

## ACCEPTING UNCONDITIONAL LOVE "Upside Down, Inside Out Living #1"

Hosea 11:1-4, 8  
June 19, 2010  
Owen L. Taylor

*"<sup>1</sup>When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.  
<sup>2</sup>But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images.  
<sup>3</sup>It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them.  
<sup>4</sup>I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them.  
...<sup>8</sup>How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused."*

"Hosea takes his place among the greatest lovers of all the ages. His love was so strong that the vilest behavior could not dull it. He suffered severely but in each pang of suffering he came to know the infinite heart of God more clearly. Gomer broke his heart but she made it possible for him to give to the world a picture of the heart of the divine Lover."  
Dr. Kyle M. Yates

The message of Hosea: **God is love and wants from us our love, above all else.**

1. **Understand** that there is nothing I can do to stop God's love for me. **(2:14-17 (NIV))**  
*"<sup>14</sup> Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her.  
<sup>15</sup> There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor<sup>1</sup> a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.  
<sup>16</sup> In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.'  
<sup>17</sup> I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked."*
2. **Rest** in the truth that there is not anything I must do to earn God's love. **(3:1-2 (NIV))**  
*"<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes." <sup>2</sup>So*

I bought her for fifteen shekels <sup>1a</sup> of silver and about a homer and a lethek<sup>d</sup> of barley.”

3. **Commit** to a life style that expresses my devotion to God. (4:1-2, 6; 6:1-3 (NIV))

<sup>1</sup>Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land."

<sup>2</sup> There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

...<sup>6</sup> my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

... <sup>1</sup>Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds.

<sup>2</sup>After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.

<sup>3</sup> Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

4. **Worship** God as a result of experiencing his grace through faith. (6:4-6; 14:4 (NIV))

<sup>4</sup>What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets, I killed you with the words of my mouth; my judgments flashed like lightning upon you.

<sup>6</sup>For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

...<sup>4</sup>I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them."

**A fair warning:**

<sup>7</sup>They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind...

<sup>14</sup>Who is wise? He will realize these things.

Who is discerning? He will understand them.

The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them." (8:7a; 14:9)