

Sermon: Loved from Start to Finish

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Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Hey, faith family, if you got your Bible, turn to Hosea chapter 11. Hosea chapter 11 is where our passage today is going to be. And really appreciate a lot of the feedback that we've received in this series.

We've been now in the book of Hosea for the entire summer. And been able to hear from a lot of you in terms of just really challenging your view of God's love.

Heard from some of you that have said this has really impacted your life. For me, it's been one of the most exciting books to teach. And so I've really enjoyed this series and really thankful for the feedback that you've shared along the way.

And continue to do that. Email us. We would love to hear from you. But today's passage is going to be found in Hosea chapter 11. We've slowed down just a little bit.

[1 : 21] I think there's more things here that I feel like we need to look at before we continue moving forward in the book. And so we're going to look at Hosea chapter 11 today. I'm only going to read two verses for our scripture reading.

Hosea chapter 11 verse 8. Hosea chapter 11 verse 8 says this. How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel?

How can I make you like Adma? How can I treat you like Zeboim? My heart recoils within me. My compassion grows warm and tender.

I will not execute my burning anger. I will not destroy Ephraim. For I am God and not a man.

The Holy One in your midst. And I will not come in wrath. This is God's word. Let's pray together.

[2 : 19] Father, thank you for the book of Hosea. Thank you for the opportunity these last several weeks to be able to study through this book. And it has certainly impacted me and the way I think about your love, your boundless love for us.

And so I pray today as we look again to your word that you would take us deeper into understanding what you say about you. And not what we want to believe or what others say we must believe.

Let us look to your word to understand you today. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. All the dates that we have given in the past are correct.

They were given to us by God. And we have a 100% track record. Those were the words of a woman by the name of Marian Keech.

She was a leader of a religious sect who predicted that the world was going to be destroyed. On December 21st, 1954.

[3 : 29] Now in addition to that prediction, she also predicted that a flying saucer was coming to pick her and her faithful group of followers up at midnight on December the 20th.

And would take them off to safety. What she did not predict was that there was a researcher.

A man by the name of Leon Festinger. who had infiltrated her group. He was a psychologist who studied cognitive dissonance.

Which is the study of people's behavior when their beliefs are contradicted by a new reality or a set of facts.

And what it does is it studies how do they adjust. Do they adapt to the new reality? Do they resist the new reality?

[4 : 32] Do they reject the facts? And so that's what cognitive dissonance is. It's when your beliefs encounter something else, what's your behavior?

What is your response? Now, Festinger studied this sect, this religious group, because he wanted to see how they would behave, how they would respond, when what they believed, namely the world was going to be destroyed, didn't come true.

Now, Festinger predicted that when their prophecy failed, that what would happen would be that those that were kind of on the fringe, they would adjust to the new reality by leaving the group entirely.

But he said, very interestingly, those that are really, really committed, those that are on the core of this group, those that had, for instance, sold homes and quit their jobs and given away their money, they would continue to believe, regardless of the facts, that the world was not destroyed.

Interestingly enough, on midnight, December the 20th, 1954, guess what? No spaceship showed up at Keech's house.

[5 : 58] They started to get a little nervous. By 2 a.m., there was still no spaceship, and people started to get really worried. By 4.45 a.m., all of a sudden, Keech got a brand new vision from God.

Do you know what God told her? God told her that because of her faith and the faith of her closest followers, that He had decided He would not destroy the world.

The mood of that close group, those that were really on the inside, changed from one of despair to exhilaration and excitement, and they kept on with their doomsday predictions and seeking to convert people into their group.

Cognitive dissonance. The inability to let go of your beliefs even when you have discovered a new reality.

Now, Faith Family, you think about that with me. How many of you have ever known someone that refused to accept reality even in face of the facts?

[7 : 19] It happens all the time. A parent, for instance, that refuses to believe their child is misbehaved, even though she makes all the kids in the neighborhood cry and her eyes glow in the dark.

Or you have people that refuse to admit that it's pronounced pecan, when that's obviously how it's properly pronounced. Or you have somebody that refuses to go to the doctor because they do not want to accept the reality that there is anything wrong with their health.

You have a person, for instance, that may be so in love, they think their spouse is perfect, even though they have lots of faults. Here's my point, Faith Family, and it's so important that we get this.

All of us, I think in one area of life or another, have a cognitive dissonance. That is, we have a disconnect between what we want to be true and what is actually true.

And one of those areas that I think we all struggle with is our view of God. I don't mean that you have somebody that believes there's no God, even though there's all kinds of evidence for the existence of God.

- [8 : 38] That's not who I'm talking about. I'm talking about people that actually say they believe in God, but they, listen, they have convinced themselves that God must be a certain way to the point that they reject the biblical evidence.
- Are you hearing me, Faith Family? They so want to hold on to what they believe about God, even though it contradicts what God says about God.
- I do this, and I need to run through this quickly, but I just jotted down some things of God according to Wes. This is God according to Wes, okay?
- Things like, my God won't let anything bad happen to my kids because physical protection is His ultimate priority. That's what I believe about my God.
- Or how about this one? My God is personally invested in the outcome of every Kentucky Wildcat basketball game. He has a personal interest in the game, and He weeps when I weep.
- [9 : 42] Which is occasionally, right? My God won't send people to hell that I don't agree should be there. My God, for instance, will only save the people that I think deserve to be saved.
- How about this, Faith Family? Listen, if something bad happens in my life, God must be punishing me. I've struggled with that for many, many years.
- Or what about this? This is true of me. My guess is it's true for you. God loves me conditionally.
- God loves me conditionally. You see, here's the reality. It's true for me, and it's true for so many of you that are watching today. Deep down, even though we have heard sermon after sermon, and sung song after song, and had Bible study after Bible study on God's love, we have memorized John 3.16 since we were children, we still hold on to the belief that God's love has to have boundaries.
- It has to have limits. There must be conditions. After all, that's fair. That's right. That's deserved. And that's the experience of every other kind of love we have ever known in life.
- [11 : 03] And so, functionally, it is hard for us to let go of the belief that God's love must, in some way, have conditions. It's got to have boundaries.
- It must have limits. And then we come across something like the book of Hosea. A picture of God, a view of God's love that rattles our cage.
- It's information that we begin to see in a totally different way. And what we start experiencing, faith family, is what God says about Himself, rather than what we want to believe about Him.
- And we see pictured in this book, God's people who break their vows that they made at Mount Sinai, and they run repeatedly after other lovers, and they have no affection for their spiritual husband, and they don't recognize His authority, and they even call Him Baal, and they run to Assyria instead of Him in suffering.
- And all the while, they pretend to be the perfect spouse by offering up sacrifices and burnt offerings. And what is God's response? What is God's response in the book of Hosea?
- [12 : 19] It's this. I'm going to restore you, chapter 3, verse 2. I'm going to romance you, chapter 2, verse 14. I'm going to renew my covenant with you, chapter 2, verse 18.
- I'm going to revive you, chapter 6, verse 2. I'm going to raise you up, chapter 6, verse 2. I will redeem you, chapter 7, verse 13. Faith family, look at me.
- If that response doesn't reshape everything you believe about God's love, I do not know what will. It's like we have this sense of, I know God is loving.
- I've sung songs about that. I've heard sermons about that. I've memorized John 3, verse 16. But then you see it in a book like Hosea, and it challenges everything you believe about love.

Because most of us default to a love that has to be based on conditions. And yet, as the great Randy Travis used to sing, God's love is a love without end.

[13 : 25] Amen. It is a boundless, incomprehensible, unconditional love. And here in Hosea 11, we see it in a comprehensive way once again.

The boundless, unbelievable love of God that He has for His people. Very simple outline today.

It's very simple to kind of understand the layout of chapter 11. And let's work through this quickly. Number one, the first point that we see in Hosea 11 is this. God has loved His people in the past.

God has loved His people in the past. Now, we at Faith Family want everything to be based on the text. So let me show you where I get that in the text.

Look at Hosea 11, verse 1. When Israel was a child, I loved him. And out of Egypt I called my son.

[14 : 30] The more they were called, the more they went away. And they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burnt offerings to idols. Yet, it was I that taught Ephraim to walk.

I took them up by their arms. They did not know that I healed them. I led them with the cords of kindness, with the bands of love. I became to them as one who eases the yoke of their jaws and bent down to them and fed them.

Now, right here, Faith Family, what are those verses talking about? It's actually very simple. It's the Exodus. Notice the language again. It's Israel was a child.

That is the beginning. I loved them, past tense. Out of Egypt, that is the Exodus. I fed them, that's the wilderness.

In other words, the language in those first four verses are clearly referring to God's rescuing of the people of Israel from their 400 year bondage in Egypt.

[15 : 37] And you remember the story, right? Just a quick recap here. God sends the plagues, the water to blood and frogs and flies and hail and locusts and ending with the death of the firstborn.

Israel takes the sacrificial lamb, puts the blood on the doorpost so that the angel of the Lord will pass over. Pharaoh agrees to let them go and then he changes his mind and sends the world's greatest army at the time after Israel to bring them back.

Israel ends up stuck between the sea and this army that is getting closer and closer. And God opens the sea that they can cross on dry land. And when the Egyptians try to follow, God closes down the walls of water.

And according to Exodus 14, every single one of the Egyptian army individuals died that day. And then God enters into a covenant with them and He'll teach them how to walk.

And He will feed them over the next several hundred years. And why did God love them in the past? Why did God do this for them in the Exodus?

[16 : 47] Look at verse 1 again. When Israel was a child, I loved him. God did this because He loves His people.

And how did they respond to this amazing, redeeming, rescuing love? Verse 2 again. The more they were called, the more they went away.

And they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burnt offerings and to idols. In other words, their response then, much like their response right now when the book of Hosea is written, was disobedience.

They disobeyed and did not respond rightly to the love they had been shown. But now stop and think about that. For those of you watching this and you're a parent, is that not consistent with your parental experience?

You birthed a child in love and you adored them and you showed their pictures to everybody and you helped them learn to walk and you fed them and you asked them to obey.

[17 : 54] And their response looked like this. Every parent has seen that expression, right?

That acting out, that response of disobedience. And yet God never, this is so incredible, it's unbelievable. God never stopped parenting them.

He never stopped loving them. Look at verse 4 again. I led them with the cords of kindness, with the bands of love. I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws and I bent down and fed them.

What a beautiful picture of God loving His rebellious people in the past. That even though they disobeyed, He continued to love them. And why was that the case?

Notice this on the screen. God's love is not based on our behavior. God's love is based on His character. God's love is not based on our behavior.

[18 : 55] It's based on His character. As I've said before in previous weeks, it's not about whether or not we are good or bad, but that we are His. The fact that we belong to Him is why God loves us.

Because God is love. And faith family, this is our story, is it not? This is our story that God has loved us in the past.

I mean, Jesus took the Passover and what did He say? This is my body. That is, the exodus in the Old Testament was just getting you ready for the greater exodus in the New Testament.

The one that would not be led by Moses, the one that would be led by Jesus. The greater one than Moses. And what would He do?

He would be our sacrificial Lamb. And here's the good news of the Gospel. God would drown your sin forever in the Red Sea of Calvary.

[20 : 01] That's the good news of the Gospel. God has loved us in the past. And I'm not just talking about your conversion. Listen, faith family. I'm talking about that thing you did in high school.

I'm talking about the mess you made of your marriage. I'm talking about the years that you played games in church. I'm talking about the college years you don't remember. The opportunities that you have squandered.

The money that you have mishandled. All the time that your life went off the rail. Every time your life went off the rail. God was loving you back on track.

God loved His people in the past. It's exactly what we see in the text. But notice the second thing we see here in Hosea chapter 11.

And that is God will love His people in the future. God will love His people in the future. And the question you should be asking is, okay, where is that in the text?

[21 : 06] Where does the Scripture say that? Let's look at it. Verse 10. Hosea 11 verse 10. They shall go after the Lord. For He will roar like a lion.

When He roars, His children shall come trembling from the west. They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt and like doves from the land of Assyria.

And I will return them to their homes, declares the Lord. Did you notice the tense of the language in those verses?

It's future tense. In verses 1 through 4, it's past tense. It's talking about the Exodus event. But now this is a different event. They shall come.

I will return them to their homes. In other words, listen to this, faith family. Whereas the previous verses are focusing on God's love from the Exodus.

[22 : 06] These verses, the ones we just read, are focusing on God's promise after the exile. Are you with me? 1 through 4 is God's love for them in the Exodus.

Verses 10 and 11 is God's love for them after the exile. They will be taken captive by Assyria, but they will return. And God promises to love them in that day.

And that happened in 539 B.C. And think about this. This was incredible to me as I thought about this passage. God, knowing full well the kind of wife He is marrying, knowing full well the kind of kid He is raising, He still makes an unconditional promise to love them in the future.

He knows full well what He is getting. He knows exactly what they are going to be when all of this happens. And yet He still promises He will return them.

And He will love them. And I thought about, you know, when you get married to somebody in real life, you have no idea who they are going to turn out to be. There is no way you can predict 10 years, 15 years down the road, what they are going to be.

[23 : 21] They may turn out to be bridezilla for all you know. Because they may change. But what is amazing about God's love is He knew exactly who you would be.

When you entered into a relationship with Him, He knew everything about you in the future. And He chose to love you anyways.

Are you feeling this, Faith Family? God has loved His people in the past. Look at the Exodus. And God is going to love His people in the future. Look at the post-exile. And this is our story as well.

I could preach, not just an entire sermon, a whole series of sermons on all the promises that God has given us for our future.

I won't preach that sermon, but I'll just give you a little snapshot from what the Scripture teaches. For instance, God is going to finish the work He began in you, according to Philippians 1.6.

[24 : 22] Jesus has prepared a place where we will dwell with Him forever, John 14. We will be given an inheritance that will not perish, spoil, or fade, 1 Peter 1.

The Bible says that a glory that makes this present suffering seem light and momentary will be ours one day.

2 Corinthians 4. There will be no more death and tears are going to be wiped away forever. Revelation 21. There's going to be a restored creation and restored life and new bodies.

Romans 8. And we are going to dwell in the presence of the Lord forever. And Romans 8 says that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, there is nothing that can separate you from that love, that future love that is yours in Christ Jesus.

That's amazing love. What's the text telling us? God, you want to see His comprehensive love? God has loved His people in the past.

[25 : 36] The Exodus. For us, our Exodus was Calvary. And God will love us in the future. Post-exile for Israel in Hosea 11.

And for us, when we see Him face to face, the glory, the resurrection day. God has loved His people in the past. He will love His people in the future. And now there's another aspect of God's love.

Third and finally is this. God loves His people in the present. God loves His people in the present.

And you say, again, where do you get this from the text? Well, let's look at it. Look at verse 5. Hosea 11. Verse 5. They shall not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to Me.

The sword shall rage against their cities, consume the bars of their gates, and devour them because of their own counsels. My people are bent on turning away from Me, and though they call out to the Most High, He shall not raise them up at all.

[26 : 46] How can I give up on you, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Adma?

How can I treat you like Zeboim? My heart recoils within me. My compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my burning anger.

I will not again destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not a man. For the Holy One is in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

Some amazing verses. What are they talking about? You see, this chapter is quite simple. God's love in the past, the exodus. God's love in the future, post-exile.

But these verses are speaking about Israel's current situation. You see, even though, this is what these verses are saying, even though you are wayward right now, and even though there is judgment or discipline coming upon you right now, Assyria, that this is going to happen, here's what's not going to happen.

[28 : 02] I'm not giving up on you. I'm not handing you over. I'm not destroying you like the cities in Sodom and Gomorrah, which were mentioned there, Admi and Zeboim.

Those were cities in Sodom and Gomorrah that were destroyed. I'm not going to destroy you like that, because I'm your God. And you're mine.

I ought to get rid of you. You should be destroyed. If this was based on conditions, if this was based on your behavior, if this was based on how good of a bride you were, but I can't do it.

I can't let you go. I can't give up on you. I can't throw you away. I can't destroy you.

See, he's talking about their present situation. Now, faith family, zone in here. Zone in here. Why would I save this for last?

[29 : 09] Here's what I mean. Isn't the normal order of things past, present, future, wouldn't that have been the right way to go about this sermon? Oh, in fact, even in the flow of the text of chapter 11, doesn't it go past Exodus and then the present, and then it gets to the post-exile later on in the chapter.

So why would I make a pastoral decision to make the present the last point? And here's why. I think you'll resonate with this.

Listen to me, faith family. The reason why I save it for last is because in my experience, of 25 years of pastoring, and my personal experience as a Christian, listen, God's love for me in the present moment is the hardest for me to believe.

I don't have a problem believing that God loved me in the past. I don't struggle with that. And I don't struggle with the fact that God will love me in the future. I don't struggle with that at all.

My struggle, much like I'm sure your struggle is, how can God, in my constant, continual, just like Israel, current inability to get my act together, still love me now?

[30 : 29] That's my struggle. Is it yours? Am I saved? No doubt in my mind. Am I going to heaven? Absolutely.

It's right now, this kind of love that God has for me in the moment of my mess, like Israel, that is what seems so impossible to believe.

Let me illustrate it this way. You all know the story of the prodigal son, right? I mean, most of you, I'm sure, even if you've not been in church very long or been a Christian for very long, you've probably heard the story of the prodigal son.

Just the quick recap, you have the younger son takes his father's inheritance or his portion. He's shameful, disgraceful, basically says, I wish you would die by asking for the inheritance.

He goes away and spends it all, returns home, home. Father throws a party celebrating that his son has been returned home.

[31 : 35] And we're rarely shocked or even disturbed because we've heard this story so many times. Unlike the older brother who is very shocked and quite a bit disturbed that such a response would be given by the father.

You know the story. Okay. Well, imagine this. So we're another prodigal son. We embrace it. We've got no problem with the way the father responds. But imagine that Disney, imagine that Disney purchased the rights to the story of the prodigal son and like they do with about every other thing, they make a sequel.

And they make the prodigal son 2. And the prodigal son 2 picks up after the big party, the coming home party, the return party, the night before.

So the morning the next day, this is where the prodigal 2 picks up and it goes like this. The younger son wakes up the next day and he breaks into his father's safe. He steals his father's antique car and he drives to the airport where he buys a one-way ticket to Amsterdam and he stays in a hostel in the red-light district of Amsterdam.

After a few days of unrestrained debauchery, he comes to his senses and he decides, I've got to fly home. And so, he gets to the long driveway of his father's house and as he's walking up the driveway, how do you expect the father to respond in the sequel?

[32 : 59] This is the second time it's happened. There's one thing that had happened before, but now it's in the sequel and it's happened again. Look, if you were thinking rationally, if you were thinking normally, we would say, yeah, you know, the father's probably excited to see his son, but probably not as excited as he was the first time.

He may greet him, but there's no kiss. He might be welcomed, but there will not be another party. Are you kidding me? And that's how the story should end.

And then Disney, because they're obsessed with trilogies, decides to make a prodigal son three. And in prodigal son three, what happens is a few months now, the younger son has been back home working for the father's business.

The younger son decides to make some bad deals with some of his father's long-time clients, and he takes in all the benefits personally, putting his father's business to the point of bankruptcy.

The younger son takes the money, runs off. This time he crosses the border where he gets involved in the Mexican drug cartels. After filling his body with drugs, he realizes enough's enough, and I'm going to return to my father whose business has barely survived.

[34 : 18] What do you think is going to happen when he walks up to the driveway this time? Well, now you're thinking logically. Now you're thinking rationally. You're going to, yeah, well, the father may still love him, but there's not going to be a greeting.

There certainly won't be a welcome. At the very best, the son's going to have to work his way back into the family again, right? I mean, everything in us, be honest, says that's how it should be.

That's what the, wouldn't that be your response? If not worse? I mean, come on. That's how the father has to respond by the time you get to the prodigal son three.

And yet that's why tears flow down your cheek when the prodigal son three closes once again, just like with prodigal son two, and just like in the original, with the father running down the driveway, screaming for the third time to his son, my boy is home.

My boy is home. He once was lost, but now he's found. Faith family, that's the boundless love of God for you in the present.

[35 : 38] Right now, in the middle of your mess, in the middle of your wayward heart, whether it's an irreligious waywardness or a religious waywardness, God can't wait right now to have you home.

And there are some of you watching, I know there are some of you watching, and you're like, nah, this is not true. There's no way. God, I mean, you can't just, I'm not justifying all that.

I'm just saying, the father has a boundless love for you right in, just like Israel, the middle of your present situation.

And if you don't believe that's true, you have not read much of the Old Testament, you are certainly not paying attention to the book of Hosea, and my friend, I'm afraid that you're not very aware of the waywardness of your own present heart.

What God is saying in Hosea 11, and I think it's just incredible, He's saying to a people, in the middle of their sin, in the middle of their waywardness, God is saying, I'm not giving up on you.

[36 : 52] I'm not going to hand you over. I will not destroy you. In the present reality of your rebellion. Why? Look at verse 8.

This is so exciting. Look at verse 8 again. How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Adma? How can I treat you like Zeboim? Now watch this. My heart recoils within me.

My compassion grows warm and tender. Now, you notice the phrase, my heart recoils within me. Did you see that?

There's actually a word picture here that's being used here in the text, and it's this. The reason why God will not overthrow you is because, this is beautiful, His heart has already been overthrown by compassion for you.

The reason why God will not overthrow you is because His heart has already been overthrown by compassion for you.

[38 : 03] And every parent, to a lesser degree, has experienced this, have you not? When everything in you is like, I ought to disown you. I ought to get rid of you.

This ought to be it. I ought to lock the door. I ought to be done. And then you just look at them and you say, but I can't do it. I can't let you go.

I can't disown you. I can't throw you to the streets. Why? Because you're mine. Because I love you. Even if you're a wayward wife, rebellious son, this is what God is saying to His people.

His love for you is not based on conditions. It's based on His character. Which means, look at me, faith family, the only way God stops loving you is He stops being God.

God. It's the only way He stops loving you. If you're His, if you belong to Him, if you are in relationship with God, the person of Jesus Christ, you are loved right now.

[39 : 07] And He can't help but love you because you're His. Are y'all like anywhere on the other side of this camera as excited as I am about this truth? Do you see it?

God's boundless love is on full display in Hosea chapter 11. I loved my people in the past. Look at the Exodus. I will love my people in the future.

They're going to return post-exile. And even more insane is the fact that right now, in the midst of their rebellion, I can't give up on them.

Everything says, wipe them out and bring down the wrath. But my wrath will not come. That's the boundless love of God.

So as I close today, maybe you're watching this and you're just still having a hard time with all this. Maybe you're just like, you're struggling with, listen, the cognitive dissonance of God's love.

[40 : 07] That is, you've been so programmed, and me too, we've been so programmed to believe in conditional love that when you come across truth, data, Scripture that teaches the opposite, it teaches that God's love has no conditions at all, it's almost hard to believe it's true.

That's the cognitive dissonance. I'm so used to conditional love that when I come in contact with unconditional love, it's hard to really believe it's true.

Like Mary and Keech and her followers, you simply can't accept that your view of God is wrong. You simply can't accept that your view of God is wrong.

So let me ask you this. Let me ask you this. Zone in here. Listen. What's the absolute greatest failure, worst sin, most egregious thing you've ever done in your life?

What is it? What is it? By the way, did you know that I know what it is? I know. I know what the most egregious sin in my life is.

[41 : 27] I know what the most egregious sin in your life is. No matter who you are or where you're at watching this, I know the worst thing you've ever done. You want to know what it is?

It's this. Your sin nailed Jesus to the cross. That's the worst thing you've ever done in your life.

Your sin nailed Him to the cross. Here's the Scripture that proves it. 1 Peter 2.24 1 Peter 2.24 says this. He bore our sins in His body on the tree.

He bore our sins in His body on the tree. As the old hymn puts it, it was our sin that held Him there.

You with me? The worst thing you've ever done, the most egregious thing you've ever done, is that your sin is the reason Jesus died on the cross. Now here's the follow-up question and I close with this.

[42 : 31] Did that greatest sin, the most egregious thing you've ever done, which is nailing Jesus with the cross, did that sin keep God from loving you?

And the answer is, no! In fact, God took your sin of nailing Jesus to the cross and He used it as the very means whereby He could be in relationship with you and love you forever.

In other words, God so loves you, even in your sin, that He turned the tables of your sin on you by taking your greatest failure and using it to love you forever.

By taking your greatest failure and loving you forever. And He did it so that you would know, you would know with certainty and believe with all confidence that God has loved you in the past.

And He will love you in the future. And my dear faith family, He loves you right now.

[43 : 51] Let's pray. God, thank you for this great passage of Scripture, Hosea 11, that we were able to study today. Every week, I just think, can your love get more amazing?

And just every week, it's just like, how can it be? How can it be? I mean, to really think of Israel's sin and all her rebellion and waywardness and time and time again and yet to see this beautiful picture of you loving them in the past and promising to love them in the future and then right there in the midst of their big old mess, you're still holding on.

Your grip is firm. Like Jesus said, no one can take them out of My hand. It's beautiful. It's beautiful. Help us rest in your love and help us believe it.

The whole holding on to conditional love because that's what we've been programmed to know and experience and yet we are coming into contact with truth, with reality and that is your unconditional love.

So help us embrace it and hold on to it and be transformed by it, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, Faith Family, I hope that you are encouraged by God's Word today and that you are growing ever deeper in His love for you.

[45 : 14] If you'd like to reach out to us here at Faith Family, maybe you don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ, you've never experienced the love that we've been talking about, maybe you'd like to follow in baptism or maybe there's a prayer request that you have that we could pray for you, we invite you, please reach out to us.

We would love to minister to you however we can. You can drop us a line at ForTheGospelGatherings at gmail.com ForTheGospelGatherings at gmail.com and we would love to hear from you.

And for those of you that are able, we are meeting in person on Saturday evenings and we would love to see you if you feel so comfortable meeting together.

So thanks for watching. By God's grace, we'll see you again next week.