

# Unfailing Love

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes God's unfailing love and mercy, calling believers to return to Him despite their unfaithfulness.*

**Duration:** 35:51

**Scripture:** Psalm 86:1-4, Psalm 86:11-13, Psalm 86:17, Hosea 3:1, Hosea 12:10

**Topics:** "Love"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing how sin can start innocently but gradually takes hold of our lives, just like a fly caught in a spider's web. He uses this analogy to explain how sin can entangle and destroy us if we don't fight against it. The speaker then introduces the book of Hosea and focuses on Hosea chapter three, verse one, where God instructs Hosea to love an adulterous woman as a representation of His love for the unfaithful nation of Israel. The sermon emphasizes God's compassion, mercy, and patience in training His children and His unfailing love for us.

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## Transcript

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Psalm 86 for our scripture reading today. Psalm 86, I'll read the first, the unnumbered verses. Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the reading of the even numbered verses as we stand to read the Word of God.

This is a prayer of David, bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am holy. O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all of them that call upon thee.

Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee, for thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord, neither are there any works like unto thy works.

All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great and doest wondrous things, thou art God alone. Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth.

Unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify thy name forevermore. For great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before them. But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me.

Give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thy handmaid. Show me a token for good, that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed, because thou, Lord, hast helped me and comforted me." Let's pray. Our Father, how grateful we are that we have been called to be your children, and to know that you are a compassionate, merciful, gracious, loving Father, so patient in training us in your ways, drawing us unto yourself, revealing, Lord, to us your purpose, your plan for our lives.

Thank you, Lord, for this day in which we can gather, and to worship you, Lord, and to again learn more about your unfailing love for us. Bless this study now. Open our hearts to receive your truth.

In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. Well, we start the book of Hosea this week, as we continue our journey through the Bible.

Tonight, Pastor Skip will lead us through the study of Hosea chapters one through four. They are short little chapters, and so you'll have plenty of opportunity to read and study them over this afternoon, and join with us this evening, seven o'clock, as Pastor Skip takes us through from Genesis to Revelation. This morning, we'd like to draw your attention to Hosea chapter three, verse one, where Hosea declares, Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet and love a woman who is 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.

In the twelfth chapter of Hosea, God said, I have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions and used similitudes. Now, a similitude is a likeness, a resemblance, a representation. The root word is similar, and of course, we have the word similarity, and that comes close to similitude.

It is something that is like, very similar to, and is used to illustrate the truth. And so here we have the similitude of uh, the Lord's dealing with the nation of Israel, as we see Hosea and his dealing with his wife, his marriage, his children. It becomes a similitude, a likeness of how God is working with the nation of Israel.

God commanded Hosea in chapter one to take a wife who was a prostitute. She, in her prostitution, was likened unto the nation of Israel, who had served other gods, which in the eyes of God is spiritual idolatry. God saw himself as married unto Israel, that intimate relationship of husband and wife.

So for Israel to be attracted to and to love other gods, and to serve other gods, was in the eyes of God, spiritual adultery. They were to be married unto God, and yet they had a love for idols and for other gods. And so Hosea took a bride who was a prostitute.

Evidently very beautiful, and he did indeed love her. She bore a son to him. He called the name of the son Jezreel.

The word Jezreel in Hebrew means scattered. And God was declaring that he was going to scatter the nation of Israel because of their turning their backs on him. So that everywhere little Jezreel went, as

people would call him, it would be a reminder of the warning of God that they were going to be scattered throughout the world because of their turning their backs upon God.

His wife then bore a daughter to him. He called her name Loruhamah. Ruhamah is the Hebrew word for mercy.

Lo is the Hebrew word for no. It's a negative prefix. So Loruhamah would be no mercy.

God is declaring now that he was not going to show mercy upon Israel any longer. He had been very merciful. He had called to them.

He had sent his prophets. He had used similitudes, but it was over. He was no longer going to be merciful to their turning their backs on him.

They would be conquered and they would be scattered throughout the world. His wife bore another child. He called his name Lo-Amy.

Lo-Amy is a word that means my people. Put the Lo in front of it and you have not my people. Hosea is saying this is not my son.

His wife has committed adultery. The son has been born, but Hosea says it's not my son. The similitude God is saying to the nation of Israel, you are no longer my people.

I'm not going to have mercy on you anymore. I'm going to scatter you because you are not my people. It is interesting when the Lord talks about the scattering of Israel.

He declares that Judah, that is the Southern tribe, would not be scattered at this time. That would come later. God promised that he would have mercy upon Judah.

No more mercy for Samaria, the kingdom of Israel, but he would still show mercy upon Judah, would save them. But not by bow or sword or battle or horses or horsemen, but by the hand of the Lord. It is interesting.

This is a prophecy concerning Judah. And when the Assyrians came to Israel, the Northern kingdom, conquered it and took them as captives and spread them throughout the world, they came down to Jerusalem. The Assyrians set siege against Jerusalem.

It was during the reign of Hezekiah. Isaiah was the prophet to Judah at that time. Isaiah had said to Hezekiah, God will deliver you from the Assyrians.

You don't need to worry. And so one night we read that an angel of the Lord passed through the camp of the Assyrians and killed 185,000 of the Assyrian troops. Those that were left alive fled back to Assyria, and thus God fulfilled the promise.

He would show mercy unto Judah. He would deliver them, but not with the sword and not with horses or horsemen, not with the bow, but with the hand of the Lord. And that prophecy was fulfilled.

Not my people. You know, it is always a tragic day when in the life of an individual or in the life of a nation, God declares, they're no longer my people. You're no longer my child.

And God disowns them as a nation. And I wonder about our nation. Just how close are we to God declaring of America, Lo, Amy, not my people any longer.

In Romans chapter one, Paul tells us that because when they knew God, they did not glorify him as God and neither were they thankful, but they became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened and professing themselves to be wise. They actually became fools because they changed the glory of an incorruptible God. And they made it like unto corruptible things, birds, beast, creeping things.

And therefore God also gave them over to their uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. And they changed the truth of God into a lie. They worshiped and served the creature more than the creator who is blessed forevermore.

And God declares, Lo, Amy, you're not my people. You're not doing my will. So as Hosea's three children were growing up in the community, their lives were a message to the nation of Israel.

You're going to be scattered. God's not going to show mercy any longer because you are not God's people. It would seem that at this point, Hosea's wife left him and she went back to her old practices as a prostitute.

She must have been a very beautiful woman, truly loved by Hosea. But she left him that she might live the sensuous life of luxury by being a prostitute. Hosea pleaded with her to return, but she refused and he was brokenhearted.

He watched her as her life began to be wasted as the result of the lifestyle that she had chosen. For she was engaging in one adulterous affair after another and sin began to take its toll upon her life. And she aged very rapidly.

Her beauty was fading. And with that, her desirability until her life was soon a wreck. The nation of Israel.

In the beginning, they had come out of Egypt and they had been worshipping the gods of Egypt. They had been more or less prostituting themselves with the foreign gods. But when God called them, he called them unto himself the first commandment, thou shalt have no other God before me.

And he was to be their God. You're not to bow down to any image, to any idol, to worship it. And they accepted this covenant with God.

And they declared that he was their God and God blessed them. And as long as they sought the Lord, God prospered them. But when the kingdom was divided between the north and the south, the northern kingdom of Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah, the northern kingdom turned immediately away from God.

They made worship centers in Bethel and in Dan and they put up an image of a golden calf and they worshipped the golden calf, which they had worshipped in Egypt. And they declared, this is the God that delivered you out of your bondage in Egypt, no longer God's people. Like the wife of Hosea returning back to the prostitution, turning away from God, turning away from the love of God and doing their own thing and living for their own pleasure.

It would appear that Gomer, the wife of Hosea, because of the life that she had chosen was ultimately reduced to slavery. She became a slave and surely that is the consequence of sin. It brings you into

bondage.

It starts out maybe as a lark, a dare, a curiosity, a fling, but it gets a hold upon your life and brings you into real bondage. One day in my office, I observed there in the windowsill a fly that was caught in a spider web. And I watched with interest as this fly was trying to extricate itself from the spider web.

But I watched as the spider came out and pounced upon the fly and began to bite the fly with its poisonous venom. I saw the spider with its six legs held the fly and then with its back two legs began to spin a web around the fly. And at the beginning, the fly was really trying to get free, working so hard to get free, but gradually as the spider was spinning this web, it was entwining this fly in the web until finally there was no strength left in the fly.

It was completely bound in that web. And I thought of how like sin, in the beginning there is that struggle against it. There's that fight against it, but gradually as it gets its hold upon your life, you come under the power of and in the bondage to sin until there's no fight left and you are destroyed by sin.

That's the similitude. If you want to know what similitudes are about. So the story of the unfaithful wife of Hosea and her going out and living again the life of a prostitute was the similitude of the nation of Israel who had turned against God's love and had begun to worship other gods.

But here in chapter three, we have a very interesting commandment of God. He commands Hosea to go and love a woman who was your beloved friend, though an adulterous, love her according to the love that the Lord has for the children of Israel who look to other gods and love the flagons of wine. So Hosea declared, I bought her for 15 pieces of silver and 12 bushels of barley.

She was no longer the beautiful young girl that he once married in the beginning. Her life is now pretty well marred and ruined by sin. She's now being sold on the slave market.

Yet Hosea is commanded by the Lord to go and to love her and to redeem her. And so Hosea paid the price for her redemption. In this similitude, we see the unfailing love of God for his people, for the nation of Israel, though they had deserted God and they were worshipping other gods and were thus guilty of spiritual adultery.

Still, God's love for them was unfailing. His undying love. God promised that they would be many days without a king.

They would then afterwards seek the Lord and David, their king, and they would worship the Lord for his goodness. And just as God prophesied here, the nation of Israel was many days without a king, without a prince, without sacrifices, without the ephod, the priestly ministry. Yet, the Lord said in the last days, they would return to the land and they would seek the Lord God and David, their king.

Now, the first part of this prophecy has been fulfilled. They have returned to the land. The second part is not yet fulfilled.

They haven't yet turned to God. Israel is still a very secular state. The people who are truly religious comprise a very small minority.

But the day will come when their eyes will be opened to the presence and the power of God upon their land and upon their nation, and they will turn to God and they will seek the coming of the Messiah. That

day will come when God destroys that group of Muslim nations who, with the support of Russia, will seek to destroy the nation of Israel, and God will intervene with divine intervention. Ezekiel tells us about it in chapters 38 and 39.

Chapter 38, 18, it will come to pass at the time when Gog, who is the leader of Russia, will come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, my fury will come in my face, for I, in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath, have I spoken. Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel, and all of the men that are upon the face of the earth shall shake at my presence, and the mountains will be thrown down. The steep places shall fall.

Every wall will fall to the ground, and I will call for a sword against him throughout all of my mountains, saith the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother, and I will plead against him with pestilence, with blood, and I will rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him an overflowing rain, great hailstones, fire, brimstone, and thus will I magnify myself and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah. Then in chapter 39, the house of Israel shall know from that day onward that I am Jehovah their God, and the heathens shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity because of their iniquity and because they trespassed against me.

I hid my face from them. I placed them into the hand of their enemies where they fell by the sword, and because of their uncleanness and because of their transgressions, I did this to them. I hid my face from them, and therefore thus saith the Lord God, I will now bring them back from their captivity and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name.

So after they have borne their shame and all of their trespasses whereby they've trespassed against me when they dwelt safely in the land, none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, gathered them out of their enemies' lands and am sanctified in them and in the sight of many nations, then shall they know that I am Jehovah their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen. But I have gathered them unto their own land and have left none of them there anymore, and neither will I hide my face from them anymore, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." So as with Hosea's wife, she left him.

She became a prostitute again. The children were a testimony to the nation. You're no longer God's people.

God is no longer going to be merciful to you. You're going to be scattered. So the nation of Israel was scattered and has been scattered throughout the world.

But the Lord promised in the last days he would bring them back into the land. He would again claim them as his people, as they claim God as their God. He will bring them back from having been scattered, show mercy, and again claim them as his people.

We see the beginning of that. They are gathered and are gathering into the land. Before long, the Muslims are going to try once more to destroy the land of Israel, and God will defend them in such a way as they will recognize the God of Israel, that he is the true Lord.

And Israel will then be received by God, and again experience God's undying, unfailing love for them, even though they were unfaithful to him. Unfailing love flows from his heart and heals my soul. In spite of

who I am, he loves and makes me whole.

I almost can't believe it's true. Unfailing love, and yet I know he gave his life to give to me unfailing love. God's unfailing love for you today.

Maybe you, like Israel, have turned away from God. There have been other gods that have commanded your love, and you found that, like as Jesus said to the church of Ephesus, you have left your first love. And maybe that's a message that Jesus, if he would have a personal talk with you today, would be saying to you, you've left your first love.

That fervency, that devotion that you once had for me and for the things of the Spirit, and other things have come in, and you've been caught up with other interests. And he's calling you, as he did the church of Ephesus, to repent and to return back to that first love. And maybe the Lord is speaking to your heart today, because he loves you.

He is merciful to you. He's called you his people, because you acknowledged him. But it is possible, like with Israel, to turn your back upon God, to go other ways, serve other gods, where God will say, you're not my people.

I won't have mercy any longer. You'll go into captivity. I pray not.

But I pray that you would respond to the voice of God's Spirit as he would speak to your heart today, and you'd come back to that first love. That he might gather you unto himself again and declare, my people. Father, we thank you for your unfailing love for us.

Though we, Lord, like Gomer, have turned our interest to other things, there have been other lovers that have come into our life. The love for pleasure, the love for the things of the world. They've crowded out that place that you once had in our hearts.

And the love has grown cold. We pray, Father, that today, there might be a powerful work of your Spirit in each of our hearts, drawing us back unto that first love, unto that relationship that we once had with you, where you were the most important thing in our lives, and nothing else really mattered except our walk with you. Let that again, Lord, be the paramount issue of our lives.

We pray, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to minister to you today.

If you find this similitude sort of fits your case, that you, like Gomer, have sort of gone back to some of the old practices from which the Lord once delivered you, sought to find pleasure in the things of the world once again rather than your full devotion towards Him, I would encourage you when we're dismissed, come on down, make a recommitment of yourself to the Lord, renew your vows with Him. He's waiting. He's paid the price to redeem you from the bondage of sin, and He will set you free today.

He will deliver you, and I would encourage you to just come and make that renewal of your commitment to Him as He draws you by His love back into fellowship in Jesus' name. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

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