

# THE NURSERY

(My Heart, Christ's Home; Message Two)  
Hosea 11:1-4

- A. Last Sunday we started a series entitled, *"My Heart, Christ's Home"*
- B. The Nursery is place of incredible responsibility: parents loving their children

## The Situation

### A. Being a parent is not a Hallmark Card experience

*"Being a parent does not lead to greater happiness. It is meaningful; it can be wonderful; but it is never easy; marital satisfaction actually decreases when a couple starts having children"*

- 1. We tend to romanticize and idealize what it's going to be like to be a parent
- 2. Kids grow up; they go off to school...but you never stop being a parent...

*"Dear kids, It is obvious that none of you has the faintest notion of the bitter disappointment each of you has dished out to us...we are constantly regaled with chapter and verse of the happy, successful lives of our friends and relatives and being asked of news of our own children and grandchildren. "I can tell you that I and Mum have had enough of being forced to live through the never-ending bad dream of our children's underachievement...I want to hear no more from any of you until, if you feel inclined, you have a success or an achievement or even a realist plan...I am bitterly, bitterly disappointed. Dad."*

### B. The Bible is the story of a parent who for good reasons is disappointed with his children - but who still responds in a way beyond our comprehension...

*"When Israel was a child, I loved him...and out of Egypt I called my son..."*  
(Hosea 11:1)

*"They sacrificed to the Baals... It was I who taught Ephraim to walk...It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them [i.e. they didn't acknowledge my care]. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek and I bent down to feed them" (Hosea 11:2b-4)*

- 1. God: *When I claimed my child Israel, they were nothing special. I loved them...and everything changed*
  - 2. When they got older, they ran after their own happiness, and left me
- C. God's response: *"How can I give up on you? How could I ever let go..."*

#### 1. God makes the ultimate sacrifice and sends his own Son to a cross

*"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends"*  
(John 15:13)

*"Christ demonstrates his own love for us in this, while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)*

2. Christ loves us regardless of how we responded - that's love

3. Because of God's nature he can't stop loving us

*"When Christ comes knocking on the door of your heart, will he find that same kind of love with which he loves you?" (cf. Luke 18:8)*

## The Story

### A. The place in our heart where love should be most evident is the nursery

Reading from "Love You Forever" by Robert Munsch  
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B. Robert Munsch: *"I'll write a story better than life, and in this story, love will be stronger than death."* That's what Christ did. He wrote a great story!

## The Suggestions

### A. In the nursery room of our heart, Christ looks for evidence of love. It includes...

- 1. Prayer: The best way for a parent to love their children is to stay close to Jesus
  - a. The best way to stay close to Jesus is to spend time with him...in prayer
  - b. The best way for a parent to love their children is to teach them how to pray
- 2. Time: the best thing you can offer your children is your time
- 3. Encouragement - parents should be their children's biggest fan

*"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

- 4. Parents need to "aim" (evangelize) their children in the proper direction  
children are *"like arrows in the hands of a warrior"* (Psalm 127:4-5)
- 5. Parents need to constantly model the Christian life

*"Example is not the best way of teaching, it is the only way!" (Albert Schweitzer)*

### B. You can do this - if Jesus takes control of your heart's nursery

- 1. This song came to him. *"I'll love your forever. I'll love you forever! I'll write a story where love is stronger than death."*
- 2. He did; it's called the Gospel. We read it at the cross