

The Tender Heart of a Loving God Hosea 11

Introduction:

1. When you hear the term "Heavenly Father" what mental pictures come to mind? Sometimes we fear that we may read too much into this title, but I believe that most of the time we read far too **little** into it.
2. We fail to realize how incredibly deep and profound is God's love for His children.
 - **1 John 3:1** emphatically states, "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...*"
3. Hosea 11 marvelously reveals to us the endless, abiding love of God for His children. Of course, the context is God's earthly children, Israel. But there is great application for the body of Christ today.
4. Israel had rebelled against God in every conceivable way (vs. 12), yet when we study this chapter we are amazed as we catch a glimpse of the tender heart of a loving God towards Israel.
5. Let's study this chapter and see the tender heart of our loving God.

God's heart is to bless His children.

1. Normal fathers or mothers enjoy blessing their children. When you see their faces light up, their eyes sparkle with excitement, and see them smile from ear to ear, your heart is warmed and filled with joy.
2. Where do you think this parental instinct came from? Of course, it came from none other than God Himself.
 - The Bible says, "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights...*" **James 1:17**
 - Jesus said to the twelve disciples in **Luke 11:11-13**, "*If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*"
3. Notice how Hosea brings this out in chapter 11.
 - God loved Israel and called them out of Egypt. vs. 1; **cf. Deuteronomy 7:7-8**
 - God lovingly taught Israel their first steps. vs. 3; **cf. Isaiah 1:2**
 - God healed Israel when they were sick. vs. 3; **cf. Psalms 107:19-21**
 - As a loving father, God drew Israel to an earthly lot for an inheritance. vs. 4a; **cf. 1 Chronicles 16:17-19**
 - God protected them from their enemies and graciously provided for them. vs. 4b
 - As a loving father, God had richly and graciously blessed His first-born son, Israel. **Exodus 4:22**
4. Did you know the same is true of the church, the body of Christ today?
 - Israel was an earthly people with earthly blessings.
 - We are a heavenly people with heavenly blessings. **Ephesians 1:3, 2:6**
5. Our Father has not held back anything - we have blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. **cf. Romans 8:28-32**

6. We are forever objects of the Father's love. **Romans 8:35-39**

God's heart is to call His children when they go astray.

1. When a father sees his child in danger, what does he do? He immediately calls unto him and seeks to protect him. This is a natural instinct.
2. This is what God had done to His wayward children. God's heart was to bless Israel, but they had left the place of blessing and went chasing after false gods and pagan images.
3. With a father's love, God had sent the prophets to call Israel back to Himself. vs. 2, 7; **cf. 2 Kings 17:7, 13-14**
4. Did you know this is God's heart towards His children today? It grieves His heart when He sees His children destroying their lives through sin. It hinders that sweet fellowship that we could be enjoying with our Father. **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**
5. Today, God calls to us through His written Word. It will bring conviction when we err, call us to do that which is right, and instruct us in how to do it. **2 Timothy 3:15-17**

God's heart is to grieve when He must discipline His children.

1. Any good father knows he must discipline his children when they do wrong, but no loving father enjoys it. It breaks his heart. This is the picture we see of God in Hosea 11.
2. Israel refused to return **to** God but continued backsliding (turning away) **from** God (vs. 5, 7). God had no choice - in love He had to bring chastisement. vs. 6
3. But we see God literally grieved over this thought in verse 8.
 - Israel deserved utter destruction from God, like the cities of Admah and Zeboim (cities that were completely annihilated with Sodom and Gomorrah).
 - But notice how God allows us to see into His heart. God cries out, "*...mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.*"
 - The word "kindled" means "to be deeply affected with passion (love or pity)."
 - The thought of destroying Israel like those cities of the plain causes God to cry out, "*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?*" **Psalm 81:10-16; 2 Samuel 18:33**
4. As a good father, God will chasten us today when we go astray, but it is always for our good. **1 Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 12:11**

God's heart is to restore His children to fellowship.

1. Because of God's deep love for Israel, He would not execute the fierceness of His anger. He would bring correction, but not make a full end of them.
2. In fact, in verse 10 we catch a glimpse of a future remnant of Jews who will repent and turn to the Lord and desire to walk with the Lord.
 - No longer stubborn and self-willed, they will come to the Lord trembling in humility and repentance.
3. How does God respond? As any loving father would? God will save and deliver Israel and safely place them in their houses. vs. 11; **cf. Isaiah 61:9**
4. All of this prophetically looks forward to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, when Christ will roar as a lion and return to this earth. **Joel 3:16-17**
5. Christian, have you strayed from your heavenly Father? Have you wandered from Him in your heart? God longs for you to simply turn to Him and acknowledge your

wayward course. His arms are open to receive you and once again enjoy sweet fellowship together.

6. The Corinthian church was a church that had strayed in so many ways.
 - Paul reminded them of God's heart in **2 Corinthians 6:17-18**.
 - The key to this is found in **2 Corinthians 7:9-11**. They sorrowed to repentance.