

1. WARNING!! Sin is Horrific!

- a. Like a vulture, waiting expectantly for death because it sees death is near, is one who watches over the house of the Lord
- b. Idolatry and neglect of the LORD as the exclusive Lord over Israel has deadened the life of the nation.
 - i. This is revealed by a resistance and neglect of obeying the law of the Lord.
 1. They cared not that He desires mercy and they run to violence and the oppression of the weak.
 2. They trusted in their own wisdom and raised their own leaders without inquiring of the Lord.
 - ii. This "dying" is indicative of idolatry
- c. There is real DANGER to rejecting God as He has revealed Himself and remaking Him into our own image, according to our perceived wisdom
 - i. This reality, death, is why God's powerful actions are not unduly harsh overreactions to sin
 1. We think of this rebellion against God as "wandering" or "foolish", but "death?" Rebellion? Mutiny?
 - ii. Often we think that God's responses to His people's sins, especially in the OT, are overreactions and unfair harsh responses
 1. But this neglects the severity of sin
 2. Because it neglects the value, honor, nobility, and glory of God
 3. When God is known as glorious, then sin is seen as a catastrophic danger requiring catastrophic measures to deal with it
- d. Denny Burk's example:
 - i. Boy pulling legs off of:
 1. Grasshopper – response: "weird little boy"
 2. Frog – response: "disturbed boy"
 3. Bird – response: "twisted, messed up child, tell his parents"
 4. Puppy – response: "you actively stop him, inform the authorities"
 5. Baby – response: "you risk your own life to stop this monster, call the authorities and have him institutionalized"
 - ii. The sin in each scenario is the same: pulling legs off creatures. Why the different responses?
 1. The differing responses are due to the value, nobility, and honor given to each progressive creature.
 2. We hold humans, particularly infants, in higher honor than a grasshopper, so we respond with greater force, anger, just wrath.
 - iii. Our frustration with God's wrath is not due to his response, but to the fact that we view him as a grasshopper, so sin is not that big of a deal. For Him to be wrathful seems disproportionate.
 1. We view God as too small.
 2. But when we view God as the most valuable, noble, beautiful, honorable, glorious being in the universe and beyond, then sin becomes ugly, heinous, worthy of a drastic and catastrophic response
 3. We've pulled God's legs off when we sin. What should God's response to this be?
 - iv. Whenever suffering comes (i.e. Katrina, Japan, exile, tax bills) our response should be to declare the justice of God and repent, falling on His mercy toward us in Jesus!

- e. For the gospel is that God poured out the wrath for our leg-pulling out upon His own Son, raised Him up from the dead to show His sacrifice is accepted in our place, so that you and I could be His righteous sons and daughters.
 - i. In this way, God is both righteous toward the heinous sin against Him and merciful toward His people: the just and the justifier of the one who has faith in JC (Rom 3:25)
 - ii. The trumpet has been answered by Christ, so that all who will close to Him in faith will be saved from the righteous wrath of God. And this is God's doing, who so loved the world that satisfies His own righteous judgment. Just turn from trusting in other things and place your dependence upon Jesus.

2. We Ignore the Danger by Working in Vain

a. We Sow the Wind but Reap the Whirlwind

- i. Sowing and Reaping: Agricultural analogy
 - 1. What you plant is what you grow
 - a. You cannot plant wheat and expect corn, etc.
 - 2. How can you plant emptiness and expect to reap substance?
- ii. Sowing the wind is to plant nothings, emptiness, wastefulness, hollow seeds with no substance
 - 1. What have we "invested" our time, energy, wealth, pursuits in to be our functional saviors in our day of trouble?
 - a. Are they capable of saving us in that day?
 - b. Are they worthy of our love, our adoration, our pursuit?
 - i. Would they forgive you or me if we failed to deliver on our promises to them?
- iii. These wastings multiply, growing in power, swirling about us until they destroy our lives
 - 1. We sow to our reputation and reap the empty fruitless anxiety of protecting and advancing our reputation to no avail, we become captivated by the approval of others, perfectionism, and a desperate fear of failure and hopelessness
 - 2. We sow to our comfort and ease and reap the empty fruitless wastefulness of our strength, gifting, our life, swallowed up in bitterness towards those who try and "steal" our comfort by making requests upon our time, energy, and wealth which we depend upon for our comfort and rest. We end up loving only ourselves, enslaved to the corruption of an unloving spirit, so completely unlike God.
 - 3. We sow to physical pleasure and reap the emptiness of addiction to substances that destroy our bodies, our emotions, our ability to relate to others in a manner worthy of being called the image of God. We reap the

emptiness of hollow sexual relationships, the destructive whirlwind of self-centered taking that leaves our souls in a rubble-strewn mess of broken hearted loneliness of spirit.

- iv. These whirlwinds are not mere impersonal or passive consequences, as if some unseen force of cause and effect were the actor: The bringer of this whirlwind is God Himself.
 - 1. His judgment is the completion of our idolatrous desires. he gives us what we pursue and it spins out of control and devastates us.
 - 2. It is actually merciful in its intent for His people, though powerfully judgmental in its actions. He shows us the true end of our roads, utter destruction and empty fruitless nothings that do not produce joyful rest with Him.
 - a. Mark 8:36 – “for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?”
 - b. Matt 18:8 – “and if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire.”

b. We Produce Nothings (The standing grain has no heads; it shall yield no flour...)

- i. Useless, not fulfilling the purpose for which it exists: to know God in exclusive relationship of worship and obedient love from the lesser (man) to the greatest (God).
 - i. When we pursue “other lovers”, other saviors, other means of comfort, rest, satisfaction, approval, power, etc. we end up acting in ways that are outside of the purpose for which we were fashioned
 - ii. “Love God with all your heart...love your neighbor as yourself”
- ii. They have become like straw, without nutrient, without value for food, sustenance, strength. Though growing and reaching heights, there is no power, there is no head of grain. They are only useful for burning or for fodder for animal refuse. Hmm....the emptiness of idolatry.

c. We Substitute Man’s Empty Glory for God’s Infinitely Valuable Glory

- i. Replacing God with grandeur of our own handiwork
- ii. When God is not sought as the greatest and the most glorious, we will substitute glory in His place: bigger stuff, more stuff, greater stuff
 - 1. True in palaces and our fortresses
 - a. Places of comfortable living
 - b. Places of strength and protection
 - 2. True in technology:
 - a. Palaces – finding comfort in online shopping, smart-phones, refrigerators, nicer cars, nicer houses, etc.
 - b. Fortresses – trusting in our medicine, our power grid, our superior military technology to protect us from harm
 - 3. True in art:

- a. Palaces – art as feel-good entertainment, cinema as escape, music as noise to escape the reality of our danger
 - b. Fortresses – art protects us from staid modernistic thinking, expression is more important than truth, art protects us from “narrowness” in the ignorance that there is a real danger at all
4. True in church:
- a. Palaces – “Happy, Healthy, Wealthy”, cushier “worship centers”, bigger buildings with more amenities
 - b. Fortresses – us vs. them, we’re safe and the world is dangerous, ministering to people just like us while avoiding people unlike us, being “safe” emotionally is more important than taking risks for Christ

3. The Gospel is News About What God Has Done!

- a. It’s easy to read the OT and feel that we just need to do better, to be better, to follow the example of Jesus, but that’s not the point
 - i. What Hosea is getting at is that we are to return to the Lord because He has performed His great works for us!
 - ii. So, even here, in the OT, we see the gospel being heralded beforehand to the saints of old: the LORD has performed His works that we should rest in them.
 - iii. This is revealed even more in and through Jesus, the completer of our salvation and the fulfillment of the OT promises
- b. Sow to the Spirit and reap His fruit
 - i. Romans 14:17 – “The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit”
- c. The beauty of the gospel is that God can bring beauty from ashes, new forests from the fires of the emptiness of our burning straw when we trust in Him
 - i. Isa 61
 - ii. Luke 4:18ff
- d. Jesus is our Palace and our Fortress
 - i. He is the Word of God, the imperishable seed that produces eternal life, the living water of God (1 Pet 1:23-25; Gal 3:16-19; John 1:1-14)
 - ii. He is the One who was burnt in our place so that we would produce the fruit of His Spirit, useful in His Kingdom
 - iii. He is the Risen Savior, alive and ruling over the earth in righteousness and power (1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20-21)
 - iv. He has poured out His Spirit upon us, sealing us in His gracious salvation (Eph 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor 1:22) and securing for sonship with God through Him (Rom 8:15; Eph 1:5; Gal 4:5) so that our palace is with God Himself as His beloved children
- e. What greater palace do we need than the Spirit of God, the fullness of joy in His presence, the enjoyment of God as sons and daughters?
- f. What greater fortress do we need than the precious blood of Jesus, shed for us, so that there is no more condemnation, no more loss of God, no more orphanage for our souls? We belong to God (Rom 8:32).