

I'm going to read several passages of scripture. The first is in Genesis 3:6: When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was a delight to the eye, and that the tree was desirable *to make one wise, she took from its fruit. She ate, and she gave also to her husband, and he ate. And the eyes of both of them were open, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made them aprons called covering. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the wind of the day.* I don't think that means that He was walking in the cool of the day; I think that they heard him in the wind.

*And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I have heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked?"* Okay, that's Genesis 3; we'll come back and talk about it a little later.

Deuteronomy 6: 5-6. *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and these words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. And you shall teach them diligently to your sons, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way.* Do you ever do things like this? *And when you lie down and when you rise up, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as the frontals on your forehead, and you shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gate.* I believe most of us do these things without even being conscious of that verse of scripture.

Verse 15 - *For the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God.* I wish that were in commas. *For the Lord your God in the midst of you, is a jealous God.*

Deuteronomy 7 is really fascinating. Verse 7 - *The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you, because you were in number more than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But because He loved you and kept the oath which he swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand.* Say amen.

*And redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the land of King Pharaoh of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps his commandment, his covenant, his loving kindness to a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep his commandments.*

Verse 13, the first sentence. *And He will love you and bless you and multiply you.* I'm going to read this just because I like to. Same chapter, verses 20 and 22. Deuteronomy 7: 20-22. *Moreover, the Lord your God will send their hornets against them until those who are left and hide themselves from you perish. You shall not dread them, for the Lord your God is in the midst of you, a great and awesome God. The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you, little by little. You will not be able to put an end to them quickly, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you, or the beasts of the field.*

Okay, in chapter 11 of the same book. *And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments, which I am commanding you today...*this is Deuteronomy 11.13. I'll read it to

you again. And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments, which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that I will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and the late rain. That's the autumn and the spring. That you may get her in your grain and your new wine, and your oil. Verses 22 and 23. For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast in Him, then the Lord will drive out all those nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. And every place from which the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours.

There are quite a few verses to read. I want to go on to Hosea now. We'll start with chapter 1. *The word of the Lord, which came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel. The word of the Lord which came to Hosea when the Lord first spoke through Hosea. The Lord said to Hosea, Hosea, take to yourself a wife of harlotry, and have children of harlotry. For the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord.*

Verse 10 - *Yet the number of the sons of Israel shall be like the sands of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come about that in the place where it is said to them, you are not my people, it will be said to them, "The sons of the living God." The sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. Praise the Lord.*

Hosea 2: 7 - *And she will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them. She will seek them, but will not find them. Then she will say, "I will go back to my first husband, for it is better for me. It was better for me then than now. For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil, and lavished on her silver and gold. Verse 14 - Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak kindly to her. Then I will give her her vineyards from there, in the valley of Achor as the door of hope. She will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. "It will come about in that day," declares the Lord. That you will call me 'Ishi' (a married man), and you will no longer call me 'Baali' (Lord). So it will come about in that day, said the Lord, that you, Israel the woman, shall call me, 'my married man', and you will no longer call me 'My Lord'. Praise the Lord.*

Chapter 2:19... listen to this: *I will betroth you to me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in loving kindness and in compassion. And I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord. And it will come about in that day that I will respond, declares the Lord. I will respond to the heavens, and they will respond to the earth. And the earth will respond to the grain and the new wine and the oil, and they will respond to what God has sown. I will sow her for myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who are not my people, you are my people, and she will say "My God."*

Okay, I think there's one other passage. Oh, let's read chapter 6, just because it's fun. *Come, let us return to the Lord, for He has torn us, but He will heal us. He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days. He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. So let us know; let us press on to know the Lord.*

Hosea 6:6 - *For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and I delight in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.* Interesting about the Bible. Whenever a passage of scripture is being read, there will come so much blackness and darkness and hope and so many words of encouragement; you'll think, goodness alive, the Lord has settled it, and it's glorious and wonderful. Then the Lord will start all over again, tell them all these terrible things, and they'll get positive again. I think that's probably the way it should be to drive the point home again and again and again.

In Chapter 9, he does this. *Do not rejoice, O Israel, in exaltation like the Gentiles, for you have played harlot, forsaking your God. You have loved earnings on every threshing floor. The threshing floor and the winepress will not feed them, and the new wine will fail them* (that is, it will fail to defeat the Lord's people). Verse 15, the third sentence. *Because of the wickedness of their deeds, I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more.*

In Chapter 11, this could be, I'm sure, was said by the Lord with tears in his eyes. By the way, the word Ephraim is just another name for Israel. Chapter 11, verse 8. *How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart is turned over within me. All my compassions are kindled.* Then two more lines: *For I am God and not man. I am the Holy One in your midst. I will not come in wrath. They will walk after the Lord.*

Okay, so it's chapter 14, then. Just verses 4 through 6. *I will hear their apostasy, and I will love them freely, for my anger has turned away from me. I will be like the dew to Israel. He (Israel) will blossom like the lily, and he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. His shoots will sprout, and his beauty will be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon. Those who live in the shadow will again raise grain.*

I want to go back to verse 4, the second sentence. *And I will love them freely.*

I'm going to speak on something this evening. Then the next time I speak, I will have to move on. Brothers and sisters, we're considering something quite new in revelation, and you haven't heard this before. Has anyone ever heard these things before?

This morning I was going to work with my student teacher. On my way back home, my student teacher and I drive to work together every day. He was telling me some things about the love of God that I didn't know. I just sat there with my mouth open, just rejoicing. It was really powerful, and he was writing it down. I think some of it is what the Lord showed him up on the mountain this weekend. He was up there for both group meetings. He's really hoggish about it. I just sat there, and I just sat at his feet. Every brother and sister in this room, the Lord has been showing you some things. Maybe it's no more than one or two sentences, but something.

Okay. I ask you to be my coworker. We're going to the whole Old Testament tonight...and that's just not fair. I've seriously thought about reading the entire Old Testament just to trace the line. To trace the line in the Old Testament, you would have to read in three ways. You would have to read from Genesis 1 through Esther. You would have to stop there and know the line is completed. Then you would have to pick up Psalms and read all the way through to Isaiah, and know that, again, the line is complete. Then start with Isaiah and read through it, and know that when you've read through all the rest of the Old Testament, the line is complete. In other words, you have your history, you have your poetry, and you have your prophecy: the history, the poetry, and the sermons.

... creating counterparts. Then the animals. And then, finally, man, when He felt ready to create a perfect picture of the counterpart. He did all of that like a skilled sculptor, practicing little by little, always going on to something bigger until finally He made His masterpiece. He would create for Himself a wife worthy of God. I want to repeat that for you. He would create for Himself a wife...worthy. Please hear that. A wife...worthy. Worthy. Worthy of God.

Where would God get this woman? Where would He get her? From out of Himself. Now that's really heavy. But brothers and sisters, God has a problem. God is a spirit, and in that respect, he is not divisible. He is neither seeable nor divisible. When I get to go to be in a much more personal relationship with the Lord, perhaps the Lord will say, "Gene, that's true - and it was also for this reason. There may be another reason. I don't know. Those are the only two I know. I'm not clear why God had to come into man to have a counterpart, but I know one thing. He did have to come into man to have a counterpart. All I can tell you is that He was an invisible God, and by His nature, He was one. And for him to have a counterpart, He would have to alter His nature and cease being only God.

Now He created a creature in His image. That creature was the only creature in His image, and that creature was...corporate. Put him...them...all together. They were quite large; this creature called man.

I want to tell you one or two other things. God put in that man an innate desire - not need - a *desire* for God. When God made man, God breathed His breath into man, and in so doing, God left Himself with an innate love, longing, and need...for man. Now there is a relationship here that could be really awesome. Glorious. In this man, in the garden, is the hope. In him is God's hope for a counterpart. God has gambled His hope for a counterpart upon this creature called man. He wishes to elevate him to a higher status.

Let me see if I can put it this way. It is to elevate man to a higher status and move God from one status to another status. Can you comprehend what I've just said? In order for God to have what He wants, man will have to be lifted higher than angels and take upon himself a new status, so new, you would say that man would change from being "man". God, who is spirit, would also have to not lower Himself, but to change His status and become something other than God. There, in these two changes, would be God's hope for a counterpart. Now, what are those two changes that would have to take place? God would have to become a

man. Alright, and man would have to become...blended...with God. He would have to take upon himself God's nature.

Now then, would man be man? Would he be only man? Would God be God? Not just God, but God plus...and man would be man plus God. Consider that. Now, will you take a look at both of them very carefully in such a state? I don't think I'll say any more. Just consider that; would you? Consider that. This was God's desire.

Now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know that he was an anxious God. I told you a few nights ago that when the Lord considered the passion within His own being and began to consider within Himself what would have to transpire for him to truly have a counterpart, I mean, really, honest to goodness, complete, and exactly what he wanted, someone with a feeling, a sense, and love, and desire, and love for Him, and appreciation of him, and a passion for Him, and a knowledge, and an understanding, and a discernment, and whatever else a counterpart would need...I don't know, but I have a strong feeling that when God considered what must take place for Him to have a counterpart, I believe He saw the whole creation: the creation of man, the fall, redemption, and everything else that was necessary to ultimately arrive at that counterpart. I cannot give you all the reasons, but I have a strong intuition within me that it was all necessary. Yet, there was always the possibility that it might work out better.

Have you ever had to come to a place where you had to make a decision, and you knew that if you made that decision, there was a possibility it wasn't going to work out too well, and a possibility it would work out wonderfully? But you considered it, and you closed your eyes, and you did it...and it didn't work out the way you hoped for the high. And that terrible moment of realization that you had gambled, and it was going to go the poorer way. P-O-O-R-E-R.

I remember something a professor once told me. I'll pass it on to you. Probably it's about the only thing I can remember in all of my seminary days. Have you ever heard me refer to anything I learned in the seminary before tonight? I remember this story. After four and a half years there, I'm bound to remember something. I believe, if I remember correctly, he was telling a story about something that happened in a class maybe 30 or 40 years earlier, when the man who founded that institution was president and teaching that particular class. He asked everyone in the class to read a passage of scripture, which I read tonight: Genesis 3. He asked everyone to read it, and each one got up and read it. Virtually every man got up and read it this way.

"Adam, where are you? Adam, where are you?"

But one brother got up. My impression was that, as he read it, he choked up, and a great pathos swelled out of it. And speaking for God, he said, "Oh, Adam, where are you?" And Adam said, "Because I had no clothing on, I hid from you." And God said, "Oh, Adam, who told you that you were not clothed?" A weeping, a dreadful sorrow, hurt, disappointed, crushed beyond words.

Adam, if you have ever felt sorry because there was a fall, think of the weeping that brought God. God saw it all. He felt it all. He knew it all. He knew what would happen. He knew what he was in for. He knew what man was in for when he came to the garden, and Adam was not there innocently, standing there waiting for the Lord to come in the wind. What had happened? What had happened? That day, what happened? God lost the chance to have His counterpart. Man lost his chance to take on the nature of God. Man did far worse than that. He not only didn't get to go up, but he went down.

Now God...God...has lost His bride, and He is going to have to go after her at a terrible price. I'll tell you, brothers, there is the greatest love story of all time and all eternity. There is no love story like this love story. Wow. I'm just getting excited standing here. What a love story. There is no other love story like it, and it's got an end, and it hasn't been written yet. Praise the Lord.

Okay, we have to remember something: no place in the New Testament can we begin and get the full picture of anything; we have to go to the Old Testament first. It's Ezekiel 16: 6-17.

I'm going to tell you just a little bit about the passage. Here's what it says. It says that God was walking by one day, and He saw a baby thrown out into the field, naked, with blood all over it. The little child was a girl. Her mother was a Hittite. The father was an Amorite. Both of these are abominable, abominable races of people. Both of them belonged to the race of the old man. There was the little baby covered in blood, the cord not cut, and about to die. And God walked by and saved the life of the little baby. He raised the baby up, and cared for it, protected it from his enemies...and it was ugly, and no one cared for it. No one was interested in it. And no one loved it. But God loved it.

The baby grew up, and God said, I took care of you through everything. I gave you the clothes you wear. The house you live in. The food you eat. But when you grew up, it turned out that you were beautiful. It came time that you were old enough to marry, and I wished to marry you. Instead, you committed a terrible sin with Egypt. And then with another and another and another and another.

The one whom God had picked out of the dirt, wanted by no one, hated by everyone, God brought up...and lost. But she...when she was grown and became beautiful, she turned away and became a fallen, sinful woman. Do you know what her name was? Her name was not Israel. What was her name? She had the most beautiful name in the universe. Her name was

Jerusalem.