

LOVE'S RIGHTEOUS ANGER

A summary of the third of four sermons by Dr Nat Schluter of the Johannesburg Bible College, on Chapters 8 – 10 of the Old Testament book of Hosea.

OUTLINE OF SERMON

Introduction

The majesty of God. The goodness of God

Humans made in his image.

On the Battlefield: God's righteous anger means...

Banishment: forfeiting the presence of God (8:13; 9:3,15; 10:5-6)

Destruction: suffering punishment by God (8:5,7,13,14; 9:6; 10:7,8,13-15)

Humiliation: experiencing utter disgrace from God (8:10, 9:2,6,11; 10:6)

Why do we need to know this?

- *God is like this*
- *To warn us*
- *To teach us about the love of God (1 John 4:10)*

INTRODUCTION

The scene moves from Courtroom to battlefield: Chapter 8 opens with images of a trumpet sounding the battle cry; and of an eagle, about to pounce on God's people because of their rebelliousness. Things are not.....safe

God is not safe! He is good; but He is not some sentimental, sappy or tame God. He is an awesome, passionate, jealous, majestic God; He is also a mysterious God. The results of these characteristics is that God's goodness is uncompromising. So, when He decides to save us, we must understand that He does so righteously, never in a way that might compromise His goodness. God's righteousness requires both His wrath and His love.

In Chapters 8 to 10, we see that God judges and punishes : the goodness of His character demands that He does so. This is part of the incredible honour of being made human in the image of God : that H treats us personally and takes us very seriously indeed.

In these Chapters, we learn three things about the terrifying judgement of God.

BANISHMENT : FORFEITING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

The first thing we learn is that His judgement means banishment : forfeiting the presence of God.

With banishment goes the loss of the presence of God. In Exodus 33 we saw, after the golden calf incident, that God said He would give them the land, they can go and take it, He would even send his angel ahead to destroy the opposing nations, but He would not go with them. Moses' response was: "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. We would rather stay in the desert and die than gain the world without you", he said.

So it is that Hosea tells the people that the land God had given them to live at peace in his presence was now going to be forfeited:

8 : 13 "They will return to Egypt".

9 : 3 "They will not remain in the Lord's land; Ephraim will return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria".

9 : 15 "Because of their sinful deeds, I will drive them out of my house".

This would be the horrendous result of their sin : to live in exilewithout the presence of God.

His righteous wrath, on consistent rebellion, eventually results in banishment, forfeiting the presence of God.

DESTRUCTION : SUFFERING PUNISHMENT BY GOD

The second terrifying thing we learn about God's judgement is that God actively punishes sin.

This is the way Hosea describes it to the people:

8 : 5 "My anger burns against them".

8 : 7 "They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind".

8 : 13 "...the Lord is not pleased with them. Now He will remember their wickedness and punish their sins".

8 : 14 "...I will send fire upon their cities that will consume their fortresses".

9 : 6 "Even if they escape from destruction, Egypt will gather them, and Memphis will bury them".

- 10 : 7-8 "Samaria and its king will float away like a twig on the surface of the waters. The high places of wickedness will be destroyed – it is the sin of Israel. Thorns and thistles will grow up and cover their altars. Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall on us!".
- 10 : 13 -15b "But you have planted wickedness, you have reaped evil, you have eaten the fruit of deception. Because you have depended on your own strength and on your many warriors, the roar of battle will rise against your people, so that all your fortresses will be devastated-- ... When that day dawns, the king of Israel will be completely destroyed.

God punishes evil : His righteousness, His goodness, His respect for us as humans, made in His image demands it.

HUMILIATION : EXPERIENCING UTTER DISGRACE FROM GOD

Hosea warns that a time is coming when, instead of prosperity and parties:

- 8 : 10 "They will begin to waste away under the oppression of the mighty king".
- 9 : 2 "Threshing floors and winepresses will not feed the people; the new wine will fail them".
- 9 : 6 "Their treasures of silver will be taken over by briars and thorns will overrun their tents."
- 9 : 11 "Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird – no birth, no pregnancy, no conception".
- 10 : 6 "Ephraim will be disgraced; Israel will be ashamed of its wooden idols".

This disgrace will be total, with not one thing left that the nation can be proud of.

So Hosea says that when righteous judgement comes, it means

Banishment

Destruction

Humiliation

This is what awaits those who reject God.

Jesus more than anyone else spoke about hell as a place of separation from God, destruction and humiliation.

There are three things Hosea is telling us in these Chapters:

1. This is what God is like : He is good and righteous. To understand His goodness, we need to understand not just His love but also His wrath.
2. God longs for us to repent and turn to Him so He can have mercy on us before it is too late. God consistently calls up prophets to call people from their sin.
3. The wrath of God teaches us about the love of God and what He has done for us through His son, Jesus Christ. We can be saved from the banishment, the destruction and humiliation in Christ.

The truly amazing thing is that God sends his son to be a propitiation for our sins, which in the Greek means "to turn aside God's wrath". As Jesus hung on the cross, he cried out:

"My God, my God why have you forsaken me" as he took the wrath of God on himself and turns that wrath from you and me.