

Our Nostalgic Father!

By Anand Peter

If you happen to have old photographs or videos of your children from their formative years, it would be a good idea to sit down with them and look through them together — show them to your children, too. You will recall their innocent pranks; tender memories of those days of loving parenting will flood your mind, days when they were utterly dependent upon you, and their smallest accomplishments were cause for celebration. Nostalgia envelops our hearts when we think of those days.

We see a likewise nostalgic God in Hosea 11:1-4. Let us read: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them" (Hosea 11:1-4).

In contrast to God's sense of nostalgia, His people responded by falling into apostasy. Backsliding is common in the Christian walk; nearly all of us backslide to some degree. But the ratio is what matters here — one step forward and two steps back, or one step forward and four steps back, and so on. The more we walk in retrograde, the more reluctant we become to return to Jesus.

In these four verses of Hosea are hidden two critical truths. The first truth is that we are the chosen people of Jesus. We are His unique and treasured people. Recall what God said to Israel: "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people" (Deuteronomy 7:6-7). What a privileged people we are! Do we recognise and fully respect this privilege God has lovingly bestowed upon us, with equal commitment?

The second truth is that Jesus loves us passionately, and enduringly awaits our return. He is willing to forgive, unconditionally, all our impertinence, disobedience, lust for wealth and power, and the resultant backsliding. He quickly binds our wounds, takes care of our provisions, and walks with us as we walk through the valley of death. In substance, Jesus keeps His covenant with us, redeems us from slavery to the snares of Satan, and releases us from the curse of eternal death. He sets us on the path of salvation, to the gates of His kingdom. Deuteronomy 7:8 confirms this: "But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 7:8).

Yes, the passages we have looked at today still remind us of His chosen people's sin then, and of ours now. But we are also reminded of His tender love for His people. Let us sit in that love today.