

Message #7

Hosea 5:1-15

There is a theological statement that Paul makes in Romans that says, “the wages of sin is death.” You can put this into any context in your relationship with God and it will prove to be absolutely true. For example, if we put this into the context of a believer’s life, what we can dogmatically say is that when God’s people pursue sinful things, it will kill their relationship with God. Even though we still are a child of God, we can drift through life and miss a vibrant, living, fruit-producing life that God blesses.

For example, if you are a believer who dabbles in things lustful and sinful, you will not sense you are close to God. As a believer, God will not let His people get involved in something evil and then let them blossom in their relationship with Him.

There is a very important doctrinal point that God’s people want to grasp and that point is this: **God’s people can get themselves so deep into sin that God will actually withdraw Himself to the point that everything in their world completely falls apart.**

If ever you want to see an example of this, it is Hosea chapter 5. This is a sober chapter to analyze and it teaches us a very important point:

GOD’S PEOPLE CAN GET INTO SUCH DEEP SIN THAT THEY NO LONGER WILL RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR SIN AND RETURN TO GOD EVEN AFTER GOD ALLOWS THEM TO KEEP LOSING ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER IN AN ATTEMPT TO GET THEM TO RETURN TO HIM.

You would logically think that if a child of God discovers his world is completely falling apart, he would analyze himself to see whether or not he is doing things that are causing his world to fall apart. You would logically think that one of the first areas of analysis would be one’s own life.

But it is possible to get so far away from God that God no longer permits His people to be convicted. God can withdraw Himself from His own people to the point that they no longer even sense the need to turn from evil and turn to Him. If you want to see an example of this, look at Israel today.

Now this chapter breaks down nicely into three main parts:

PART #1 – The leaders are responsible for God’s people plunging deep into sin. **5:1-7**

Now we may observe from **verse 1** that God specifically addresses Israel, but he singles out two specific groups. He singles out the religious leaders (priests) and the political leaders (king). Combined, these two groups were responsible for the people of God moving away from the truth of God.

God calls these leaders and Israel to listen to what he has to say because He is specifically holding them responsible for the judgment He was authorizing to come against them. Now He mentions that what they had done at Mizpah and Tabor had become a major snare to them. Mizpah was an ancient worship place in Gilead east of the Jordan River. Mt. Tabor was a high place north of the Jezreel Valley. These were places where people went to worship; but they were not worshipping the true God of the Bible.

The religious and political leaders were leading the people “deep in depravity.” These people had turned away from God, so God says in **verse 2**, “I will chastise all of them.” With all of their economic prosperity and political activity and religious worship, God says I’ll track you all down.

Now in **verse 3** God informs Israel that I saw all of the immoral behavior that took place in Ephraim. Ephraim had actually worshipped Baal and engaged in fertility matters of prostitution. Ephraim was like Gomer, in that they plunged deep into immoral sin. The nation Israel was very corrupt and very defiled and God would bring it down. This was no idle threat because Ephraim and much of the north of Israel was completely wiped out in 722 B.C..

According to **verse 4** they had reached such a level of sinful depravity that they would not return to the Lord and did not even know their God. **Don’t overlook verse 4; your sin can and will prevent you from returning to a wonderful relationship with your God.** You can have some sin in your life that prevents you from really being close to God. You can be a habitual liar; you can be addicted to lustful things; you can be insanely jealous and never get close to God because you will not deal with it.

In **verses 5-7** we get a description of evil that characterized God’s own people:

Trait #1 - God’s people were proud. **5:5a**

God hates pride. He hates proud people and even a proud look. The more we are in tune with God, we will hate pride within ourselves and in others. It is not becoming of a child of God. Keep in mind this was the attitude that characterized religious and political leaders.

Trait #2 - God’s people stumble in their iniquity. **5:5b**

The particular Hebrew word “iniquity” means that God’s own people were involved in perverse sexual activity (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 614). When you drift away from God, you cannot stop stumbling and fumbling around in things immoral.

Trait #3 - God’s people will seek the Lord but will not find the Lord. **5:6**

These people take their animals to the worship services to sacrifice them. This is interesting because what this verse proves is that it is possible for people to come to Texas Corners Bible Church having been baptized and having taken communion and still not actually have a real relationship with God and Jesus Christ.

People can go to worship services really wanting a relationship with God, but never finding it because they will not face their own sin.

Trait #4 - God's people have dealt treacherously against the Lord. **5:7a**

The word "treacherously" is intriguing. It means that God's people were frauds. They went to religious services but were not honest; they were covering and hiding what they really were (*Ibid.*, pp. 101-102). How foolish. No one can cover up and hide from God what they are.

Trait #5 - God's people have borne illegitimate children. **5:7b**

They literally physically did this through their immoral behavior, but they spiritually did this too. They did not produce children who loved God and His Word; in fact, they did not even promote that idea. They produced a crop of children who were not committed to God in any way.

Trait #6 - God's people will be devoured by their evil religious worship. **5:7c**

God says because this is the way you are, your false religion will be that which will cause Me to devour you through people who are false. God would permit people dedicated to false religion to take over Israel's land.

Now the question we need to ask is where are the Mizpahs and the Tabors today? Many years ago Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said today the Mizpahs and Tabors are churches, theological seminaries, Christian Colleges and Universities. Most of these places are not promoting a love for the Scriptures and conformity to a life that pleases God. They are proud of themselves and their works and their achievements and they do not teach people to humbly walk with God.

If we could crawl into the behind scene things that only God sees, we would discover that there are things that are happening in many of God's peoples' own lives that are evil and depraved. We would see a great majority of religious people who are going to their worship services who are living corrupt, perverted lives who are not interested in understanding and applying God's Word in any way.

Do you think it is a coincidence that the United States is being dominated by false religion? This is a judgment of God because political and religious leaders are too proud to humble themselves to the true God of the Bible.

This book of Hosea clearly teaches that God will hold political and religious leadership highly accountable and responsible so it had better be pointing people in the true, pure ways of God. Leaders can be a blessing to people or they can be a snare to people.

I do not tell people how to vote, but I can tell you this; if people elect leaders who do not fear God and His Word, it will eventually cause God to destroy that nation. If God did this to Israel, He certainly will do this to the United States.

PART #2 – God warns His own people what He will do to them because they have plunged deep into sin. **5:8-11**

Most people don't get what is revealed in these verses. People, especially those in Israel and the Middle East, tend to want to look for solutions to their problems by a series of peace talks with enemies. **The real solution to ending turmoil is to have a meeting with God.**

God is the cause of the turmoil and if His people would turn to Him and seek to be right with Him, they would see this and learn this. The actual cause of the warfare and conflict is God. He is the One who judges nations and individuals. He is the One who raises up one and puts down another.

God says sound the alarm because the day of rebuke is coming. Gibeah was a very important town in Benjamin about 3 miles north of Jerusalem. Ramah was about 5 miles north of Jerusalem. Beth-aven was about 11 miles north of Jerusalem. By mentioning Ephraim in **verse 9**, what we learn is that the entire land of Israel would come under severe judgment by the hand of God.

God does not specifically say who He intends to use for this judgment, but He makes it clear that when it does occur the end result will be "desolation." This may be a reference to Assyria, Babylonia and also the Great Tribulation. I think all judgments God would bring to the land would be a very fitting fulfillment of what is predicted here.

Listen, when God's people drift away from God, God can and will cause every area of life to fall apart. God can cause His own people to collapse mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. When God decides to send His chastising judgment against His own people because they refuse to face their sin, their entire world will fall apart.

According to **verse 10**, the political leadership enlarged their own boundaries by moving boundary markers so they would have more land. God says I will pour out My wrath like water on those political leaders and they will lose everything they thought they had.

There are political leaders who use their offices for their own personal gain. They think they are getting away with it. God says I will put an end to it all.

Now carefully notice **verse 11**, God is pouring out His judgment because the people "follow man's command." Rather than these people being seriously interested in what does the Word of God actually say, they were following men who were leading them away from the Word and will of God.

It is serious business to follow after the traditions and teachings of men rather than pursuing the Word of God. I just read a statement of one God-mocking politician who said the Bible does not forbid homosexuality. Then he said people are born homosexuals. Well, I would hand this imbecile my English Bible and take him to I Corinthians 6:9 and I Timothy 1:10 and then I would hand him my Greek text and make him parse the Greek word used in those verses.

The English uses the word “homosexual” and the Greek uses a stronger word which means “men who go to bed with men.” Furthermore, both of these passages refer to the fact that this is an evil sin that will bring condemnation unless one turns to faith in Jesus Christ. People are not born with this, they choose it. People are listening to the false opinions of this leader rather than the Word of God. The tragedy of all of this is that these leaders are leading people away from a wonderful relationship with God. If they would face their sin and turn to God, they would find a wonderful life.

This is what was happening in Hosea’s day and God says this is why I am going to punish my people.

PART #3 – God warns what His relationship will be like with His people because they are in sin. **5:12-15**

Now this section ends with Hosea by him using a series of metaphors to describe His relationship with His own people:

Metaphor #1 - He would be to His own people like a moth. **5:12-13**

God would be like a moth to His own people in that He would bring rot to them. He would cause them to have open wounds that would not heal. Instead of Him blessing His people, He would be negative to His people.

Metaphor #2 - He would be to His own people like a lion. **5:14**

God is describing the fact that He would be like a young lion against His own people and would tear them to pieces. God would permit His own people to rot and be torn to shreds.

He concludes in **verse 15** that He would return to His place until His people come to terms with their sin and guilt and earnestly seek Him. It will take the Great Tribulation to cause this to happen.

Jesus actually spoke of the same moment in Matthew when He said Israel would not see Him again until they realized He is the Blessed One of God and turn to Him (Matthew 23:37-39).

But think about what is actually said in **verse 15**; in spite of the horrible things that God’s people had done, God would have a relationship with them if they would “acknowledge their guilt and seek God.” You seek a relationship with God by acknowledging that which you have done that makes you guilty.

That is all that is required in order to have a wonderful relationship with God. Just acknowledge the truth. Just acknowledge the sin and turn to God. I love what Jeremiah said, “Only acknowledge your iniquity that you have transgressed against the LORD your God” (Jer. 3:13).

So no matter how depraved you have been as a child of God, what God wants is for you to acknowledge your sin. He is waiting for you to acknowledge your evil.

But do you want to know what is so sad? Most people are too proud to do this and, as a result, their relationship with God is dead.