

Hosea

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[0 : 0 0] the words which I trust the Lord will enable me to make a few remarks we found in the prophecy of Hosea the second chapter the 19th and 20th verses the prophecy of Hosea chapter 2 verses 19 and 20 and I will betroth thee unto me forever yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercies I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness and thou shalt know the Lord as we were seeking to find something to bring before you this evening so that word in the 10th chapter the prophecy of Daniel seemed to rest upon our mind and he said

O man greatly beloved fear not peace be unto thee be strong yea be strong and when he had spoken unto me I was strengthened and said let my Lord speak for thou hast strengthened me and how that word brought a certain amount of reality upon our spirit it is indeed a wonderful thing to know something of the love of God within our hearts and when the Lord speaks to sinful creatures and calls them men greatly beloved now the love of God cannot really be put into words it is one of those things which it is impossible to describe and yet the prophet here under the influence of the Holy Spirit has in these three chapters demonstrated the love of God towards his church he shows us very clearly what the church of God consists of and how the word of the Lord came to Hosea and how he was told to marry this woman of autumn and when we come to consider the name Hosea is the same as the name Joshua and Jesus and how Hosea was a type of Christ how he came to save those of his own that he was married to in eternity and those who through their adulteries sought after other gods and how like the psalmist says rid me and deliver me from the hand of strange children and so when the Lord comes and speaks to his people he brings before them their sin their adulteries their ordem in departing from the only true and living God and what a mercy it is if the Lord takes it in hand and shows us where our love should be

I know that some people's religion is all love but if we come to examine that love we shall find that it is a love of adultery that it is a love of ordens it is that which sets upon self self gratification self righteousness and how you'll find that their religion centres around self but if we are rightly taught the Lord will show us our own weaknesses and he will show us that we have many lovers in this life spiritual lovers those who we seek after and how even we have to come with a hymn writer who said at times the heart uplifts with God's own gifts and makes him gracious near and therefore it is a great mercy if the Lord has shown us something of our departures from him but oh to know something first of all of the love of God shed abroad within our hearts oh man oh woman oh child greatly beloved and so we see in this very portion the greatness of the love of God to wretched vile sinners now as we read this portion together so we read of the ordums and the children that were brought forth from this marriage and if ever there was a description of faithfulness and love surely we have it here if ever there was a description of the wretchedness and the vileness and the depravity of the human heart we have it here

I don't believe I may be wrong in this my knowledge of the scriptures is very scant but I don't believe that there is another portion in the word of God which describes the adulteries and the ordums of the church of God so precisely as are recorded in the prophecy of Hosea and neither is the mercy and the loving kindness of the God more clearly demonstrated than it is in this portion and what a mercy it is for you and me to know something of the reality of the love of God toward us and just in passing we'll say this that for some year or two now this first verse in the second chapter has been on our mind and yet we've never been able to speak from it say ye unto your brethren Ami and to your sisters Ruhamah that is say unto your brethren my people and to your sisters that is having obtained mercy now there's a lot in that verse and so often as we come to the word of God we read these names if only we were to take the trouble to understand to look up the meaning of the names how we would have more light upon the word of

God and so with Hosea so that name represents Jesus it's the same it means the same thing well now he says and I will betrothed unto thee and I will betroth thee unto me forever so here we see the work is his we see the departures of the church and as we look upon the church today so we can see the various departures going back to that time of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was fought forth and where they were all in one where they had that beautiful unity and where they had all things in common today we can see the various ordems the departures of the adulteries which have taken place and so the church is divided and there are those people who say well we are the people and then there are other people that say well of course we are the people and then there are other sects that come very near to the truth and they say well of course we are the people and then

[8 : 52] Satan will get going with you and he'll say well now here we are there's those people they think they're right these other people they think they're right and the people that you abide by they think they're right now who is right well there's only one way that we know whether we are married to Christ and that is no religious label whatever we touched upon this last Lord's Day it's not the label that we wear it's not the people that we mix with it is the evidence we have of this love toward us and what a mercy it is and this is all I want to know and these are the only friends I want are those that know something of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus to their souls now you see how the

Lord through his prophet here commanded that he should marry this woman now where the Lord commands there's no sin it may sound very strange but if the Lord commands the thing it cannot be sinful with regard to Rahab that may often cause us concern as we know that she lied as they came to seek after the spies but if the Lord commands there is no sin in it and so there was no sin in that which Hosea did it was according to the command of the Lord there was no sin that the Lord Jesus should save this adulterous generation and bring them into the knowledge of his love and his mercy toward them you see the psalmist had a view of this when he said against thee the only have I sinned and therefore sin is against

God and if God commands well then there can be no sin and therefore Hosea was not a sinner any more than the Lord Jesus was and when we come to consider that his people are an adulterous generation and yet he had mercy upon them how our hearts go out in love to others how we would seek a more comfortable pathway how we would desire this and how we would desire that and how we would want this and how we would want that but where would it bring us for it is when we are brought down in the very depths and when we cry out of the depths under the Lord that the Lord reveals his love and his mercy toward us doesn't it now I will be trothy unto me forever he doesn't say well now I'm not having anything to do with that person their love is not a true love they are not faithful they are unfaithful to me now let us look at this then have you been unfaithful to this

God has your love to this God been unfaithful have you given him that which he is entitled to you say well of course I'm a sinful creature I'm not able to I never asked you that I know that you're a sinful creature and I know that you're not able to do these things as you would but have you honour the Lord and do you honour the Lord as you should I'll come closer do I honour the Lord as I should or indeed not now this then makes this betrothal much more blessing it makes it much sweeter you see the sinner is brought to realise his sinfulness and his depravity and therefore he cannot understand why the Lord has even taken knowledge of him look at

Ruth outwardly she appeared to be a very gracious character but when Boaz came to her in the gleaning field she said why hast thou taken knowledge of me seeing I am but a stranger and why has the Lord taken knowledge of you why has the Lord taken knowledge of me why because of his electing mercy towards us in eternity and I will be trothy unto me forever now when we feel a little of the love of God within our hearts and his faithfulness toward us it is good and as I say no words will ever express the love of God felt within the heart of his people it may only be for a moment as the Lord looked upon Peter there he felt the faithfulness and the love of God as any man would and I believe that all his people sooner or later know something of that same love that

[14 : 32] Peter had you see Peter had a love toward the Lord in a way by faith now it's good when we have a love toward the Lord by faith but that's nothing like the love which the sinner feels with forgiveness and you see although Peter had that love and he could say well now I'll go to death with thee yet he proved his unfaithfulness he loved his own life that was his adultery he loved his own life and his own skin more than he loved the Lord and therefore he cursed and he swore that he never knew him that was Peter's adultery what is yours what do you love more than the Lord but the Lord looked and in that look there was this and I will be trothy unto me forever

Peter whatever your sin is I will betroth thee the power is mine all power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth and however sinful however weak you are however unfaithful you are to me you make a promise you say you will stand by me that you will do this that you will do the other but you don't Peter you are unfaithful to me and therefore this is your adultery but I will betroth thee and not for a few moments it will be forever do you know the most blessed marriages upon this earth are a very very short duration but this marriage between Christ and his people is forever once in him in him forever thus the eternal council stands for what a mercy it is to know something of this betrothal and I will betroth thee unto me forever yea

I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness my righteousness I'm the one now all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags but your righteousness as I betroth thee as this union is one and as a husband gives all that he has to his wife so I will betroth I will give you my righteousness now this is the gospel in a simple way it is the gift of God it is that which he gives to his people they have no righteousness of their own but he gives them his righteousness and therefore as a husband betroth unto his wife his possessions I will betroth unto thee forever yea I will betroth the betrothal of marriages until death do thee part but there's no death here it's forever and I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment

I'm the judge and what a mercy this is and what is his judgment based upon your love toward him indeed not this is where you and I go wrong so often we base our judgment upon the Lord upon our love toward him and what could my heart so hard remain prayer a task and burden prove every trial give me pain if I knew the saviour's love of course not I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment I'm the one who judges this love and my love is a love that can ever alter your love is a love which has been implanted into an earthen vessel your love it wanes and your love depends upon that which I give you and therefore

I will betroth unto thee forever yea I will betroth unto thee in righteousness and in judgment I'm the judge not you and although at times you cannot judge yourself to be a child of God the Lord does and he doesn't judge you as men judge you he doesn't judge you by your sinfulness or by your righteousness he doesn't judge you by what you are in the flesh he judges you by his mercy and by his loving kindness and by his righteousness and all those precious gifts which he bestows upon you as his bride and I will betroth thee unto me forever yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness now the Lord where the Lord does this he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it nothing will alter it even Peter's denial will never alter it he's the same God and his love can never be altered and I will betroth thee unto me forever yea

[20 : 11] I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness is and what does the psalmist say even they even they that are wise and shall observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord who so is wise and shall observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord as the Lord gave you a little wisdom to believe in his word and to believe that whatever you may feel and whatever may come between you and your guard that he's proved to you his faithfulness he's proved to you that his love doesn't alter and although your sin and your wretchedness your vileness comes between you and him and although you may go to great lengths in cursing and swearing and denying him he doesn't alter he's the same

God he's faithful and these are the precious gifts which he bestows upon his bride the church of Christ you see and I will be trothed unto me forever I'm not a God that will divorce or depart from you I'm a God that will stand by you this marriage union to which Jesus and the chosen race subsists a bond of sovereign grace and that bond of sovereign grace can never be altered he speaks here with regard to a covenant and how that covenant stands and in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven and with the creeping things of the ground and I will break the bow of the sword and the battle out of the earth and will make them to lie down safely in other words they're going to have very many enemies and they're going to find that the chief enemy is themselves but when the Lord takes his people as he took them in eternity and he marries them knowing well what they are and this it brings such confusion to the professor and there's such hatred within his heart to these truths because he looks to himself he's that proud amen surely there is none more worthy than me to wear the king's apparel there is none more worthy than me to ride upon the king's horse

I am the one you see but poor Mordecai who was sitting in dust and ashes who doesn't know what to do who finds that everything is against him but has got nothing of his own got no one to plead for him apart from Esther who again is the type of Christ but how he was delivered and how the Jews they had a day of rejoicing didn't they how they were able to rejoice in the goodness and the mercy of the Lord well now you see the love of God is clearly manifested here to a people who are most undeserved now this is one of the ways in which you and I can testify of the love of God do we deserve it do you feel that you deserve the love of God do you feel that your walk your conversation do you feel that your profession merits the love of

God I hear someone saying no in fact everything with regard to my religion everything with regard to my walk everything with regard to my conversation points against me ah yes and it will what was there in me to merit esteem or give the creator delight to us even so Jesus we ever must sing for so it seemed good in thy sight and that is the gospel in all its truth and in all its simplicity and you'll never get away from it because it seemed good in thy sight and I will be truthfully you know sometimes we look at a couple and we say whatever can that man see in that woman or whatever can that woman see in that man can't understand it can we and yet the union between them why there's nothing you see attractive in them that would attract us but people as they look to the Lord and as they look to this gospel there's nothing attractive in the gospel to them is there anything attractive in the gospel of the Lord

Jesus to you do you find that it's just what you want although perhaps you can't claim it although perhaps you're not able to have the assurance that I know because the ring is not upon your finger yet and the robe is not upon your back but the Lord doesn't say I have he says I will betroth thee the time of love will come when thou shalt clearly see not only that he shed his blood but you shall say for me tarry his leisure then wait the appointed hour wait till the bridegroom of your soul reveals his love with power what a wonderful thing the love of God is when it is shed within the heart of a poor wretched vile sinner with power love I have known it some of you have known it but how little does it last

[26 : 46] I remember on one occasion could have ever I committed adultery I had been how I was in hospital surrounded by the ungodly and how for days on end my bible hadn't been brought out and I had no thought with regard I was as dead as dead inwardly and then the Lord came and he spoke to me in such a most blessed way he reminded me of an oath made and a desire made months before and I felt the love of God shed abroad within my heart to such an extent that I felt I could hardly bear it in fact I had to beg of the Lord to withdraw or take me it was only for a few moments but you see the beauty of it was this

I was so undeserving of that love because my heart to him had been so cold I had been so unfaithful to him but he was the same God he was so faithful to me you see for what a mercy it is and I'll tell you why it's a mercy because if once the love of God we feel upon our hearts impressed the marks of that celestial seal could never be erased have you ever felt the love of God shed upon your heart once poor sinner when you felt that you could from all things parted be but never never Lord from thee I will betroth thee unto me forever yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness even they shall understand the loving kindness of the

Lord it takes a lot of understanding mercy but what a mercy when the Lord does and in mercies now you see if it was not for his mercy where could we be apart from my mercy I could not live here blessed one since soon would reduce me to utter despair and it wouldn't it but I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness and thou shalt know the Lord thou shalt know the Lord this is true religion to know the Lord a lot of people they know the doctrines of grace they know the word of God they know everything they know what other people should do they know how the minister should preach they know the minister says a word out of place but they don't know the Lord do you one thing is needful and that is to know the Lord and thou shalt know the Lord what do you know about the Lord can we get a little personal can we delve into each other's hearts never mind about the sin never mind about the corruption never mind about the adulteries and the love for other things but do we love the

Lord I say tis a point I long to know after it causes anxious thought do I love the Lord or no am I his or am I not do you think you would be concerned with regard to your love for the Lord if you didn't love him do you think those parents those children that have been held hostages do you think they would be concerned for their welfare if they didn't love their children of course not and do you think this God is not concerned with regard to you why greater love hath no man than this that a man should lay down his life for his friends ye are my friends says the Lord and what a mercy it is to know this God to know him as a friend thou shalt know the

Lord and so to know him as a friend to know him as one that is a faithful friend to know him as one who is a righteous friend you know you might be brought to that place and you probably will if you're a child of God where at times you'll think well there's no one I haven't got a single friend not a real faithful friend it's all very well for these people to talk about church fellowship and this that and the other you won't find much church fellowship not in the day in which we live it's a good thing when you are able to talk to one or two but what a mercy it is to know something of this friend who loveth at all times a brother born for adversity and thou shalt know the Lord and to know something of his loving kindness to know something of his mercies well now then sometimes we hear people they have such a wonderful understanding of the scriptures and they're able to talk about the Lord and this that and the other but you ask them how they know the Lord well first of all do you know the Lord as the

[33 : 04] Lord who cannot look upon sin do you know him as the Lord of justice and have you known what it is to stand before this God and know it as a just and a holy God and you've stood before him as a wretched sinner and as he's pointed out to you your odour and your departures and your adultery your unfaithfulness toward him and you've stood before him as a guilty wretched sinner deserving to be cast away forever and then have you known something of his mercy I will betroth the unmean righteousness I will give you all that which you don't possess I say the Lord said I will give you all that which you don't possess and what's more which you can't procure yourself isn't it a mercy that this

God has all those things that we don't possess and which we cannot procure ourselves and yet the very things that we desire the very things that we need the very things which we're so dependent upon we're now in a normal marriage the husband is responsible for the welfare of his wife I know in the day in which we live these things are for the most part cast aside but it is for the husband to provide the home to provide the food to take the responsibility to clothe to love to honour to obey to love and to honour to cherish and these things are looked upon so lightly today but the love of God was his church how he provides food for her how he provides clothing for her how he provides everything shelter from all the storms of life how he protects her how he loves her how his love is unaltered and therefore you see she knows him she knows him by his very acts by the tokens the evidences of his love we know each other up to a point don't we but there are those in this congregation that know each other more than we know them why because they've been united in marriage they've lived with each other for a number of years and therefore they know each other far more than we know them and so it is in marriage and with this church this God he knows more about his people and his bride than they know about him but oh to know something about that marriage garment there are those that come in you know and they profess to know this love but how this man he judges how came he in without the marriage garment why it is the garment isn't it woe in everlasting love and so there is this wonderful provision and then the shelter is this what you need do you know this God as a shelter from the storms of life as you've been brought into those places where none but the

Lord was able to help you and he found shelter and as the winds blew that house didn't fall down why because it was built upon a rock what a mercy it is to know something of the shelter which can be found in a precious Christ and then when your very sins and when it seems as if you're full of the very devil oh you say the Lord's people don't get like that well if that's the case I'm not one of them and therefore I know nothing of this but I'm telling you straight that I know what it is to be full of the devil and then for the Lord to come like legion of old how the devils were cast out and how the love of God is felt within the heart of that one now there is a reality in these things and you know the

Lord you know him by his power you know him by what he has done you know him by what this God is to you and whatever others may say about him you know this God and then again where there is this union you won't have his name spoken against you know where there is a true union you won't find one partner speaking about another there will be this one union what a mercy it is when one is married to the Lord you'll never say anything against him you'll never be able to say that you don't love him and then another thing when others speak against him you'll know whether you love him because you'll defend him there'll be that within your heart as you hear his name blaspheme it will be like a dagger to you you know full well that if someone said anything about someone that you truly loved it would be like a dagger in your flesh wouldn't it whether it was right or whether it was wrong it would still be a painful experience if you loved anybody to hear them despised and spoken against well what about this man this blessed redeemer whose human heart he still retains though thrown in heights of bliss and yet to hear his name blaspheme

I say don't you feel it at times well you know the Lord his name means something to you his name is above every name and that name really means something to you why because you know a little of what that name represents you know that he means something to you now isn't it then strange that you feel that within your heart that you feel this painful experience that his name is blasphemed if you don't love him you must love him you must be betrothed to him there must be this union if you can hear his name blasphemed without it having any effect upon you if you can hear him being despised and rejected of men and it has no effect upon you well you say why was I made to hear his name and answer whilst there's room and thousands made a wretched choice and was rather starved than come why was it why it was the same love that spread the feast that sweetly forced you in else you would never have had a taste and perished in your sin

[41 : 10] I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness in spite of your unfaithfulness and thou shalt know the Lord and then how he goes and it shall come to pass in that day that I will hear saith the Lord and I will hear the heavens and the heavens shall hear the earth and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil and they shall hear Jezreel and how you see this represents the unity between heaven and earth the church militant and the church triumphant and how that blessed oil and the corn you see is all part of the love and the unity of the church of God and then how he goes on to say thou art my people and they shall say thou art my God what a mercy it is when one is brought to that place when in spite of all their unbelief like Thomas they can say thou art my God this is what you're longing to say you say if only I could call this God my God well when e'er to call the saviour mine with ardent wish my heart aspires can it be less than love divine that animates these strong desires can it be less than love divine

I know I've spoken of many hymns tonight but I know this that the hymn writer can put into words the love of God far better than I can and how those precious hymns of ours how they we mentioned this last Lord's Day didn't we how those hymn writers they can in a few lines they can put a sermon and how our sermon is put to shame as the last hymn perhaps is given out and it's all in that last hymn perhaps or just a few verses or one line perhaps but how the Lord I believe under the same inspiration those men penned those wonderful hymns which so describe perfectly our case and I love them for it and I love the Lord too for inspiring them in such a way and giving them such gifts so that you and I sometimes we find our love to the

Lord even in those precious hymns now I believe and I will be trustworthy unto me forever and so this is not a fickle love it's not a love that we can't rely upon it is the word of God and his love is forever now then can we understand this love and I was sad to them that were not my people and I will sow her unto me in the earth and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy and I will say to them which were not my people thou art my people and they shall say thou art my God now this of course we know refers to the Gentiles and also to the return of the Jews we know that there will be this pouring out of the

Holy Spirit upon the Jews the Jewish nation literally will know the Lord but what a mercy if we know something personally of these things well now often we may look to ourselves as we said in opening so many think well of course this denomination are right and therefore we belong to them and this other people well they think they are right but do we know the Lord do we know anything that I might know him and the power of his resurrection the fellowship of his sufferings the power of his resurrection and be made conformable under his death is this your prayer is this your longing desire that you might know him and thou shalt know the Lord that's one thing if ever you felt the love of God he knows you and you'll know him

Moses wasn't able to see the face of the Lord but he knew him he might not have seen this Lord literally but you'll know him and you'll know him by his walk you'll know him by the way in which he loves you and the way in which he deals with you oh yes his love is such that he will deal with you and he will deal with you in judgment the Lord won't allow you to go on in your own way but he will do this he'll bring you into that place to see that all his dealings have been wise and good uniform though various though they seem by reason viewed cross or quite contrarious and sometimes we're brought in that way where it seems as if the Lord is cross with us and all his ways are so contrarious there's no evidence of his love toward us but thou shalt know the Lord and when the

[47 : 03] Lord makes his way plain before your face then you will know the Lord and as you know him so you will know his love toward you and I will betroth thee unto me forever yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercies and I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness and thou shalt know the Lord may the Lord have his blessing amen lead and ph