

Church

Though rejected God still offers love to his followers

Sunday school lesson

THOUGH REJECTED, GOD STILL LOVES
(Read from your Bible
Hosea 2:2-3:5)

"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." (Hosea 2:23)

One of the most mystifying attributes of God is His ability to love the unlovely. Think of the most despicable, onery, mean disobedient, irreverent, sinful person that you can imagine. God loves that person and wants to forgive him, so that he can become God's adoptive son. It is a marvel for us. We wonder without understand-

ing, yet we know it to be true. Our minds cannot fully understand.

The message which God spoke to Israel through the profet was given in a cycle of God's judgement and subsequent punishment, followed by God's forgiveness and restoration of the people. The coming disaster would destroy Israel's relationship with the Lord. They had been God's people, but He would call them "Lo-ammi", not my people. Yet there was hope for a future reconciliation, for God's love for them was strong as it is with all who become wayward people.

RENEWED RELATIONSHIP
(Hosea 2:16-20)

"And it shall be at that day, saith

the Lord, that thou shall call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali." (Verse 16)

In that day, the day of restoration and blessing, the people would refer to the Lord as "Ishi", meaning my husband, not "Baali," meaning my lord, or my master. Israel would see God as a beloved husband rather than as a heartless master, or boss. In verses 18-20, Hosea again used the phrase "in that day," also referring to a time in the future. However, this is an indication that Hosea's prophecy looked beyond the return of the people from exile, a few decades in the future.

Here it speaks to a time in the future—the triumph of God's Kingdom

which will usher in the era of universal peace. "And I will betroth thee unto Me forever;—" (Verse 19) "And I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord." (Verse 20) What had God been asking of Israel all through the prior centuries? Faithfulness and obedience. The same as he asks of His church today—and of individual Christians.

RENEWED PROSPERITY
(Hosea 2:21-23)

Hosea, looking through the eyes of God, spoke to the time in the near future when they would be forgiven of their idolatry and restored to their land. He then turned to the distant future, to the time that God's King-

dom would be fulfilled. Now, in these verses the prophet speaks again about the return of Israel from exile, and of how God planned to renew their prosperity. The message was presented in a way that all would understand.

Prosperity would come through their crops; grain, grapes, olives...The land would produce in abundance. "And they shall hear Jezreel." (Meaning God plants) The picture of the history of ancient Israel of the Old Testament is seen in cycles. Israel sins, God brings judgement, Israel repents, God forgives. Through it all we see many attributes of God manifested. His love, patience, grace, forgiveness, long suffer-

ing, and yes, His justice and His righteousness.

Through it all, like a blazing neon sign in the night heavens, we see that "God still loves." God's love for Israel was "love that will not let us go." Though Israel played the harlot in her idolatry, and would soon be taken into exile because her sin demanded punishment, God loved her still. The messages of God are both timely and timeless; they are applicable even in our modern world. God said, "I am the God of creation, I change not."

(Lesson based on the International Sunday School Lessons)

Church calendar



EVANGELIST
BRENDA MCDOWELL

Women's day scheduled

Bay Branch A.M.E. Zion Sunday school begins at 10:00 a.m. with Mr. Horace Hurdle in charge.

Woman's Day will be observed at 11:15 a.m. Evangelist Brenda McDowell of Fayetteville, N.C. will be the guest speaker.

A combined choir will render the music. Mrs. Barbara Shannon, Organist. The public is invited to attend.

Saunders Grove news

Sunday, May 3, at 1:00 the committee for the sick is sponsoring a program. Elder Stephen Vaughn afflicted with Emanuel Pentecostal Holiness Church will deliver the sermon. Music will be presented by Saunders Grove Youth Choir.

On, Sunday, May 10, at 2:30 the

C.A. Proctor Gospel Chorus will celebrate their anniversary. The Rev. Robertson, pastor of Piney Grove A.M.E. Zion Church will deliver the message. Music will be presented by the New Spirituals. All singing groups and the public is invited to attend.

Conference schedule

The Albemarle Black Ministers Conference will be held Saturday, May 2, 1987 at 10:00 a.m. at the First Baptist Church, Hertford, N.C. Presi-

dent, the Rev. John Trotman asks all ministers to be in attendance. Refreshments will be served.

Revival services planned

The Rev. John H. London, Jr. will conduct the revival at the St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Edenton,

Chowan County. Nightly 7:45 p.m., May 5-8, 1987. Different choirs will sing each night.

Ministers to meet

The Albemarle Black Ministers Conference will celebrate their third annual "Elizabeth City State University Day" to be held at the Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church, Elizabeth City, N.C. on Sunday, May 3, 1987, at 6:00 p.m. The special guests are the St. John Baptist Church music department of Creswell, Washington County, The J.H. London Crusaders of Perquimans County, The Steve and New Birth Harmonies of Edenton, Chowan, The New Shiloh Baptist Church Commu-

nity Choir, plus many other church choirs and soloists.

This is a event sponsored in support of the Elizabeth City State University Chancellors Advancement Scholarship fund. The churches are asked to donate at least \$50.00; each minister, \$10.00 or more. RE personal donations are accepted. Checks are to be made to ECSU Foundation or Chancellors Advancement Funds. The Rev. John E. Trotman is president and the Rev. John H. London, Chairman.

Fire-lighters get burned

It's not unusual in North Carolina for accused criminals or traffic violators to walk out of court—free on a technicality.

But if you're a game law violator, beware! Conviction rates are high—especially for people who illegally hunt deer.

Last year, for example, 400 people were arrested in North Carolina for hunting deer at night. Two hundred seventeen were convicted while only 10 were acquitted. The remaining cases are pending.

Major S.R. Johnson of the Wildlife Commission's Enforcement Division cited a number of reasons for his officers' successes.

"All the cases our officers carry into court are misdemeanors," Johnson said. "The majority of the cases carry small fines with the maximum fine about \$50 plus court costs. In most cases, people had rather pay those small fines than go through a long court case.

"Another factor is that our officers conduct good investigations, preserve evidence and make a good presentation in court," Johnson said. "That usually leaves no doubt in the judges' mind that the person is guilty."

Closely related to night deer hunting is the case of the shining light. Fire-lighting, or night deer hunting, is described as shining a light into an area populated by deer and possessing a firearm when shining the light. Some North Carolina counties have ordinances that prohibit anyone from shining lights on deer or in their populated areas, even without a firearm in their possession.

"If there's a county in which it's unlawful to shine a light from sunset to sunrise, then they know absolutely that if they are caught, it's a violation of the law," Johnson said. "If someone is in a county that has a curfew of 11 p.m. on shining lights, then they know they can shine until 11 p.m."

Dear friends,

Easter marks the end of Christ's ministry on earth — his resurrection and ascension into heaven.

His travail was to no purpose unless we follow his precept, the essence of which is 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you'.

Respectfully,
Larry Swindell

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Pictured above is Cheri Williams in a colonial gown which was worn at the time Winfall was settled. Cheri and the other residents of Winfall are making plans now to celebrate Winfall's centennial on Saturday, May 16th. The festivities will be held at Perquimans Central School, and will get underway at 10:00 a.m.

Book available on arthritis

If someone close to you has arthritis, you may wonder, "What is this disease? How will it affect our lives? Can I help?"

You are not the only one asking these questions. There are 37 million Americans with arthritis—and that means a lot of families are affected.

One of the challenges of being a family member is finding ways to live as normal a life as possible, despite arthritis. Regardless of the degree of change that arthritis has brought into your life, you can help make the difference!

The Arthritis Foundation offers a

brochure which describes arthritis and its possible impact on the family; discusses what you can do to help; and explains resources that are available to help you and your family adjust.

If someone close to you has arthritis, call the Arthritis Answer line toll-free at 1-800-422-1492 and ask for your free copy of "The Family: Making The Difference."

The Arthritis Foundation is the only non-profit health agency working to find the answers of this chronic disease. Please call today for your free brochure.

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"SERVANT'S RESPONSIBILITY"

George Wilmore, Pastor
Mt. Sinai Baptist Church

Some mistaken people, sincere but wrong, have thought that all the Lord expects of them now is simply wait for the Lord's return. They depend upon the people to naturally respond to the Lord as the Spirit convicts them.

Let's look at Luke 19:11-27 and continue our study. From verses 11-14: when Jesus left this earth, the work of ministry was given to faithful followers. He expected the work of his followers to exceed his own. Just think of how much easier we can travel and communicate the gospel by comparison to the time of Jesus or the Apostle Paul. Jesus has entrusted faithful followers.

From verses 15-21 we learn there is no responsibility without accountability. One day the Lord will return and he will require a testimony from each one of us. The believers works are to be judged. Some will be burned and some will last as pure and worthy. It is from these works that remain that our reward in Heaven will be determined.

Faithful service will always be rewarded from the Lord.

(verses 22-27) Even a cup of cold water given in His name does not go unnoticed. The reward will be in proportion to the degree of faithfulness on the part of each servant of the Lord. Nothing will go unnoticed by the Lord. That fact should be an encouraging thing to the sincere and faithful Christian.

What a tragedy to have nothing to show the lord for years of labor! xxx was a church member, whether he was a Christian or not, The Lord will have to judge. During his lifetime, xxx was known to come only sporadically to the worship services. Easter and Christmas were his favorites. The treasury showed no giving for the cause of Christ, although xxx fared well in motional goods. Not a soul could say they had been pointed to salvation by the witness of xxx. He thought it crude to put someone of the spot by asking about their relationship to the Lord. Well . . . xxx died and from here it looks like nothing but an empty, fruitless life to present to God. What a shame. He was a nice guy, too.

Do something for the Lord today.

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