10/10/2021 AR LOVING Hosea 11:8-11 **“ With Bands of Love”** by Rev. ST Hong

These days we often see those who love their children so much that it effects other in bad way. They have the wrong idea that others will love their child as much as they do. God of today's Bible, Hosea 11, is this kind of father. "Unlimited Love for My Son Only" This is the topic of today's sermon.

[Hosea(NKJV) 11:1]

When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

"a child" here isn't a good thing, it represents "childish, idiot". God did not choose Israel because they looked pretty and lovely, but because they were living as fools as slaves. He chose them to be His sons. God wanted Israel to become a 'Son like Him'.

[Romans(NKJV) 5:8]

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This story is not unique to Israel. The same applies to us. When God chose us to save us, we were sinners and enemies of God. God's love is such a one-sided and great love. Because all our thoughts and actions were sins, yet He chose us. God killed his son and adopted us as sons.

This strange and one-sided love of God did not end simply with 'choice and salvation'.

[Hosea(NKJV) 11:3-4]

3 I taught Ephraim to walk, Taking them by their arms; But they did not know that I healed them.

4 I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.

Look closely at the scripture verse above. It is a picture of parents raising young children. This is God. He puts love into it all. He had removed the yoke of the slaves who had bound them before and bound himself with His son, Israel. He poured out all His devotion. There is only one reason. Because he really wanted to become one with his son. But what is the result?

[Hosea(NKJV) 11:2, 5]

2 As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images.

5 He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, Because they refused to repent.

God led Israel in the cord of love. So He kept sending the prophets diligently. But Israel ignored them, even killed them, and eventually abandoned God. As a result, they became slaves to Assyria. It is as if they were slaves in Egypt before God chose them.

The God of Hosea is the 'father of perfect love'. It is completely different from the image of the wrong father that you have. Still, Israel betrayed her father's love, saying, "What You have done is meaningless. What Baal and the Golden Calf did is much better." For such a foolish son, trial and imprisonment are the best fit. So God hands Israel over to Assyria as a prisoner. But God wept as he saw his son wearing a prison uniform and suffering.

[Hosea(NKJV) 11:8]

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.

God has called us as He has called Israel, and He has led us just as He led them. But Israel forsook the love of God and returned to slavery. Could it be that we are like them? If it could, then we must listen to the mourning cries of God. We have to see Father's tears that break His heart.

[Romans(NKJV) 11:29]

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

God does not regret calling and having saved us. He still hasn't changed the goal of His first calling. "I will make you my son completely like me." Still, He did not move even one step from this goal. No matter where you are now, that goal has not changed. He is still working hard to make us holy.

Let's remember that love and tears. Let's go back. Let us commit ourselves to His goals. May He hold you tight with His "binding Love" and lead you whole until the day you become one with Him.