

Return to the Lord, Your Husband Hosea 1:1-3:5

Today we begin a new series on *The Book of the Twelve*, a study of the Minor Prophets, from the Old Testament.

- As you can see they already have two strikes against them.
 - They are found in the “Old” Testament, which means they can’t be as good as books in the “New” testament, right?!
 - And they are “minor.” **Who wants to watch a minor league baseball game when you could watch a major league game?**
- Well, the Old Testament is God’s Word, the larger portion of God’s Word, Jesus’ Bible!
 - These things are written for our **instruction** and **hope**, as Paul says in **Romans 15:4**.
- And they are called “Minor” **not** because their **importance**; but rather because of **their size**.
 - There are **major truths** to learn in these **Minor Prophets**.
 - **In fact, I happen to be writing my Romans commentary and this week I wrote Romans 9. Paul quotes Hosea twice in Rom 9! He also quotes Malachi! In Romans 10 he quotes Joel! Clearly Paul thought these prophets were important!**

They cover the 8th century to the 5th century B.C. Not the whole OT. Post Solomon. OST Elisha, about midway through 2 Kings onward.

Hosea is one of the first one of the longest.

- He is prophesying to the Northern Kingdom, Israel (often called Samaria because everyone it was the capitol city; and Ephraim because it was the largest city).
- It is a remarkable study of God’s love, pictured in the marriage of Hosea and Gomer.
 - If you’re not a Christian, perhaps you think the message is **good people go to heaven and bad people don’t**. But Hosea shows us that salvation is by grace alone. The grace and mercy of God here is remarkable, even scandalous.
 - If you think you have to get your life right before you turn to Christ, please consider the message of this book: **Come as you are!**
 - **If you smell like smoke, come to Jesus.**
 - **If you smell like drink, come to him.**
 - **If you smell like, in Gomer’s case, the red light district, come to him.**

There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us — see it in Hosea.

Will you be a grace receiver or grace rejector?

In our English Bibles, the Minor Prophets consist of 12 **separate books** placed **at the end of the Old Testament**. In Jesus’ Hebrew Bible, these twelve were on **one scroll**.

These twelve are united in various ways.

- (1) There are clear **textual links** between them, often in the “seams” (at the end and beginning of each book).
- (2) There is a similar message of **judgment** and **messianic salvation** (Hosea 3:4-5 as a programmatic text for the minor prophets).
- (3) There are echoes of the major prophets, especially **Jeremiah**;

(4) They have a shared desire: they were **revivalists**, calling Israel back to faithfulness to Yahweh.

The Hebrew Bible (cannon) exists in three parts: **Law** (Torah), **Prophets**, and the **Writings**.

- The Book of the Twelve appears at the end of this second section: Prophets.
- **Former Prophets**: Joshua, Judges, Samuel Kings (giving historical background)
- **Latter Prophets**: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, & then **The Book of the Twelve**

Our plan is to spend a week on each of these prophets, which means **we will not always be able to look at every verse**. My aim is to overview each book, and to also look closely at a particular part of the book for our primary application for the day. (2:14-23 today)

3 Attributes

The Minor Prophets teach us much about God's character. 3 particular attributes stand out:

#1: The Sovereignty of God

- These twelve books show us that **nothing in history happens** to Israel or to outside nations apart from the sovereign plan of God.
- The locust plague in Joel, the destruction of Nineveh, the invasion by Assyria and Babylon, never got God by surprise.
- **Habakkuk wrestled with God's actions**, but **none of the prophets for a moment doubted that Yahweh was in charge of history**.
- This is a comforting truth for us.
- **Our God is in charge of the affairs of history**, and he is taking it to its appointed end, and **that end involves the coming rule of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, proclaimed by the prophets**.

#2: The Holiness of God

- Because God is holy, God takes sin seriously.
 - It does not matter where that sin may be: Edom (as in Obadiah); Nineveh (Nahum) or among Israel and Judah.
- Because God is holy, judgment must be executed.
 - Apart from repentance, judgment falls.
- Because God is holy, God expects his people to be holy.

#3: The Love of God

- Because God loves his people, he sends the prophets to speak his truth to his people.
- "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline" (**Rev 3:19**)
- God is a lover (as we see in Hosea); who woos his people back..
- In all that happens to Israel, nothing can quench his love for her.

Hosea 1:1-3:5

Hosea's marriage to a prostitute, Gomer, symbolizes Israel's unfaithfulness to Yahweh.

The first 3 chapters describe the marriage, and the rest of the book contains excerpts of Hosea's preaching.

- I will walk through the first three chapters today.
- **If you can get chapters 1-3 you get the message of the book.**

**The overarching message to Hosea is:
"Return to the Lord, your husband. Your Loving Husband"**

By placing Hosea at the beginning of the prophets, God's passion for his people is made clear. It shows us the 'heart of God,' and chapter 1 shows us important details about the plan of God.

Consider a few passages from chapter 4 onward that describes the backstory of God's relationship with Israel:

Gracious Redeemer

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son. (11:1; Recall this reference in Matthew? Jesus would be the faithful Israelite, who would keep the covenant perfectly)

But I am the LORD your God
from the land of Egypt;
you know no God but me,
and besides me there is no savior.
It was I who knew *you in the wilderness* (13:4-5a)

Israel's Unfaithfulness

For they have gone up to Assyria,
a wild donkey wandering alone;
Ephraim has hired lovers. (8:9)

Rejoice not, O Israel!
Exult not like the peoples;
for you have played the whore, forsaking your God.
You have loved a prostitute's wages
on all threshing floors. (9:1)

Like grapes in the wilderness,
I found Israel.
Like the first fruit on the fig tree
in its first season,
I saw your fathers.
But they came to Baal-peor
and consecrated themselves to the thing of shame,
and became detestable like the thing they loved. (9:10)

O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols?
It is I who answer and look after you. (14:8a)

God is not an impersonal force, but a lover.

**A Lover who is near and dear, whose heart can be wounded; who pleads with his bride,
“Return to me, Your Husband.”**

**Hosea’s message is that judgment is coming,
nothing can quench but God’s love.**

- This relationship between the **Groom and a Bride** is later expressed in the NT as Paul describes **Christ’s love for the church.**

**Here’s the good news of Hosea:
God is willing to begin again!**

Maybe you grew up in the church; had all the spiritual privileges – being around hymns, Bible studies, sermons, class, Christmas carols – but you have turned your back on God...

This message has great application for you: Return to the Lord, your Groom.

Historical Setting

v.1: We know little about Hosea. We do see his father’s name.

- Hosea’s name means “**salvation.**”
- Yet, in a sense, we know a lot about him because we read of his marriage...
- He has been called the “**prophet of the sorrowing heart.**”

Hosea prophesied before the northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed during the reign of Jeroboam II. You can read of him in **2 Kings 14:23-29.**

- He actually mentions more Judean kings in verse 1, probably even though he prophesied to the North Kingdom, probably **to recognize the Davidic line running through Judah.**
- Hosea was **a contemporary of Amos, Jonah, Isaiah [major] and Micah.**
- So he was one of the **earliest** and he had one of the **longest ministries** (it went longer than the reign of Jeroboam II).
- When He began prophesying no one would have thought the end was near.
- **Economically** they were strong.
- Jeroboam II (who reigned for 41 years) **expanded the boundaries of Israel.**
- Uzziah, king of the southern Kingdom, his contemporary for 37 years, expanded them also.
- Together, the Israel and Judah had almost duplicated the same territory as they had during their golden days.

But while land was expanded, buildings were built, and luxuries were present, this prosperity did not lead to more godliness.

- It was a time of **moral decline.**
- It was a time of **great injustice (as Amos declares passionately)**
- **Orphans and widows were oppressed; business dealings were corrupt, and the courts did nothing to help.**
- And **underneath it all was idolatry:** Baal, sacred prostitution, the high places and more.

After the reign of Jeroboam II, Israel's economic and political prosperity declined rapidly. In 2 Kings 15:8-onward, we read of a series of brief reigns and a weakened Israel until they were eventually taken over by Assyria (2 Kings 17).

Four Parts: **(1) Marriage, (2) Message, [hope] (3) Mercy, and (4) Messiah**

#1: Marriage (1:2-2:1)

Hosea's marriage to Gomer symbolized Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

2: Hosea is told to marry an unfaithful woman, Gomer. It's shocking.

- It seems she was immoral before and after marriage.
- In chapter 3, he is told to take her again – which means she had been unfaithful during the marriage, and they were separated. So that much is clear.
- **That seems radical.**
- **But the prophets often did something strange or shocking to draw attention to the message.**
 - Isaiah walked around naked and barefoot for three years as a sign of the coming exile of Egypt and Cush (Isa 20:3–5). Dress code at IDC: **“Clothes.”**
 - Ezekiel lay on his side for over a year near to show Jerusalem under siege (Ez 4–5).
- **Hosea's marriage contains a message: Israel has been unfaithful to Yahweh.**

How were they unfaithful?

- ¹² My people inquire of a piece of wood,
and their walking staff gives them oracles.
For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray,
and they have left their God to play the whore. (Hosea 4:12)

3: Hosea obeys, and she conceives a son.

4-9: We read of the **three children that symbolize God's judgment on unfaithful Israel.**

- I've heard of some interesting names (**“Bless His Name,” “Born on Thursday” “Kenny McKenny”**) but imagine naming a kid, **“Judgment is coming.” “Not Loved.” “Not mine”**
- **Starting at shortstop, number 6, “Judgment is Coming.” Playing third base, #4, “Not loved.” And on the mound, “Not mine.”**
- There would be **outrage** today.
- And **that's the point.** God was outraged because of Israel's idolatry.
- **Every time the kids name was spoken it would send a message to the state of their relationship with God.**

A. Jezreel (4-5)

4: This name brought vivid memories to the people of Israel.

- It would be like calling someone's name, **Auschwitz** or **Chernobyl** or **Gettysburg**, because this placed symbolized bloodshed, disaster and death.
- Jezreel was where **Jehu** slaughtered the house of Ahab (2 Kings 9:7-10:28) in obedience to the Lord's command.

- Jehu was called to be an agent of judgment against the wicked house of Ahab, including his wife Jezebel. It included the destruction of false prophets of Baal.

Calling him “Jezreel” was a way of saying, “future judgment will come come.”

- **This sets the tone for the rest of the book: a confrontation of Baal and Yahweh**

“for the blood of Jehu” – Since Jehu is commended for carrying out God’s will (2 Ki 10:30), the meaning is something like this: **I will punish Israel for not learning the lesson of Jezreel** (NAC). **That is, that idolatry and evil leads to judgment.**

Jezreel also means “**scatter**” and that’s what God will do: scatter them in judgment. (In 2:22 it’s positive, can be “scattered to sow grain”)

- The first son, “**Jezreel**” – **scattered in judgment.**

The point: **Unfaithfulness begets corruption, violence and treachery.**

- **And judgment is coming as a result. They would be cast away.**

5: The bow was a symbol of power; the broken bow means a loss of power.

B. No Mercy (6-7) [Lo-Ruhamah]

- Meaning, “Not loved.” Or “No mercy” – “she who has received no mercy.”
- God will **no longer show mercy to Israel.**
- Judgment will fall.

6: The word translated “**forgive**” in the ESV is translated “**take them away**” in the CSB.

- It can mean “forgive” as in “carry away our sins”
- It may also be rendered, “**I will carry them away**”
- The **CSB is probably the best translation: God will carry Israel away in judgment.**

7: The contrast with Judah. **Hosea one is a fitting intro to all Twelve Minor Prophets.**

- Yahweh will not show mercy to Israel **but he will to Judah.**
- “**by the Lord their God**” is God’s way of making an emphatic statement: **They still know who their God is!**
- “**not by bow, sword...**” implies that **will trust God (see the 2 Kings 19, 185,000 Assyrians destroyed not by bow, sword, or war... but by God’s interevention).**

C. “Not My People” (8-9) [Lo-Ammi]

8: **This is even bleaker then the second name.**

- Lo-Ruhamah speaks of not receiving mercy; **this speaks of being disowned.**
- “**my people**” is used some 17 times in Exodus alone.
 - It’s a phrase of endearment and familial bond.

9: **Yahweh would disown Israel; He would not be their God.**

- Why? Recall verse 2 – **they had unfaithfully gone after other gods, other lovers.**

The sequence: **scattered in judgment, no mercy, no identity.**

D. Hope for Restoration (1:10-2:1)

In the Hebrew, verse 10 begins chapter 2.

10: “Yet.” The gospel in the OT.

Though God was declaring his detachment from Israel, there would come a day in which God would make their number like the sand on the seashore.

- So with the message of warning and judgment in verses 2-9, here is a word of hope.
- It's the language of the **Abrahamic covenant. (Gen 22:17)**
- **Paul tells us that those who believe are children of Abraham (including Gentiles)**
- **God will keep his covenant in spite of the unfaithfulness of the people.**
- **The unfaithfulness of Israel does not nullify the faithfulness of God** (from Rom 9:6).

There would be severe punishment to come when the Assyrians took them captive; **but that judgment would not be the last word.**

- Afterward, God would not call them “not my people” but in the future he would call them “**children of the living God**”

Application

Lest all of this sounds so distant from you historically, recognize that both **Paul and Peter quote Hosea 1 and 2**. They apply it to believers, to the people of God in Christ.

This is our story.

- **In Romans 9:26**, Paul quotes it to talk about God's saving grace extending to the Gentiles to salvation.
- **1 Peter 2:10** – it's our testimony.

**Out of Egypt, God called his Son, Jesus Christ, and all who are in him,
are children of the living God!**

Adam's houseguest, sneaking girls into the pastor's house, sneaking around to smoke weed... He got caught... Was confronted... by grace (Jean Valjean moment!). He was convicted, and eventually converted. Threw his bong away.

- **Adam: “The life change is undeniable. He's now bringing his friends to church. Lovingly rebuking Christian friends who are making unwise sexual choices. Considering becoming a missionary in Africa.”**
- **That's the kind of thing God is saying he does here, and in Rom 9 and 1 Pet 2:10.**
- **He takes those who are *not* his people, and makes them his people!**
- **He calls former deceivers, adulterers, and Rebels against God, “Children of the Living God!”**

11: This happened **partially** after Babylonian exile. No longer were there two nations.

- But they were **not** able to choose the head of the government; they were under governors appointed by Persia, and never attained true autonomy at any point before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.
- But a day would come in which they would be **under Christ himself, in new creation.**

2:1: Hope is spelled out “You are my people, you have received mercy.”

- Now it’s “Ammi” (my people) *not* Lo-Ammi; and “Ruhamah” *not* “Lo-Ruhama”

So, Exile would be a time of reflection and repentance; a time of waiting for restoration, waiting for the coming of the Messiah.

- He has come, and through Him, we are God’s people; in him, we have received mercy.

#2: Message (2:2-13)

Israel had forsaken Yahweh to pursue other lovers.

Here the relationship between Hosea’s marriage and God’s relationship to Israel is spelled out more.

2:2: “**Plead**” – Israel is being called to repent and return in faithfulness to God.

- “**She is not my wife**” implies **Hosea had disowned Gomer**, like Yahweh had disowned Israel.
- **In 3:1, he is called to take her back.**
- Her adultery is described in vivid ways **showing the shame of Israel’s ways.**

2:3-13: [Read the whole section]. We can summarize it with three verses:

1. **She has loved other gods, though Yahweh wanted to be her husband. (2:5)**

- He did not abandon her; she abandoned him.

2. **All that she has, she has received from Yahweh, though she thinks it’s from Baal. (2:8)**

- She did not “**know**.” This is an important word in the book.
- It carries this idea of intimacy/relationship. “Adam knew Eve...”
- Israel did not “**know**” the Lord
- Here they are being urged to know his provision and grace (8) **Later:**

i. **Promise of Betrothal: 2:20**

ii. **Lament: 4:1, 6; 5:3-4**

iii. **Exhortation: 6:1-3**

iv. **Lament: 8:1-3**

v. **Failure to acknowledge his grace: 11:3**

vi. **Relationship 13:4-5**

- What does it mean to be faithful? It means to **know him.**
- **Know where salvation is, where provision comes from, to love him.**

3. **God will punish this harlotry. (2:13)**

“To be a human is to be a lover” — we love things.

- **Kabobs, sweet T, college football, Superheroes, cars...**
- **Give your deepest love to your Savior, Jesus Christ.** “Do you love me, Peter?”

- **Augustine: “You have made us for yourself; and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.”**
- A sin problem is a worship problem.
- “Whoever is wise, let him understand these things...” (14:9).
 - **This book is for your wisdom.**
 - **It’s for your good. Do not love God half-heartedly, but whole heartedly.**
 - **There are good effects of pure devotion to Jesus; while idolatry brings ruin.**

We are not here for 8th century history lesson!

- **Sin’s ability to interest and satisfy eventually ceases to interest and satisfy. So you trade it for another sin... often a more damaging vice.**
- **But see here that the person who pursues the glory of God will never cease to be interested and never feels unsatisfied.**

Hosea shows you the tragedy of loving other things more than the one who made you.

- But it also shows you the unfathomable mercy of God and ineffable love of God.

#3: Mercy (2:14-23)

God promises to allure unfaithful Israel back to Himself.

God plans to restore the relationship with Israel.

- THIS corresponds to 1:10-11. It looks forward to future grace toward Israel.
- It is a message not only for the northern Kingdom of Israel, but for us as well – those who share the faith of Abraham by faith (Rom 4:16; Gal 3:7; 1 Pet 2:10; Rom 9:24).
- We see the merciful nature of our God. “In you the orphan finds mercy” (14:3).
- Here the unfaithful find mercy (Ps 51; Ex 34:6-7)

Notice three things the Lord Continues to Do:

1. The Lord Woos Us Tenderly (2:14)

*O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

- His love will not let us go.
- Our God is a jealous God. He wants our hearts (James 4)
- **“The wilderness”** – where the Lord loved and cared for Israel. (13:5)

A word to the unfaithful today:

- God wants to **be alone with you.**
- **God can start all over with you.**
- He wants to speak **“tenderly”** to you. Literally, he can “speak to **her heart**”
- When we hear him speak to our hearts, he tenderly woos us back.
- **It is like what a husband says to his bride when they are alone on a walk after leaving an event; as they are alone.**

Piper: “Go with him into the wilderness and listen with your heart. Do not think you are too ugly or too rotten. He knows that his wife is a harlot. That's the meaning of mercy: God is wooing a wife of harlotry.”

- Have you gone astray? **See God’s love here.**
- He welcomes you back.
- **Return to the Lord Jesus Christ, your Groom.**

2. The Lord Provides Satisfaction and Safety (2:15-18)

15: The Valley of Achor was where Israel was unfaithful.

- After they entered the Promised Land; Achan sinned against God, which led to Israel’s defeat against Ai (God’s discipline). (Josh 7)
- **Achor** represents **trouble and disgrace.**
- But now, God promises that a day is coming **like the day they first entered the promised land, a day of God’s great blessing.**

16-17: “And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more.

So how do we enjoy this renewal? What does God want from us?

- He wants you to **see him as your only God, and your true husband.**
- Do not see him as **one among many other lovers, many other gods.**
- See Him as the only living God and **the only lover of your soul!**
- Love him warmly as your divine husband; don’t treat him as a harsh master, or some superstitious good luck charm.

Baal meant “**Master or Owner.**”

- The Lord is our Master, but he’s more: He’s our **husband.**
- Israel began to see their faith as a **duty to a Master, rather than a love relationship with a wonderful husband.**

**Do you see the faith like that? As a duty to be performed without joy?
Or do you see it as the best of all relationships?**

Like Newton says:

***Our pleasure and our duty,
though opposite before
since we have seen his beauty
are joined to part no more.***

Verse 18 spells it out this **satisfaction and safety** more.

- If you will return to your husband, **you will find paradise.**
- Notice the promise to created things; this is **like a return to Eden.**
- No **violence, no conflict. Peace and blessing and communion with God.**
- The Lord says: “Put your unfaithfulness away, can come back to me and enjoy Paradise!”

3. The Lord Renews the Unfaithful by His Mercy. (19-23)

The Lord will renew his wife's betrothal and consummate the marriage in purity (19-23)

19-20: He says it three times: "I will betroth you to me."

What does this mean?

It means God is willing to start all over with you if you have been unfaithful to him!

- He is saying, "We will return to the days of our engagement."
- It means, "Spiritual prostitutes get their purity back."
- That's what happens when genuine repentance takes place.
- You get to return to purity and joy and newness.

19b: We will start all over with righteousness, justice, steadfast love, and faithfulness.

- **You can be known for holiness instead of harlotry.**

20: "And you shall know the Lord"

Here's that word again: "know." "Joseph knew her not until she had borne a son."

- You will "know me" meaning it will be like the purest of intimacy with me.

21-22: As a result of this renewed relationship, **the Lord promises to answer their prayers, and supply all their needs.**

23: It is a picture of complete reversal, and a completely restored relationship.

So Good News for the Unfaithful:

- **God woos us tenderly to himself;**
- **He promises us full satisfaction and safety;**
- **He starts over with the unfaithful, and offers us the most enjoyable relationship possible.**

Think about your failures:

- Your sins of omission and commission.
- Your lack of devotion to Scripture.
- Your prayerlessness.
- Your attempt to find joy and satisfaction apart from God.
- For some of you, this has involved doing that which you never thought you would do... you have been in the pit of sin...
- Think of your pride. Your greed. Your anger. Your lust. Your desire for glory....

Here the message of Hosea:

God is wooing you into the chambers of his love.

He is calling you back to the garden,
where you walk with him in the cool of the day.

It's His **love** that invites us back to this **renewed relationship with him**.

*And I will build my life upon your love it is a firm **foundation**.*

And I will put my trust in you alone and I will not be shaken.

Those who know him in this way of love...

- **Find their joy and pleasure in him.**
- **Long to be with him in the word and in prayer.**
- **Pursue godliness with passion for his glory.**
- **They sing. Serve. Give.**
- **When you know God as your Loving Husband, not as a Harsh Master, everything changes.**

#4: Messiah (3:1-5)

God promises messianic salvation in the future.

We meet Hosea and Gomer for a final time.

1: She has run off with another lover.

- But Hosea is not told to end it. He is *not* told to stone her.
- **He is to mirror God's undying love for Israel.** "Go again and love her."
- What love this is.
- She had been unfaithful. Now she has run off...
 - She loves "cakes of raisins," refers to eating these cakes as part of false worship ...
 - **It's not that God is opposed to cake. He gave Elijah cake!**
 - **Little Debbies are divine! Esp fudge rounds.**

- But Hosea is told to love her again – and further – to **buy her back** from this lover.

2: She has fallen into destitution and slavery. (Ex 21:32)

- **God says, whatever it costs, go buy her back.**
- **Go get my bride, as wretched as she may be.**

3: OT version of: "I do not condemn you, but go and sin no more."

4: God will use the exile to cure Israel of her apostasy...

5: Israel's ultimate hope lies in a King from the line of David.

- God had a glorious future for Israel though they'd been in rebellion against the House of David.
- God will honor his covenant of having one on David's throne forever!
- "at the end of days" is a way to speak of the Messianic kingdom to come, where all that was lost will be restored.
- As this vision looks beyond the restoration of the northern kingdom from Assyria and the restoration of the southern kingdom of Babylon, **to something greater.**

Jesus the Son of David came to redeem his bride.

And He will come again to take us to himself, where Paradise is restored

All who have said yes to his gracious invitation, will enjoy him forever.

Our ultimate hope lies in this King.

He is the Savior of the believing Jew today; and for the believing Gentile, those grafted in, as Paul says in Romans 11.

We are like Gomer, wayward, wretched dirty, and idolatrous.

- **But Christ has come to pay the ultimate price for us;**
- **He has wooed us by his grace.**
- **He has become our Groom and our Sovereign King.**

Return to the Lord, Your Husband. Don't see him as a harsh master.

See Him as a wonderful Husband who is faithful and merciful to the end.

- **No one loves sinners like him, the ultimate prophet of sorrow, the ultimate Son of David.**
- **“Christ loved his bride, and gave himself for her.”**
- **At the cross, we see the ultimate picture of love.**
- **Christ stepped into the marketplace of sin and brought us out of bondage through the price of his own blood.**

- **He took us to himself; replaced our shame with his righteousness.**
- **He said, “You are mine forever.”**

- **Behold your groom: “Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded.”**

- **“His mercy has triumphed over judgment.”**

- **Do not give your heart to another – Love the Lord Jesus Christ, your Groom, and live your life in joyful submission to him.**