

Title: **MY FAVORITE BIBLE STORY**
Text: Hosea 1:2
Subject: *Hosea and Gomer: A Story About Grace*
Date: Sunday Morning — April 1, 2007
Tape # Z-23a
Reading: *Hosea 1:1-11; 3:1-5*

Introduction:

What is your favorite Bible story?

- Creation? — The New Creation
- Adam and Eve? — Christ and His Church
- Noah and the Ark? — Salvation in the Ark
- The Passover? — Redemption
- Joshua and Jericho? — Grace Triumphant
- Ruth and Boaz? — Christ our Kinsman Redeemer
- David and Goliath? — Christ and Satan
- Water to Wine? — Transforming Grace
- Feeding the Multitudes? — Christ our Bread
- Zacchaeus? _Irresistible Grace
- The Prodigal Son? — God’s Salvation

I want to tell you my favorite Bible story. I haven’t told it in a long, long time. It is the story of redemption and grace in and by our Lord Jesus Christ that is found in the Book of Hosea. I read it to you earlier. So let’s begin in Hosea 1:2.

(Hosea 1:2) “The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD.”

There are many, many pictures of grace in the Scriptures. But if I had to choose one Bible story or parable from which to preach about and illustrate the whole message of the gospel, I believe it would be this story of God’s prophet Hosea and his chosen, beloved, harlot wife, Gomer.

- **Hosea, whose name means “savior,” is presented in this story as a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ.** He was commanded of God to go down to the red light district and take a wife from among the harlots.

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- He chose **Gomer, whose name means “consumption.”** That’s us, God’s elect, consumed with sin and consumed by sin.
- Gomer was **the daughter of Diblaim, whose name means “dried” or “dead.”** Like Gomer, we are the dead children of a dead father.
- **Gomer also means “consummation.”** That’s us, too. As Gomer was the consummation of all Hosea’s purposes and work, the consummation of his great love, so God’s elect are in their ultimate end the consummation of all God’s purposes, works, and great love.

The Lord gave Hosea and Gomer three children who also represent us.

- **Jezreel** means “seed of God.”
- **Loruhamah** means “no mercy.”
- **Loammi** means “not mine, or not my people.”

We who were not his people and had not obtained mercy are now his people and have obtained mercy in Christ. **That is exactly how the Holy Spirit interprets this story for us in the Book of Romans** (Romans 9:25-26).

(Romans 9:25-26) “As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. (26) And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.”

Hosea came home one day, and Gomer was gone. She had gone back to her lovers. **Chapter two** tells us about Gomer’s great fall and Hosea’s purpose of love and grace concerning her. **Chapter three** tells us how Hosea’s love and grace prevailed and he fetched Gomer home again. Let’s read it together.

(Hosea 3:1-3) “Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, **love a woman** beloved of *her* friend, yet an adulteress, **according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel,** who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. (2) **So I bought her** to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and *for* an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: (3) And **I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days;** thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: **so will I also be for thee.**”

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God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessing on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace,
Behind the frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain:
God is His own Interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

GRACE ALONE

Without question, the Word of God plainly teaches us that salvation is altogether, from start to finish, the work of God's free, sovereign, unconditional, effectual and irresistible grace in Christ. The works of the sinner and the will of the sinner have absolutely nothing to do with the accomplishment of salvation. This is the universal testimony of Holy Scripture (Psalm 65:4; 110:3; John 1:12-13; 6:63; Romans 3:23-24; 6:23; 9:16; 11:6; Ephesians 2:5, 8, 9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:4-8).

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(Psalms 65:4) “Blessed *is the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.”

(Psalms 110:3) “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

(John 1:12-13) “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

(John 6:63) “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.”

(Romans 3:23-24) “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

(Romans 6:23) “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

(Romans 9:16) “So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

(Romans 11:6) “And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

(Ephesians 2:5) “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”

(Ephesians 2:8-9) “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

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(2 Timothy 1:9) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

(Titus 3:4-8) “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (8) *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

All God’s saints freely and gladly confess, with the apostle Paul, “**By the grace of God I am what I am**” (1 Corinthians 15:10).

But what do we mean when we say that we are saved by grace alone? **What does God mean when he declares that salvation is by grace?** This story of Hosea and Gomer illustrates the meaning of grace beautifully and clearly.

Proposition: Grace is the boundless, free, effectual goodness of God toward fallen sinners, by which he has elected and redeemed, by which he regenerates, calls, justifies, sanctifies and glorifies the objects of his everlasting love for the glory of his dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone made this distinction between the mercy of God and the grace of God: “**Mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve. Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve.**” We all deserve to be in hell right now. It is the mercy of God that allows us to live upon his earth. **Life is mercy; but eternal life is grace.** None of us deserve eternal life. That is the free gift of God’s grace. **Anything short of hell is mercy. Salvation and eternal life in Christ is grace.** We deserve wrath; but God has saved us by his grace.

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Divisions: This portrait of sovereign grace plainly sets before us seven characteristics of the grace of God by which we are saved. The grace of God is...

1. Sovereign, Electing Grace.
2. Undeserved, Undesired, Unconditional Grace.
3. Prevenient, Preparatory Grace.
4. Distinguishing, Effectual Grace.
5. Costly, Redeeming, Sin-Atoning Grace.
6. Preserving, Persevering Grace.
7. Immutable, Covenant Grace.

1. SOVEREIGN, ELECTING GRACE

First, I want you to see that the grace of God in Christ, by which we are saved, is sovereign, electing grace (1:2-3).

(Hosea 1:2-3) “The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD. (3) So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.”

God told Hosea to go love a woman, not just any woman, but a fallen woman, a harlot, not just any harlot, but a particular harlot. — “*So he went and took Gomer.*” **Why did he do that?** What was the purpose of this? It was to show us a picture of God’s grace toward us. **Hosea loved Gomer, “According to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel”** (3:1).

Remember, Hosea means “Savior.” Gomer means “consumption” (which is what we are by nature). Gomer also means “consummation,” indicating that the consummation of God’s purpose in all things is the salvation of his elect by Christ.

There are many in this world to whom God is not gracious. I know that men talk about “common grace” and “special grace.” But there is nothing common about the grace of God. God’s grace is always special and particular. He sovereignly bestows his grace upon some and refuses to be gracious to others (Matthew 11:20-27).

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(Matthew 11:20-27) “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: (21) Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (22) But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. (23) And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. (24) But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee. (25) At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (26) Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. (27) All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.”

God will be gracious to whom he will be gracious. And whom he will he hardens.

Illustration: Israel and Egypt — For four thousand years Israel alone had the light of Divine Revelation.

- The fallen angels were not given grace, but were immediately damned.
- Most of the people who live in this world have never heard a man preach the gospel.
- Most of those who hear the gospel are not called to life and faith by the Spirit of God. — “*Many are called; but few are chosen.*”
- Most of those who profess faith in Christ do not persevere in the faith.
- Some who seek him find him, but not others: — Esau — The Ruler.

There are few to whom the strait gate is revealed, fewer still who enter it, fewer still who walk in the narrow way, and fewer still who walk in that way unto the end. There are many in this world to whom God is not gracious.

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But, blessed be God, he has chosen to be gracious to some! There are some men and women in this world who are loved and chosen of God from eternity, whom he is determined to save. **To them he is gracious, always gracious, gracious in all that he does.** For those elect sinners, whom God has chosen to save, there is a sovereign, unchangeable, eternal purpose of grace, by which he rules the world (Ephesians 1:3-6).

(Ephesians 1:3-6) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

- We were chosen in Christ and predestinated to be like Christ before the world began.
- The basis and cause of our eternal election was and is the everlasting love of God toward us.
- Our election in Christ gave us an eternal, immutable acceptance with God. **God said, from eternity,** “*I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him*” (14:4).

The only person who does not love and rejoice in God’s sovereign, electing grace is the one who has not received grace (John 10:26). Every saved sinner gladly acknowledges...

`Tis not that I did choose Thee,
For, Lord, that could not be;
This heart would still refuse Thee,
Hadst Thou hast chosen me.

2. **FREE, UNCONDITIONAL GRACE**

Second, the grace of God, by which we are saved, is free, undeserved, undesired, unconditional grace. Gomer was a common strumpet, a whore, a prostitute, a hooker, a street walker. She was not looking for a husband. She

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did not want a husband. And she did not deserve a husband. But Hosea chose her. Hosea loved her. Hosea wanted her. And his heart could not be satisfied until he had her. That is the picture of God's grace toward us.

- God's grace toward us in Christ is altogether undeserved.
- The grace of God in Christ was totally undesired by us.
- And that grace by which we are saved is absolutely free and unconditional. — We were chosen unconditionally. — We were redeemed unconditionally. — We were called unconditionally. — We are kept unconditionally.

3. PREVENIENT, PREPARATORY GRACE

Third, the grace of God by which fallen, ruined, helpless sinners are saved, always begins with what we might call prevenient, preparatory grace. It is impossible to tell when the grace of God begins to operate upon the hearts of his elect. Sometimes we may be able tell when the quickening, regenerating, converting grace comes, but not the grace itself. **We cannot tell when God begins to work for his elect, because grace always works for us.** There is a time when grace begins to work in us; but grace always worked for us. God's grace is exercised for his elect long before we are aware of it. Let me show you what I mean.

Prevenient is the grace of God that precedes his saving grace. It is prevenient grace that followed, pursued us, provided for us, and protected God's elect until the time of their calling (Psalms 23:6; Jude 1; Hosea 2:5-8).

(Psalms 23:6) "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

(Jude 1:1) "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called:"

Hosea 2:5-8 "For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them **hath done shamefully**: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give *me* my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink. (6) Therefore, behold, **I will hedge up thy way** with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her

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paths. (7) And **she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say,** I will go and return to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now. (8) For **she did not know** that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal.”

Grace separated me from my mother’s womb, followed me and directed me throughout the days of my rebellion, and then brought me to the place where Christ was revealed in me.

Illustration: *Onesimus!*
The Prodigal!

God’s grace begins in our earliest years as **formative grace.**

- He sovereignly puts us in our homes.
- He molds our dispositions.
- He forms our thoughts.

Grace follows us through life, and following us, it secretly orders our steps as **protective grace.**

- **God provided for our needs, even when we despised his goodness** (Hosea 2:8).

(Hosea 2:8) “For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal.”

- **God protected us, even when we hated him** (Hebrews 1:14).

(Hebrews 1:14) “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

Throughout the years of our rebellion, God’s grace was upon us as **preventive grace,** keeping us from performing the evil that is in us by nature, often even keeping us from doing the evil we were determined to do.

Illustration: Abigail and David

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If God has prevented you from any form of outward evil, if he depths of open profligacy and sin give him thanks; but do not glory as if you have some superior, personal goodness. You have none. The evil that other men do is in your heart. But God has mercifully prevented you from doing the evil things you have imagined, plotted, dreamed about and secretly cherished.

- Not all women are harlots in deed, but all are harlots at heart.
- Not all men are whoremongers in deed, but all are whoremongers at heart.
- Not all are murderers in deed, but all are murderers at heart.
- Not all are blasphemers in deed, but all are murderers at heart (Matthew 15:19).

(Matthew 15:19) “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

For others grace is evident as the marvelous **restraining grace** of our Heavenly Father. He allows many to walk in the paths of open sin and run the course of profligate rebellion, only that he might bring them down to be gracious to them. Yet, even with the most profligate prodigal, he restrained the evil that his fallen child would have done. How I rejoice in those words of my God — “*Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further!*” (Read Psalm 107:1-31).

Parents: God may be bringing them down!

Then, this same grace prepares the hearts of God’s elect for his saving grace (Matthew 13:3-9).

(Matthew 13:3-9) “And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; (4) And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: (5) Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: (6) And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. (7) And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: (8) But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an

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hundredfold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold. (9) Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Grace prepares the heart and makes a way for grace. This preparatory work of grace is beautifully illustrated by the story of Hosea and Gomer.

GOMER’S RUIN

Gomer was a harlot, but Hosea loved her. The godly prophet brought this harlot into his house and made her his wife. Hosea lavished his affections on Gomer. He gave her everything her heart could desire. He gave her three children: Jezreel, Loruhamah and Loammi. It would seem that Gomer would be very happy and grateful. But she was not.

Hosea had taken Gomer out of the Red Light District; but he had not taken the Red Light District out of Gomer. She was still a harlot at heart. She lusted for her old companions. She was religious, but not redeemed. — Correct, but not chaste. — Dutiful, but not devoted.

One day she looked out her window and saw one of her old lovers. He winked at her. She called him to the door. And there they made their desires known to one another.

NOTE: Young people, hear me now. Keep far away from temptation. — *“Flee youthful lusts!”* A permissive word, or unguarded moment may bring you into the misery of hell itself. Keep away from those Internet chat rooms, no matter who else uses them. If you don’t want to get burned, don’t take fire to your bosom. — *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sitteth in the seat of the scorers, nor standeth in the way of sinners.”*

Gomer’s stupidity was great. She had hearkened to the counsel of the ungodly, for she hearkened to the counsel of her own heart. While she slept in the arms of her loving husband, she thought only of her lovers.

One day Hosea came home, and Gomer was gone. — Gomer had gotten into the gutter again. — Though she was fallen, by willful and malicious

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transgression, Hosea loved her! — And he sought for her everywhere. — No doubt, Gomer saw Hosea and heard his voice; but she hid from him.

Finally, Hosea found his beloved Gomer. He went to her room every night and secretly provided for her. He wanted her more than life itself. He loved that worthless woman. He had every right to take her by force. **But he would not bring her home again, until she was willing to come. And he was determined to make her willing** (Psalm 65:4; Hosea 2:9-17).

(Psalms 65:4) “Blessed *is the man whom* thou chooseth, and causeth to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.”

(Psalms 110:3) “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

GOD’S “THEREFORES”

Behold the reasoning of grace! I love God’s “therefores” in chapter 2! God our Savior, the Lord Jesus, uses the word “*therefore*” four times in this second chapter, to reveal to us the reasoning of his grace toward his elect. He says...

1. “*Therefore,*” **because she is a harlot,** let her leave her lovers and return to me (v. 2).

(Hosea 2:2) “Plead with your mother, plead: for she *is* not my wife, neither *am* I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts.”

2. “*Therefore,*” **because she has gone after her lovers,** because she is determined to destroy herself, therefore, behold, I will protect her from herself and from them, and force her to return to me (v. 6).

(Hosea 2:6-8) “Therefore, behold, I will **hedge up thy way with thorns,** and **make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.** (7) And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find *them*: **then shall**

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she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now. (8) For **she did not know** that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal.”

3. “*Therefore*,” **because she will not return to me**, I will return to her (vv. 9-13).

(Hosea 2:9-13) “Therefore will I return, and **take away** my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will **recover** my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness. (10) And now will I **discover her lewdness** in the sight of her lovers, and **none shall deliver her out of mine hand**. (11) I will also **cause all her mirth to cease**, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. (12) And I will **destroy her vines** and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These *are* my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. (13) And I will **visit upon her the days of Baalim**, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith the LORD.

4. “*Therefore*,” **because she has utterly forsaken me and forgotten me**, I will never forget her. I will make her willing to return to me. I will conquer her with my love (vv. 14-17).

(Hosea 2:14-17) Therefore, behold, **I will allure** her, and **bring her into the wilderness**, and **speak comfortably** unto her. (15) And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a **door of hope**: and **she shall sing there**, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. (16) And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, *that* **thou shalt call me Ishi** (*My Husband*); and shalt call me no more Baali (*My Master*). (17) For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.”

God graciously prepares his people to receive his grace and makes each one willing to come to Christ in the day of his power. He creates in his chosen, by one means or another, a dissatisfaction with themselves. He

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strips away our joy. He destroys our peace. He turns our pride into corruption. He brings us into misery. Oh, may God do that for you! **Like Gomer, we have to be brought down.** Gomer sank into the dunghill of iniquity and learned by bitter experience that “*the way of the transgressor is hard.*”

- She came to poverty.
- She grew old.
- She was an outcast of society. The “good” folk despised her and the other harlots mocked her.
- She was helpless and worthless.
- At last, when she was no good for prostitution, she came to the slave market to sell herself into bondage and servitude, if anyone would have her.
- **Nobody loved Gomer. Nobody wanted Gomer. Nobody but Hosea!** Now, she was ready for his love, mercy, and grace.

That’s the grace of God! Even when we were in the arms of another, we belonged to Christ. He loved us. And he was, even then, preparing us for grace!

- Grace gave us a tender conscience at last.
- Grace made us willing to hear the gospel.
- Grace wrought conviction within us.
- Grace brought us down!

4. **DISTINGUISHING, EFFECTUAL GRACE**

Here is a *fourth* characteristic of God’s saving grace: It is distinguishing, effectual grace — “*And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies*” (2:19). **The grace of God that brings salvation is always distinguishing, effectual, and irresistible. Everything Hosea did, he did for Gomer alone, that he might have Gomer. And he got her** (Romans 9:16). God the Holy Spirit turns the eyes of the prodigal to his Father’s house, seeks the lost sheep and calls the adulterous wife.

One day Hosea was walking in the streets. When he came to the slave market, he stopped. There were many slaves, who were sold for many purposes. But, among the most derelict and abominable of those slaves,

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Hosea spotted Gomer! He called her, “Gomer.” She hung her head in shame. He called her again, by name, “Gomer.”

Down in the human heart, crushed by the Tempter,
 Feelings lie buried that grace can restore.
 Touched by the loving hand, wakened by kindness,
 Cords that were broken will vibrate once more.

Hosea bought Gomer. — “*So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley*” (3:2). He went over to the slave block, kissed her, embraced her, took her hand and tucked it under his arm. And he walked proudly down the streets with Gomer at his side. He was not ashamed of her. And she certainly was not ashamed of him. — **That is what our all-glorious Christ has done for us by his matchless grace.**

- **He came to us when we would not and could not come to him** (Ezekiel 16:6-8).

(Ezekiel 16:6-8) “And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live. (7) I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *wast* naked and bare. (8) Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”

- **He called us and brought us to himself.**
- **He brought us into his house and owned us as his bride.** — “*He brought me to his banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.*”

5. **COSTLY, REDEEMING GRACE**

Be sure you see this next point. — The grace of God is costly, redeeming, sin-atoning grace. — “*So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and*

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for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley” (3:2). **Before Hosea could have Gomer, he had to redeem her.** He did not buy all the slaves. He did not want them all. He loved Gomer. He wanted Gomer. He bought Gomer. And having bought her, by lawful ransom price, he could not lose her.

This is what our Savior says to us: “I have bought you with the silver of my sweat and the gold of my blood. And you are mine” (3:3).

(Hosea 3:3) “And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also *be* for thee.”

- Christ redeemed us by costly, but legal price.
- Christ redeemed us particularly.
- Christ redeemed us effectually.
- Now we belong to Christ (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Illustration: *The Two Black Birds.*

6. **PRESERVING, PERSEVERING GRACE**

Sixth, I must make mention of the fact that God’s grace is preserving, persevering grace (2:20-23).

(Hosea 2:20-23) “I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. (21) And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; (22) And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. (23) 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.”

- Grace perseveres toward us.
- Grace preserves us.
- And grace causes us to persevere in grace.

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7. IMMUTABLE, COVENANT GRACE

And in the last place, I want you to see that the grace of God, by which we are saved, his electing grace, his undeserved grace, his prevenient grace, his effectual grace, his redeeming grace, his preserving grace, is immutable, covenant grace. — *“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 and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely”* (2:18).

In the covenant of grace God not only resolved to save us, but he also made all things to be instruments of mercy and grace to us. — *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* (Romans 8:28).

Application:

“THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER’S HAND”

‘Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But held it up with a smile.
“What am I bidden, good folks,” he cried,
“Who’ll start the bidding for me?”
“A dollar, a dollar;” then, “Two! Only two?
Two dollars, and who’ll make it three?

Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
Going for three.” — But no,
From the room, far back, a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loosened strings,
He played a melody as pure and sweet
As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,

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Said, “Now, what am I bid for the old violin?”
And he held it up with the bow.
“A thousand dollars, and who’ll make it two?
Two thousand! And who’ll make it three?
Three thousand, once, three thousand twice,
And going, and gone,” said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,
“We don’t quite understand
What changed the worth of the old violin?”
Swift came the reply:
“The touch of a master’s hand.”
And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.

Ruined and running from God he goes,
In madness, to hell, headlong!
He is “going” once, and “going” twice,
He’s “going” and almost “gone.”
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that’s wrought
By the touch of the Master’s hand.

- What the Lord Jesus Christ has done for me by his grace, he can do for you.
- Let us ever praise God for his grace (1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

(1 Corinthians 1:26-31) “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence. (30) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and

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righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

AMEN.

¹ Tape #T-80—Danville 4\10\88 - January 1998;—New Caney, TX 6\26\88;—Jacksonville, NC 4\7\88;—Houston, TX 8\21\88;—St. Marys, GA 14-97;—Rock Creek Baptist Church, North Wilkesboro, NC (08/14/01) - Danville — (AM 04/01/07)