



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

John Bunyan Conference, Lecture 11

TRANSCRIPT

[Introduction of Dr. Johnson] This is Dr. Johnson's third year with us, and we hope very much it is not his last. He has said he will come back with us next year, we're glad for that. As far as I'm concerned, he's part of the woodwork here, part of the permanent fixture of a Bunyan Conference. He's part of it as long as the Lord allows it we're glad to have him. We appreciate his ministry, Dr. Johnson.

[Johnson Lecture] I learn some things every time I come here, and this time I've particularly learned how to handle my glasses when I'm preaching. [Laughter] Art likes this particular method, and Don likes a similar kind of method as well, so I'm going back to Dallas and I'll practice it [Laughter] so I get more used to it, but you know you often have people listening to preachers and those are the things they remember, [Laughter] "Yeah, I remember that message. I remember the way he did his eyes, or the way he did this or that and." I want to acknowledge, that's not the main thing I got from those great messages. [Laughter]

When I was in theological seminary we had Dr. Ironside come every year and give a course, and it was called Special Bible Lectures, three other men did, they came for two weeks. In earlier years of the seminary they came for a month. And they spoke Tuesday through Friday.

I may have mentioned this before, Tuesday through Friday twice each day, so they did eight lectures a week on a particular book of the Bible, and they were called Special Bible Lectures. And the classes met at 10:00 in the morning when the chapel met, the regular chapel, and then in the afternoon at 2:00, which was the first class hour of the afternoon. And Dr. Ironside, at the beginning of almost all of his two week or monthly sessions, would remind the students in the afternoon at the 2:00 hour on Tuesday that he realized that they had just eaten and therefore they would be inclined to nod [Laughter] and he wanted them to know that he would speak more quietly in the afternoon at 2:00. And looking out over this audience and seeing the age of the audience I want you to know that I'll follow the same methodology, [Laughter] and if you want to drift off, well that's alright it won't be apostolic, but nevertheless it will be acceptable [Laughter] for 2:00 in the afternoon meeting, just after you have eaten a very large lunch.

For this session I'm turning to the Book of Hosea in the Old Testament. If you have a bit of a time finding it, I'll wait a few moments. Hosea chapter 11, the prophet writes, and incidentally I'm using a New King James Version, so you'll perhaps see some differences between the version that you're using and mine,

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. As they called them, so they went from them; they sacrificed to the Baals, and burned incense to carved images. “I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them. “He shall not return to the land of Egypt;”

Now there is a different rendering for this, and if you have an NIV you probably noticed that. That text reads, although I don't have it before me and did not have it this morning, I think it reads, “He shall return to the land of Egypt.” And the question is the proper rendering of the

word “low,” low, low. Those are the two words. They sound exactly alike; it’s not surprising that there would be confusion over them. What one of them means “not” the other means “to him.” Now my version here has what I’ve just read to you. Verse 5 then again,

“He shall not return to the land of Egypt; (or he shall return to the land of Egypt, it does not effect the total sense) but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to repent. And the sword shall slash in his cities, devour his districts, and consume them, because of their own counsels. My people are bent on backsliding from Me. (the Hebrew term here is a very interesting term because the term that is found here is *teluim* and it means “are hung on” that verb means to hang, so they are hung on backsliding from me, like you hang your hat on the hat rack, they’re hung on backsliding) Though they call to the Most High, none at all exalt Him. (now the ones who are calling of course are the prophets who over and over are calling Israel to repentance) Though they call them to the Most High, none at all exalt him. “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? (most of us read those words for the first time and wonder what is the meaning of Admah and Zeboiim? These are two of the cities that were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah. So, they’re very fittingly put here) How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? (that is destroy you utterly) How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within me; my sympathy is stirred. I will not execute the fierceness of my anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. (you want to know why, well he tells you why) For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst; and I will not come with terror. “They shall walk after the Lord. He will roar like a lion. When he roars, then His sons shall come trembling from the west; they shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses,” says the Lord. “Ephraim has encircled me with lies,

and the house of Israel with deceit; but Judah still walks with God, even the Holy One who is faithful.”

Derek Kidner has written a very helpful little book on Hosea and in it in comments he says this, “It is the people you love who can hurt you the most. One can almost trace the degree of potential pain along a scale from the rebuff which you hardly notice from a stranger, to the rather upsetting clash you may have with a friend, right on to the stinging hurt of a jilting, the ache of a parent child estrangement or most wounding of all, the betrayal of a marriage.” Well if it’s true there is a kind of growth in pain that you may experience from these various arrangements. Then there’s no question but the greatest pain of all is the pain that Kidner talking about and it’s the pain that is reflected in Hosea chapter 11 and the person who is pained is not men but God. It’s a remarkable picture of the nature of the God and Father of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. You’d never think of him as being hurt like the member of a marriage who is hurt by the unfaithfulness of the other, or the parent hurt by a child’s action, or these other arrangements, and ways by which people are related to one another that he’s been speaking about.

But I think you can see from this that when Hosea presents this as the relationship between a God and Father who has redeemed us, the great God of the universe, the Father in the eternal Trinity and you recognize that Hosea is trying to speak about the hurt in the soul of our heavenly Father, you can understand why he’s called the prophet of unconditional love. And you can understand something of the intense hurt that he speaks of when those who are the objects of the great covenantal promises are the ones who are departing from him. When we think of the relationships between husbands and wife, and we think of adultery as the greatest kind of sin, it doesn’t, it doesn’t even compare with the feeling that Hosea speaks about here in chapter 11 in this marvelous little book.

Three times however, he says that his wrath is not the final word for his people Israel, his prodigal son. Now I think if you read just one chapter in the Bible and it was this chapter, and then you were asked the question, “Do you think that Israel has a future?” that you would have to say, “Yes, I believe she must have a future” because this is God with whom Israel has had relations in the past, the recipient of those great covenantal promises of the Old Testament, first to Abraham then to David and on inclusive of the Gentiles as well who are the son’s of Abraham as well, as Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 3. So, I look for a future for Israel. And if I read only this chapter I think I would have good grounds for saying that. God does not go back on his unconditional, covenantal promises.

Now the dominant note of verses 1 through 10, as you’ve read it through, is disobedience and judgment. In verse 11 through verse 14, it’s the divine conquering love of this father who has entered into this relationship with Israel. Now I think you can also see that we can say about this love of God that it is unfrustratable and it’s ultimately irresistible. What a magnificent God to have. What a magnificent relationship to have. Knowing my heart, as well as knowing your heart a bit, but knowing my heart, to know that this relationship is an unfrustratable relationship and irresistible covalently sure. I look forward to the future with anticipation. And I want you to know that in the experiences of life, when the fundamental experience of your life itself comes to you, one of the most helpful things in the world is to realize the one with whom you’re dealing and how he has described himself in the word of God. One of my old Hebrew professors who was himself a Hebrew Christian said, “He loves sovereignly with boundless love and he loves because he loves.” That’s his nature toward us.

Well we have a husband and wife relationship set forth in chapters 1 and 2, the father son relationship here, underscoring the cost of the love of God, the anguish of the love of God, the ardor of the love of God, and surprisingly, the vulnerability of the love of God. You’d never

think of God as a vulnerable person, but this chapter suggests that very fact. We can speak of him as vulnerable in the sense that he has set forth here.

So, my topic this afternoon is “Eternal Love, Anguishing and Yet Vanquishing.” Now I want to speak a few moments about verses 1 through 4, and then we’ll look at verses 5 through 7, and then verses 8 through 11. These are the three divisions; God’s love, Israel’s rebellion, God’s discipline, and then God’s conquering, distinguishing grace. It’s a marvelous picture of love under different tender figures. One figure, the Father’s love, verses 1 through 4, the Father, then the nurse, then the husband, and also the herdsman. All of these are figures that the Lord uses of himself; the Father, the nurse, the husband, and the herdsman, so marvelous picture under these various things.

Hosea says, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” Now we know that the apostles themselves read this chapter because Matthew cites this text in the Book of Matthew. It’s been a good bit of discussion over it, but he cites it in a typical way of our Lord being called out of Egypt and he says in a typical sense, it was a fulfillment of this particular passage, “When Israel was a child, I love him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” Notice the identification of my son with of course our Lord, God’s ultimate Son. The Father, the nurse, the husband, the herdsman, all of these figures he uses here to express his love and Israel’s rebellion.

So, what we can think about when we think about this right at the moment is that divine love is more, not less, ardent than human love. It’s more vulnerable, not less vulnerable than human love. That’s important for us to remember. And I want to tell you when you lie on the hospital bed and your life is in balance, it’s particularly useful to know that fact, [laughter] that the God whom we know is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is one in whose hands your destiny lies. [Amen from audience] I found that very comforting that you can just lie there and say, “Well Lord if this is the time in which you wish to take my life, that’s fine, [Amen from

audience] that’s fine, [Amen from audience].” And I know from my background and from my life previous to my conversion, I would not have had any kind of relationship like that, lying upon a hospital bed. So even if I were a Christian, if I just knew that truth that would be greatly helpful, but to know that that’s a reality, that’s important.

Now, Mr. Spurgeon has some interesting words on how God excites men to action and he describes how God excites us to action as over against the way the worldlings insight their friends to action. The worldling is usually flogged to duty by fear of punishment and there are many ways in which you might illustrate that fact. Mr. Spurgeon illustrates it by the difference between the Greeks and the Persians in the Persian wars. The Persians came because they were flogged into the military and flogged to action, and flogged in their journeys toward Greece, but the Greeks had an entirely different attitude. They loved their country; they wanted to fight for it, they wanted to retain it. They went into action with a desire to free themselves. The Persians came not because they wanted to but because they had to because someone was beating their backs if they didn’t go. Well that’s all the difference in the world in one sense, between the person who serves the Lord legally and those who serve it because they love him who has loved them, all the difference in the world. That’s why, one of the many reasons, why I could never be a legalist. You can never serve the Lord from a legalistic background. It just doesn’t work, but one that is backed up by the infinite love of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, ah, how motivating that is in the experiences of life.

So, he says, notice these marvelous little figures, “When Israel was a child, I loved him” “out of Egypt I called my Son.” They sacrificed to the Baals, burned incense to the carved images,” but then “I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms.” So the Lord present himself as a nurse, he presents himself through the prophet Hosea here as the one who heals, he presents himself as a husband, and you can just imagine how the figure works out with the eternal God, “I taught Ephraim to walk.”

I still remember when my son was born. And I still remember doing exactly what the Lord is speaking a here. I can remember at, well he walked at about age thirteen months. I was quite proud of that because I had some friends whose son didn't walk that early. [Laughter] But I can remember urging him on. And I can remember taking him by his two hands and walking along with him. You all have done that. You know that. These are the figures that Hosea uses with reference to the Lord God. He's the one who takes our hands at age one, or two or whatever, and enables us to walk.

Then he says, “As” verse 2, “As they” they is a reference to the prophets, “As they called them so they went from them. They sacrificed to Baals, burned incense to carved images, but I was the one who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms,” but they didn't know when he did his healing work, Jehovah Raphah, they didn't know that he was the one who healed them, so ignorant. “I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck.” He was not only a father, he was also a herdsman. And so you can picture the heifer who's come in after a day's labor and now the things are taken off of the animal in order that the animal, tired, thirsty, might be fed. Jehovah is the one who does this. “I was to them as those who take the yoke off of their neck, I stooped and I fed them.”

Now what did he feed them? Well now we've had some allegorical preaching recently, [Laughter] so I want to suggest, this incidentally was suggested to me by C. H. Spurgeon, so we put him in that category. Around seminary allegorical preaching is not so great, because one of the things that we learn from hermeneutics is that allegory is not really found very often in the word of God. And it's particularly not found in the prophetic sections of the word of God. And any kind of prophetic view of truth that is settled upon allegory is not going to be listened to very carefully in theological seminaries. But, here we'll indulge a bit, because it is figurative language. It's not allegory here, but it is figurative language and so when he says, “I was to them as those who take the yoke from off their neck with the intent of feeding them, I drew them with

gentle cords, with bands of love” and I’d just like to suggest that the things that might be fed to the saints of God that are the meat that would be fed to them are the meat of the great doctrines of the word of God, and we can think of, well I think preeminently in a message like this I think of the meat of the great doctrine of substitution, because substitution is the doctrine that makes it absolutely necessary that a man believe in a definite form of atonement. We’ll see more about that a little later on, but you cannot believe that Jesus Christ actually died for you in your place and then believe that you face judgment later on. Substitution is the most important of the Calvinistic doctrines, penal substitution, penal substitution by satisfaction. You want to state that doctrine correctly; it’s penal substitution by propitiation. That’s the analysis of the atonement that means that those for whom Christ died are those who are sure to have eternal life. Arminians cannot say that. They cannot say that Christ died for everybody and believe in substitution at the same time.

You know when I was in theological seminary, that’s thirty years, and I’ve taught five, six, seven more after that, but thirty years in my own seminary, one of the things that the students frequently did would be to come to me and say, “Well Dr. Johnson I’ve been listening to what you’ve been saying about the doctrine of the atonement and what you’re saying about the doctrine of the atonement does make sense logically, but then there are many texts in the word of God over which there’s a lot of discussion and furthermore, that might seem contrary to the idea of a definite atonement, that Christ died for a definite people and that definite people only.” And they would then generally say, “I see the logic of it, but the texts puzzle me.” Well now of course there are texts that puzzle, but after a little while of hearing that answer given to me I decided that I needed to have a response. So I thought about it a little bit.

I remember thinking about it and saying, “Now why am I going to reply to this?” because they were trying to be honest, they admitted that my logic was good, but the texts, now of course there are thirty or forty texts in the New Testament that we could talk about and say that’s a

problem for a doctrine of definite atonement, but I hit upon this and it almost invariably stopped the men, because they believed in a substitutionary atonement. So I'd usually just ask them this, “Do you believe in a substitutionary atonement?” “Oh yes, I believe in a substitutionary atonement.” “Well then you really believe that Jesus Christ substituted for you on Calvary's cross and bore the punishment that you were to have?” “Yes I do.” “And so you accept substitution, you accept the idea of a substitutionary atonement by virtue of the satisfaction that Christ has rendered in the shedding of blood on Calvary's cross?” Said, “Yes.” I said, “How many texts teach substitution in the New Testament?” Well he knew the New Testament taught many texts, so I just simply said to him, “All of those texts are my texts. They're not your texts; they're my texts, because if it's true that he did suffer for me there's no way in which heaven can bring judgment against me, [Amen from audience] therefore every one of them is my text. So your pure, your few little texts of problem here and a problem there, they're nothing in comparison with the many that I have that Christ died a substitutionary death for me.” And I learned what it is the joy you have to win arguments. [Laughter] I won lots of arguments as a result of that.

The other day I was reading an account of atonement in one of the dictionaries written by an Arminian. And he was engaged in giving the Arminian position. And he came to substitution and he made an interesting statement. He said, “We Arminians cannot say that Christ died as a substitute for all, for if so then there could be no judgment brought against them.” He was even using my principle argument. [Laughter] So, it's so wonderful to know that we have a Lord and savior Jesus Christ who was our substitute, stood for us, stood for Samuel Lewis Johnson Jr. and bore my judgment. Heaven cannot judge me longer.

Now, those four verses speak of God's love and Israel's rebellion, and we'll go on now to God's discipline in verse 5 through 7. It's true immutable love cannot cast off the nation, but it can discipline the nation. And while it is also true that the immutable love of the Father for me

cannot bring ultimate judgment against me, the immutable loving Father can discipline me. And you know in the Scriptures the passages of the word of God that speak about the discipline that may be yours if your path strays from the will of God for you. So here is the discipline. Verse 5 through verse 7,

“He shall not return to the land of Egypt; (or he shall return we’re not sure about the rendering of that) but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to repent. And the sword shall slash in his cities, devour his districts, consume them, because of their own counsels. My people are bent on backsliding from me. And though the prophets call them to the Most High, (though they call them to the Most High) none at all exalt Him.”

So, the condition of Israel at the time that this great prophet of unconditional love is giving his prophecy is seen in that expression, “They are bent on turning from me.” They are hung up on turning from me, teluim, hung up, on turning from me. That’s their position. They’re just like you take a coat and go over and hang it on a coat rack and it’s there until you change, that’s the picture of them. They’re hung up on turning from the Lord God. That of course, means the nation must be disciplined. And that you know is what has followed and what Hosea, from his perspective, he also knows it is followed. But it’s pitiful irony. Yahweh’s people are to return to the land from which they were brought, in which they were brought up, and from which they had been removed, but they’re going to have to go back.

But now we want to go to the final section in which we have God’s conquering distinguishing grace, verse 8 through verse 11. Now there’s a remarkable change in this, and I suggest that when you’re reading the prophets that you pay attention to the words. I’m so glad that when I was first converted I was taught to pay attention to the text of Scripture. The man who was the instrument in my conversion, Donald Grey Barnhouse, was a preacher of the word

of God, and paid attention to the text and when he came to our Presbyterian church, in Birmingham, Alabama, he preached the word of God. In fact, to tell you the truth, it was about the first time I remember in the morning sessions of that church, which had been a conservative church in the past, that I remember the preaching of the word of God itself.

So, I appreciate what it means to look at the text itself, now will you notice verse 8, “How can I give you up,” isn’t that interesting? The word I’m speaking about is the word “you” through the prophet Hosea, he’s speaking directly to them, the elect son, or the elect sons are addressed face to face as if the prodigal stood before the Father. And what follows is after he has said that they are hung up on departing from him, what we read now is, “How can I give you up? You, you, the one I’ve been talking to, how can I give you up, when you are the one,” as he’s just said, “are hung up on backsliding from me?” Well what I would say, just looking at that text is that there’s a conflict between the Father and the sons, for he says they are hung up on sin, in departure from him, but now he says, “How can I give you up?” There’s a conflict there, and it’s a conflict in the heart of God.

This is what Hosea is suggesting by his words, and he doesn’t just suggest it by the “you” which makes clear that the Lord God is speaking to them, Hosea, calling them Hosea’s people calling them “you” but notice what he says in the following lines, “How can I give you up Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim?” Four times he expresses this conflict that he has, as if in his own mind he has a question about it, “How can I do this, how can I do this? Everything indicates that that’s what I should do, but how can I do it?” And then further to explain his own heart he says, “My heart churns within me;” that’s the reading of my text, “My heart churns within me; my sympathy is stirred.” So the elect son is addressed face to face as if the prodigal stood before the Father, and what he has just said in these words I’ve just read is, “You deserve judgment, but now here is a radical refusal to execute punishment.”

Now that stands out in the Old Testament because do you remember the passage in Deuteronomy? In Deuteronomy chapter 21, verse 18 through 21. Now I know most of you don't, that's unfair. I didn't remember that the first time I looked at it in prophet Hosea either I'm sure. But what that passage does it talks about the relationship with a father to disobedient children. May as well just read it, we have all the rest of the afternoon for this message.

[Laughter] Deuteronomy chapter 21, we do because you can fall asleep if you want to [Laughter] remember? Deuteronomy 21, verse 18 through verse 21 we read,

“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear. (and I can believe that last clause particularly) all Israel shall hear and fear.”

This is what you do with a disobedient son. But now here we have disobedient sons in Hosea chapter 11 and the Father who gave the law is saying, “How can I give you up? How can I hand you over? How can I make you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim?” In other words, to put it in theological terms it's the conflict between justice and mercy. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other, but you don't see that right here. You will see it, but you don't see it here.

So this is a kind of passionate intervention that interrupts the words of moral cause. And the political effect of them, because what follows is, “I will not.” And again, notice the emphasis, “I will not execute the fierceness of my anger. I will not again destroy Ephraim.” Why? “For I

am a law breaker.” No, of course not, “For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst; and I will not come with terror.” This is what someone has called the *mysterium tremendum*, that is, the awful mystery, the awful mystery of a God of grace who is also a God of judgment and how they fit together.

So, on one hand the answer to the question, “How can I give you up?” justice knows only one answer, “Give them up, give them up, give them up Yahweh, give them up. They’re worthless sons. They’re disobedient children. Give them up.” That’s the message of justice. In the Father’s case he’s troubled by his own law it seems, “My heart is turned within me” verse 8, “My heart churns within me. My heart is turned within me.” And then also the last part, “My sympathy is stirred.” But it’s much stronger than that in the Hebrew text. We’d render it something like, “All my compassions are kindled.” This is the actual experience of our Lord God in heaven, “My heart churns within me and all my compassions are kindled.” That Hebrew word *comer* means to grow on, tender, to be, or grow hot. It’s found in some rather interesting places in meanings like that.

You remember the story in 1 Kings, chapter 3, you might turn back there, it’s chapter 3. Everybody remembers this story, but I want you to notice a word or two. 1 Kings chapter 3, verse 16 through verse 28. I’m going to read these verses because it’s familiar to you but it’s good to read it again,

“Now two women who were harlots came to King Solomon, and stood before him. (at this time the Israelites didn’t know how wise their king was, but they learn) And one woman said, “O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she was in the house. Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that the woman also gave birth. And we were together; no one was in the house, except the two of us in the house. And this woman’s son died in the night, because she lay on him. So she arose in the middle of the night and took my

son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne.” Then the other woman said, “No! But the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son.” And the first woman said, “No! But the dead one is your son,” (and so on) Thus they spoke before the king. (you can see them going back and forth, having a quite a heated, very heated argument) And the king said, “The one says, ‘This is my son, who lives, and your son is the dead one’; and the other says, ‘No! But your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.’” (I imagine in Solomon’s mind he’s going, “How am I going to decide this? How am I going to decide this?” So he’s repeating the argument. [Laughter] Professors often do that you know, you ask a tough question and he’ll say, he’ll repeat the question a couple of times while he’s thinking, “How am I going to answer this?” [Laughter] So the king then comes to his conclusion and says) “Bring me a sword.” So they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, “Divide the living child in two, (what a fair solution, divide the living child in two) and give half to the one, and half to the other.” Then the woman whose son was living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion (that’s comer, that’s the word Hosea uses) yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, “O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!” But the other said, “Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him.” So the king answered and said, “Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she is his mother.”

The one who yearned with compassion, well that’s exactly what we have here, “My heart yearns with compassion.” Not only that, I think it’s interesting that that’s what Hosea, by the Holy Spirit in divine inspiration, says is in the heart of God. But do you remember when Joseph is in Egypt and he longs so much to see his father? And he wants to see not only his father, he wants to see his brother, the only other brother he has. And so finally, there comes the time when

he's in the presence of his brother and the same kind of statement is made there. I know I can find this in a hurry, but it's, you know the story in Genesis, when he came and saw his brother. The statement is made that the same thing occurred. The same word is used; his heart was hot, as he thought about his brother. It's the word that's found in Lamentations chapter 5 and verse 10, “Our skin is hot as an oven because of the fever of famine.” And in Genesis chapter 43 and verse 30 these are the words that bear on the point. Genesis 43 and verse 30, when Benjamin,

“He lifted his eyes (Joseph did) and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, “Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?” And he said, “God be gracious to you, my son.” “Now his heart yearned (my text says, is hot we could say, is hot with compassion) so Joseph made haste, looked for a place to weep, (it meant that much to him) longed for a place to weep. And he went into the chamber and wept there.”

That's not a bad thing to do right here. Not a bad thing at all, for we read here, “How can I, how can I, how can I? My heart churns within me. My compassions are all stirred and poured together.” And then suddenly, in verse 9, without further explanation, “I will not, I will not, for I am God and not man.” There is something in God that enable him, in the face of divine justice, which he must exercise, to also manifest and carry out divine compassion and save the object of his love. In other words, put it in another way, his love even overcomes any obstacles of divine justice, amazing, just amazing. So, Hosea says, “I will not” speaking for God, “I will not, I will not, for I am God and not man.” There is something in God that enables him to do that. Deeply stirred over the issued, nevertheless the love of God wins.

Now, someone has said that Jesus Christ, it was John Watson of Ian Maclaren fame of the Bonnie Brier Bush, said, “God is the chief sufferer in the universe.” That's true if we're talking about God the Son and if it's voluntary, not forced. He is the deep, the greatest sufferer.

“I will not, I will not, I will not” three times, the agony of decision is reached; wrath will not have the final word about Israel’s destiny. Why? Because he lowers his standard, is he love and not light? No, he says, “For I am God and not man.” He loves, he’s angry like a man, but as God, as God the Holy One, no lowering whatsoever of the standard, but the Holy One is of such a being that he can be compassionate and remain holy. That’s the point; he’s different, he’s different. So, he’s “the Holy One in your midst and will not come with terror.”

I think it’s very interesting that Hosea’s name means “salvation” essentially, “the Lord saves.” And if I’m looking for any place in the Scriptures that might help to explain how the Holy One can here be merciful and holy at the same time in such a situation as this, then my mind goes back to the great text in Romans 3:21-26, this is how. I’ll just read it for you, because most of you will recognize it immediately as I start reading it, if you don’t already,

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by his blood, through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul explains, in the doctrinal fashion that he frequently does, affirming that the cross is in the heart of God, affirming that by pointing to Yahweh Jesus, the true Hosea, he gives us the answer that it is God in his holy righteousness and his divine eternal love can be both righteous and loving toward the same person.

So, we, if we are believers in the marvelous grace of God, there is nothing that does, that presents more fruitfully and pointedly the fact that our great God is a sovereign God who is able to carry out in a just way his saving work. The 8th verse is the greatest verse in the Book of Hosea, chapter 11 verse 8. Others call that the remorse of God, but I call this a better verse; it's the best. Hosea's name meaning salvation, calling to mind all that God is able to do and so those of us who've come to know what he can do and has done, we are inclined to think about a verse like, “Calvary, oh Calvary, mercies vast unfathomed sea, love, eternal love to me, Savior we adore Thee.” You notice the next verse says, “They shall walk after the Lord, mercy for silly trembling, a silly trembling dove” for that's what God calls Israel elsewhere, “a silly trembling dove.” The mercy and the blessing go to him, not to Baal.

Well what I think about this chapter is that it's the triumph of unconditional love, royal, immutable, the kind of love that the Scriptures speak. And further, that it leads on to Romans chapter 11 and verse 1. There in that great text, in the midst of the section of Romans in which the apostle deals with the question of the promises made to the nation Israel in the Old Testament and are they still valid? And this is what he says, “I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! [Amen from audience] For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.” Foreknew, foreknowledge like we think of it? No, foreknowledge like the Bible speaks of it, fore love, foreknowledge biblically, fore love, the eternal love, the personal side of the eternal choice of the Lord God.

So, we who today read the text of holy Scripture like this, we know that these marvelous truths reflect the fact that we stand on his special, eternal, immutable, redemptive love. And furthermore, it's the kind of love that means that everything that is set forth in Scripture for the one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be ours.

Yesterday, or the day, I guess it was Sunday, in Fred’s church I spoke on Romans 8:32. This is one of my favorite texts because it absolutely “no” answer whatsoever to it from my Arminian friends, “He who spared not his own Son.” The picture is Abraham offering up Isaac, cause that’s the term, the precise Greek term *phedomai*, that is used in Romans 8 is found in the Old Testament translation of Genesis 22, “He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” In other words, if he has done that he’ll do everything that’s necessary. What are the things that are necessary? Well, repentance, “How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” faith, repentance in faith. What that text says is that everything necessary for salvation is sure, must be given, if as he says, “He spared not his own Son, but delivered him” our Lord Jesus Christ “up for us all. How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” So for those who have been delivered up, well that just seals the whole account, “He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.”

I took the church there, I went through the preceding context in fifteen or twenty places that we have “us” and also “all” which clearly refers to believers, “He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” So we cannot say Christ died for all if we cannot say the “all” for whom he died have everything else. We know they don’t, the Scriptures say that they don’t receive that. Those elect ones do. So it’s obvious he’s talking about us all in the sense of we believers, all.

So, people kind of, people tend to think of Calvinism as something hard, harsh. I think it’s just the opposite. [Amen from audience] I think Thomas Erskine had put his finger on the point. He was a Scottish theologian. He spoke of Calvinism as a sheep in wolf’s clothing [Laughter] and Arminianism as a wolf in sheep’s clothing, [Laughter] that’s true. So, do we limit the atonement? Of course we do. As a matter of fact, everyone limits the atonement who’s reading the Bible at all. Arminians do, Calvinists do. Arminians limit the efficacy of the

atonement, its effectiveness. The Calvinists limit its extent. One limits its depth, the other its breadth, one its power, the other its purpose. Ultimately of course, God is the one who does that. And therefore, we believe that he died for his people, “He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” he’s the one who has accomplished our salvation.

Hosea writes about it. He doesn’t understand as much as most of you in this auditorium who understand what we’ve been talking about, but he had the essence of it, when he heard the words from the Lord God, “For I am God and not man.” And he’s able to those things that mean, that ultimately bring forth for us this marvelous, definite, saving atonement that we know about.

Isn’t it interesting how in the Old Testament you can find Romans? It’s there, its’ the same truth. I didn’t tell you, but John said he’d like for me to preach on the finding Christ in the Old Testament or preaching Christ from the Old Testament. Well, anyone can do that if they read the Bible. That’s what the apostles did.

So, anyway, I thank you for your patience in listening to me. I forgot to look at where the clock was when I started, so I’m sure it’s only about thirty-five minutes that I’ve been going. [Laughter] I probably have wrecked their whole schedule for this afternoon. I apologize for that. May I lead in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful and thankful for this marvelous message of salvation that the prophets understood, at least partially, and that the apostles knew even more intimately...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]