**Leader Copy | How Deep The Father's Love For Us. | Feb. 17, 2016**

**Creational Text – Large Group**

Valentine's Day – the holiday of “Love“

 Any traditions around Valentine's Day?

 In high school we played the "Get the Hearts" game.

 Exchanging cards

 Slide show of bad Vday cards.

 *I never felt real comfortable on Valentines Day*

 *Maybe Valentines Day takes love, and replaces it with something else.*

 *Valentines Day seems like a time where we are nice to each other to make each other feel happy. Maybe God's love is something different. Maybe God's love involves pleasure, but also commitment and pain. We will look at that together tonight.*

*Sing – How Deep the Father's Love For Us.*

**Creational Text – Small Group**

How do you feel about the Valentine’s day holiday?

Do you have any Valentines Day traditions? Did you give out Valentines Day cards? What kind were they?

 In what ways do Valentines Day traditions show real love? In what ways don't they?

 How has a person shown you that they love you in a real way? How did it make you feel?

**Scriptural Text**

This text is a little tough, but it is a powerful story! Read it through slowly and see if you can pick up on what God is telling us about his relationship with his people

The “I” here is God

**Hosea 11 1-9**

11 “When Israel was a child, I loved him,

 and out of Egypt I called my son.

2 But the more they were called,

 the more they went away from me.

They sacrificed to the Baals

 and they burned incense to images.

Another name for Israel, God’s people

3 It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,

 taking them by the arms;

but they did not realize

 it was I who healed them.

4 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.

5 “Will they not return to Egypt

The bad guys

 and will not Assyria rule over them

 because they refuse to repent?

6 A sword will flash in their cities;

 it will devour their false prophets

 and put an end to their plans.

Shift in God’s attitude

7 My people are determined to turn from me.

 Even though they call me God Most High,

 I will by no means exalt them.

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8 “How can I give you up, Ephraim?

 How can I hand you over, Israel?

These are cities God destroyed

How can I treat you like Admah?

 How can I make you like Zeboyim?

My heart is changed within me;

 all my compassion is aroused.

9 I will not carry out my fierce anger,

 nor will I devastate Ephraim again.

For I am God, and not a man—

 the Holy One among you.

 I will not come against their cities.

What is the relationship between God and his people like? What word picture is used?

 *God is a father and the Isreal is a kid. The father is kind and gives the child good things but Isreal is like a stubborn teenager who doesn't want anything to do with the dad.*

How does God treat his people?

 *He loves them, feeds them, teaches them to walk, heals them*

How do God's people treat God?

 *They turn to Baals, they are determined to turn from God*

What does God *think about* doing to his people?

 *Let other nations overrun them. Let the bad guys win. "put an end to their plans", "by no means exalt them" he is angry.*

How does God finally feel about his people? How does he deside to treat them?

 *His heart is changed. He cannot give them up. He will not carry out his anger. He will not destroy them like other cities. He loves them like a faithful father.*

 **Romans 5: 6-9**

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But **God demonstrates his own *love* for us in this**: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!

 How did God demonstrate the love for us he described in Hosea?

 *Through Jesus.* *Christ came to earth to live and die for us.*

 Did God‘s children "clean themselves up"? Did they return to him and run into his arms?

 *No, we were ungodly and powerless. While we were still sinners God saved us. He turned away from his wrath through the person of Jesus. God didn’t give up on us.*

**Connections**

* How is "Valentine's Day Card" love different than God's love?

*God's love is deeper. It involves wrestling, compassion, but also sacrifice. God's compassion, through Jesus will never fail. Nothing can seperate us from God's love. Lots more answers work here!*

* In what ways have you experienced the love of God? What was it like? How did you feel?
* How does does God's love for people affect our lives?

Prayer -

 Ask for any prayer requests