the fifth chapter of his prophecy has some very striking things to say about the nation. He says, “Alas you who are longing for the day of the Lord, for what purpose will the day of the Lord be to you? It will be darkness and not light.” It’s like Amos were to enter into the pulpit of some of our professing churches today, and a vast congregation of religious people, and he would say, what are you looking for today? Are you looking for heaven? I’m sorry, you will not know what heaven is like. Because instead of heaven, instead of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God and the presence of the glory of God and the glory of heaven, it’ll be darkness and midnight for you in the Lake of Fire.

And he goes on to say, “As a man flees from a lion or a bear, and bear meets him, and goes home and leans his hand against the wall, ‘I’m finally at home,’ puts his hand there, and a rattlesnake bites it” – that’s what he says, and a snake bites him – “will not the day of the Lord be darkness instead of life? Even gloom and no brightness in it?”

Then Amos, in probably the greatest expression of how God hates religiosity, he says, “I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies.” It’s as if the Lord God were to say to us, “I hate your assembling in Believers Chapel at 11 o’clock on Sunday morning. I hate your observance of baptism, and I hate your observance of

the Lord’s Supper” when we do not observe it in the spirit of the knowledge of the glory of God.

So, Hosea says he’s going to betroth Israel to him in justice – *mishpat* – with a proper ordering of life. And further, he will bring lovingkindness there. In lovingkindness – in loyal love – what covenant partners owe one another. It’s what we say in the marriage ceremony at the conclusion of the marriage vows, and we say, there, too I plight thee my troth. That is, I pledge thee my faithfulness. There’s no more significant word in my opinion than troth – what a beautiful expression of truth in the sense of faithfulness. That is, what one partner in a marriage owes the other in that covenant; the husband owing the wife his troth, the wife the husband her troth – faithfulness. And God, of course, the great exemplar of all of these virtues, and so he says, “I will betroth you to me in lovingkindness” – loyal love. Or as the Scot said, remember, in *leel* love.

And not only that, he says, in compassion. This is the warmest of all. This is mercy; the kind of compassion that one partner should have for another partner in the marriage covenant.

And finally, he says, I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. That’s the virtue most lacking when one partner deserts the marriage contract. Faithfulness. I will be true to my vows. As we say, forsaking all others, cleave only unto her so long as we both shall live. And it is God who says, Israel, I’m going to betroth you to me, and I’m going to give you these five great things as part of my gift to you in our marriage. That’s the bride price. It’s what he’s going to bring from himself, and it’s what he’s going to work in them.

And then the climactic thing. And then you will know the LORD. That’s the probably the crowning promise, because that the crowning promise of the New Covenant that Jeremiah promises, that they will know the Lord from the least to the greatest. Nothing can be greater than knowing the Lord, and having the Lord know us. Knowledge depends on likeness, and they’re going to be like him, and so they know him.

Reminds one of 1 John chapter 3 verse 1 and verse 2, where the Apostle John, speaking about the future and speaking about also the time in which the Lord is going to come in his Second Advent, he writes, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God, and we are.” Isn’t that interesting? And we are. “For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.” So the knowledge of him is similar and produces likeness to him. And if we are like him, we really come to know him as he truly is.

Now of course, when you read something like this, how can you possibly believe in a God who is frustrated in his purposes? And I dedicate the next three or four minutes to any Arminians who may be in the audience [laughter] because they belong to you. Because you see, Arminians believe that you can frustrate the purposes of God. That’s part of Arminianism, to frustrate the purposes of God.

Now that is not something they deny. Do not for one moment think that I am saying that they believe it, but they really don’t believe it. They say that they believe it. They say that we can frustrate the purposes of God. They say that Jesus Christ came to die for all and to save all, but his purpose was frustrated by human unbelief. They say that. I’m not saying that except repeating what they say. That’s what they say.

Now I want to tell you a little story. Some of you may have heard it. It’s a story about a golfer, and I appreciate it because some of you know I used to play golf rather seriously as an amateur golfer. Played in professional tournaments, too, as an amateur. I love golf stories. This is one of the finest [laughter] cause it has a theological thrust.

There’s a fellow who used to play Cypress point in California – that’s a magnificent golf course right along the Pacific Ocean, and I think it’s Cypress Point, if not, it’s the course right next to it, but anyway – I think it’s Cypress Point – that has this hole in which you – I’ve stood on the tee – and you stand on the tee and you look out to the

green. It’s a par three hole, about, as I remember about 225 yards, a pretty good shot, and the Pacific Ocean comes in just like this and so you have to shoot over a corner of the Pacific Ocean onto that green.

Now of course, it’s quite a test of nerve because many a ball has found its way into the Pacific Ocean, and I understand the first one has now found its way and rolled up on the beach in Hawaii. [Laughter] Anyway, quite a few balls have been put into that particular place.

Many years ago there a fellow who was an outstanding professional golfer named Porky Anderson. He finished second in the national open; he was that good. He played in one the January tournaments there which is held every year, and he shot, and his first shot landed on the side of the cliff that goes up to the green (incidentally, the green sits up 30 or 40 feet from the beach below). So, he put it down on the beach, and so he decided he didn’t want to go down there. He would have another ball, hoping to put it on the green, but unfortunately, then, he put four there in the water.

So the newspaper reporter reporting it the next day said, “Porky decided he had at least made a beachhead on his first one, and so decided he would play that one,” and so he went down and he played it out and shot something like an 11 or a 13 on the hole, still managed to shoot about an 83. But anyway, this fellow played every day, and every day he put a ball in the Pacific Ocean.

So one day he got up, he went over to the window, pulled the shade, looked out and it was kind of a day like this – it was overcast, it was sprinkling. He said, “Oh good, I don’t have to go out and hit a ball in the Pacific Ocean today.”

And a voice came into the room and said, “Get up. Get dressed. Today is your day!” [Laughter]

“But Lord, I’ll just put another ball into the Pacific Ocean.”

“Get up. Get dressed. Today is your day.” Enjoy this, Arminians. [Loud laughter]
So anyway, he got up and he got dressed and he got his clubs and he put them in the back of his car, and he drove out to the clubhouse.

And as he was drawing near the clubhouse, voice came again and said, “Go to the 15th hole.”

“But Lord, I’ll just put a ball in the water.”

“Go to the 15th hole. Today is your day.”

So, somewhat unbelievably, he went over to the tee and he got his clubs out and walked up onto the tee and he reached down in his bag – how often I’ve done this – he pulled out an old ball. And he was teeing up the old ball, and the voice came again and said, “Use a new ball. [Laughter] Today is your day. Use a brand new ball.”

“But Lord, its just a dollar-and-a-half put in the water.”

“Use a brand new ball.”

So very reluctantly he went over and took out one of his brand new balls. Took the paper, put the ball down on the tee. And as he got his club out, he had a brass – it was kind of a long shot there, you know, and about the time he was getting ready the voice came again and said, “Take a couple of practices swings.”

So, he said, [Johnson gestures as if swinging a golf club, making swinging noises]

And the voice came, “Use the old ball.” [Loud, sustained laughter. Johnson laughs]
I’d like to officially dedicate that to the Arminians [more laughter].

We do not have a frustrated deity. We do not have a frustratable deity. If God intends to do something, you can be very sure he will do it. He will do it. And there is no way for us to ignore that except to take a little bit of glory away from him. He is a sovereign God. That’s what we mean when we say God is sovereign. We mean he’s truly sovereign. We mean he does what he says he will do.

Now, I don’t now that it’s necessary for me to do this, and I really hadn’t intended to do it. I did not do it in the earlier service. But sometimes it’s good, perhaps, to do

something like this, and so I’d like to just refer to a text or two in which this particular truth is set out.

It’s in the 14th chapter, I believe, of the Book of Isaiah, and we read, “For the Lord of hosts has planned,” verse 27, “and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?” And then in Isaiah chapter 46, we read much the same thing. For there we read, chapter 46 and verse 10, “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’” There are many other texts that we could talk about, but it’s not necessary to do it. God is an unfrustratable God.

Now finally in the last section of Hosea chapter two, we describe these last three verses very simply. “As from homelessness to home and father.” The end of the world-wandering of the Nation Israel. All of those years and centuries of being scattered to the four corners of the earth, those years of forgetfulness of the Lord God as he says in verse 13, so that she forgot me – all of the wandering, all of the forgetfulness – those things are going to end one day in the magnificent accomplishment of the sovereign grace of God in the institution, the reconstitution of Israel as the people of God in possession of the Abrahamic promises in the land. Listen to what he says,

“And it will come about in that day,” declares the LORD, “that I will answer.
I will answer the heavens, and they will answer the earth,
And the earth will answer the grain, the new wine and the oil,
And they will answer Jezreel”

In other words, there is set in motion all the stages of the fertility cycle because remember, Baal was the fertility god, and Israel had succumbed to the idea that Baal was the source of the blessings of life, but now it is Yahweh who is responsible for them.

He’s the true nature-God, and he is going to demonstrate that fact to his people by bringing them back into the land and blessing them, both materially and spiritually.

One is reminded of our Lord Jesus on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of the storm, and the disciples come to him as he’s sleeping in the stern of the boat, and they say, “Master, Master, carest not that we perish?” And the Lord Jesus arose and rebuked the winds and the seas and immediately there was a great calm, and they were astonished. “What manner of man is this that even wind and sea obey him.” Well, he’s the sovereign God. And when he speaks, things are done. It’s that God who has promised to bless Israel.

And now, he reinterprets all of those names, and there was a reversal of the significance of the names to indicate this reconstitution of Yahweh to his people. And the chapter ends on the exchange of vows. And God says to the generation of that future day, “You are my people.” And they respond, “You are my God.”

And so I ask you now as we close, can you really say deep down within your heart, You, Yahweh, the God and Father of Jesus Christ – not God in general, not a Unitarian kind of God – but God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ who gave his Son a sacrifice for sinners; you are my God?” Is he really your God, your personal God, your intimate, personal God that you can even speak to as if he were your husband? You are my God. And forsaking all others, I cleave unto you as long as we both shall live.

If you’re here this morning and you’ve never believed unto the Lord Jesus Christ, we invite you, acknowledging your own sin to come to the only unfrustratable deity who accomplishes his purposes and will save any sinner who comes to him desiring forgiveness of sins. May God give you grace to come to him. Come to Christ. Don’t leave this auditorium with this issue unsettled. Come to him. Say deep down in your heart, Lord God, Father of Jesus Christ, you are my God. I as a sinner need you. I receive as a free gift the forgiveness of sins, for by grace am I saved through faith and that

not of myself; it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. Come to Christ.

Let’s stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent words from Hosea the Prophet, Thy prophet who has spoken to his people, who largely rejected him, but whose message thrills us today though the world may reject the message. We give Thee thanks for these magnificent promises, because we recognize that we, too, have been brought into a marriage relationship with Thee by Thy grace, inheriting the Abrahamic, Davidic, New Covenant blessings by virtue of the blood that was shed for sinners on Calvary’s cross.

If there should be someone, Lord in this audience who has not yet come, O Lord give them no rest nor peace until they rest in Christ.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.