

Foundation of the sermon

Purpose

To show the devastating affects of sin on the life of the sinner.

Principle Idea:

The example of Israel and Judah and their punishment for sin show us the devastating effects of habitual sin in the life of the sinner.

Type of Outline

Exposition based on Hosea 5:8-15

I. Introduction

The verses we will look at today are in the Hebrew form of parallelism. One portion is laid down next to another part of the passage, and compared and contrasted.

They provide us an example of the punishment for sin in the life of a sinner when the sin is habitual and takes place over a long period of time. These effects are shown in the complete destruction of Israel when the people are sent into captivity. The effects are shown in the destruction and restoration of Judah after a 70-year captivity.

The passage today is Hosea 5:8-15:

8 Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: sound an alarm at Beth-aven; behind thee, O Benjamin.
9 Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.
10 The princes of Judah are like them that remove the landmark: I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.
11 Ephraim is oppressed, he is crushed in judgment; because he was content to walk after man's command.
12 Therefore am I unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

13 When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to Assyria, and sent to king Jareb: but he is not able to heal you, neither will he cure you of your wound.

14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver.

15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

II. Body

A. Instruments of Warning. (8)

1. Two instruments are mentioned in this passage. They are the cornet and the trumpet.
2. Three cities are mentioned: 1) Gibeah; 2) Ramah; and 3) Beth-aven.
3. Barnes Notes says the following concerning these instruments and cities:

Barnes Notes: "Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah -- The evil day and destruction, denounced, is now vividly pictured, as actually come. All is in confusion, hurry, alarm, because the enemy was in the midst of them. The 'cornet,' an instrument made of horn, was to be blown as the alarm, when the enemy was at hand. The 'trumpet' was especially used for the worship of God. 'Gibeah and Ramah' were cities of Benjamin, on the borders of Ephraim, where the enemy, who had possessed himself of Israel, would burst in upon Judah. From Bethaven or Bethel, the seat of Ephraim's idolatry on the border of Benjamin, was to break forth the outcry of destruction, 'after thee, O Benjamin;' the enemy is upon thee, just behind thee, pursuing thee. God had promised His people, if they would serve Him, 'I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee' Exodus 23:27, and had threatened the contrary, if they should 'walk contrary to Him.' Now that threat was to be fulfilled to the uttermost. The ten tribes are spoken of, as already in possession of the enemy, and he was 'upon Benjamin' fleeing before them."

Note: The above quote was copied from - <http://bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/22161/eVerseID/22161/version/rsv/RTD/barnes>

4. "Oh Benjamin" at the end of the verse is another form of warning:

Again referring to Barnes Notes -- "this is a warning call" -- the reference to Benjamin to Judah and Israel at this time was like saying "those that pursue you are right behind you."

B. The Punishment for Sin - Ephraim (parts of verses 9,11-13 and 14)

1. The Punishment of desolation and oppression for sin (9a)

It is obvious through this passage that God viewed the sin of Israel as more grievous than Judah's sin. Here is a picture of God's ultimate punishment for national sin. Here God is destroying a nation.

The words under consideration here in verse 9 are: "Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke".

There are times in our lives when we are out of harmony with the Lord and when our whole world seems to crash in on us. This verse pictures that scene. Here, the passage uses words to describe the condition of Israel on the eve of destruction. This statement by God is a warning shot over the bow. When we see this in our lives and when we see devastation just around the corner, we know it is because of our failed relationship with God. Then we should realize we are in deep trouble. Israel was.

a) The word desolate is equal to the word "waste land".

God was about to make Israel a waste land. Their world, as they knew it, was about to come to an end. In the case of Israel, they were not going to be allowed to return from the captivity they were going into -- until Christ returns.

This is the picture of the prodigal son in the New Testament parable in Luke 15:11-32. The son demand his inheritance and then he wasted it all on riotous living. When he came to himself, he had nothing left. He was in a "pig pen" eating what the pigs left behind. He was in a desolate waste land. God sometimes puts us into dire straits so that we can see the error of our ways.

b) The word rebuke as used here means punishment and that punishment is sure.

- (1) It is translated punishment in Psalm 149:7.**
(2) This punishment is absolutely sure.

God had pulled Israel's fat out of the fire many times before. They had failed Him over and over again. They had promised Him loyalty, and repentance. They had just gone too far this time. They had repeated their sin over and over, and this was the final time. Their punishment was going to happen.

Here the picture is of the punishment for habitual sin. A while back, I preached a series on I John and discussed that the passages were difficult to understand in I John 3 because of the way they are translated in the King James Version. We discussed the fact that the condemnation in those passages is not for single isolated sins, but for ones that are characterized in the Greek text as habitual and continuing. God is merciful and kind. He forgives us of sin, but there comes a time when a pattern of habitual sin has its price. Israel had reached that point.

That which is trustworthy -- verbal form -- this is a passive -- according to Kiel and Delitzch -- "This word is to be interpreted as in Deut. 28:59, where it is applied to lasting plagues."

In Deuteronomy 28:59 - it says:

Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. (Deut. 28:59 KJV)

The word in question here is translated "long continuance" This is a sure punishment; it is a long-endured punishment.

2. The Punishment for Sin is oppressive (11a-b)

The passage under consideration for this point is part of verse 11 that states: "Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment."

Again, we need to consider the implications of two words in this passage.

a) The first is translated oppressed in this verse.

It has to do with the type of exploitation that takes place in a business transaction. The weaker party is taken advantage of by some. This word in some forms - not the one used in this passage -- can take on the sense of the violence and crushing that can take place in human relationships.

Have you ever felt like you have been taken advantage of in some situation? Now multiply that and make it constant. That is what happened to Israel. It was a punishment for sin. Its ultimate goal was to force Israel eventually to return to God.

b) The second word is translated broken in this verse.

It has specifically to do with the crushing, oppressive nature of someone under extreme pressure. This is the pressure that is seen when some people are forced into servitude. It is the word for the mistreatment that takes place in oppression.

These two words are used in a parallel fashion to discuss the effect of oppression upon Ephraim during the up-coming captivity.

3. The Punishment for sin is slow (12).

The moth is used here to describe the nature of destruction of Ephraim. The moth destroys clothing. It does this slowly, but it destroys none the less. God will take His time to carry out the punishment upon Ephraim.

The effects of sin are like this at times. Sin works over time and we don't see its erosion of our moral character. The moth works and works and works and eventually, there is an area of the cloth with a hole in it. The damage is done; the garment is useless. Our moral character becomes damaged beyond repair and yet we don't see it, until sin has done its work.

4. The Punishment for Sin causes the search for help. (13)

a) Israel eventually saw that its condition was weak.

This is the discomfort and gradual decay in the society of Israel due to their sin. As a result, they sought help.

b) Israel did not seek help from God, but from an enemy.

Ephraim, when it started to decay, was feeling the effects of their internal sickness, but did not seek help from God. They went, instead, to an enemy. It is likely in this passage that Jareb is a descriptive name, coming from the word for the avenger. It refers to Israel seeking help for its internal ills from Assyria. This is the country who would eventually take them into captivity.

Do you remember the story of Saul in the Scripture? He started out with such promise. He was tall and good-looking. This guy became king. He was given several opportunities to change when it was found that he was sinful. Eventually, God rejected him as a suitable king of Israel. One of Saul's last acts was to seek out the advice of the witch of Endor.

This was the same Saul, who early on, had banned witches from Israel. It was Saul who had made the practice of witchcraft in Israel unhealthy, and unworkable. Now, he sought the witch because he was unwilling to go to God for help.

Now that is sad. It can happen to anyone who allows his or her life to become damaged by sin. Instead of turning to God, sinners seek some help for their condition -- when they eventually realize it. They go to sources who do not have their best interests at heart.

**5. The Punishment for Israel was like the flesh-devouring lion.
(13)**

God is like a lion when it comes to Ephraim -- tearing it apart, because of continuous sin. The older lion does not kill for fun. The she-lion kills for food and eats until satisfied. The rest of the pride join in and eat until they have picked the carcass clean. What they don't eat, the jackals pick clean. The picture for Israel is that there is nothing left when the work of the lion is done.

C. The Punishment for Sin -- Judah (parts 10, 12-15).

The sins of Judah are similar to those of Israel. They, however, had not gone so far down the road to destruction. They had at least retained most of the infrastructure of the worship of the God of the Bible. We will not spend as much time on them today as we did on Israel.

There are several items we should note about the punishment for sin with relationship to Judah.

1. The Punishment for Judah was because of changing boundaries (10).

Judah hadn't rejected God completely, but had moved the boundaries of holiness. They moved the surveyor's cornerstones to their advantage. They had robbed from others by moving that stone so they got the best of a deal. They had also done this to God and His ways -- His boundaries.

If I may, I will paraphrase Keil and Delitzch by saying: they had broken the boundaries set by God between the worship of Baal and the worship of the true God of the Bible.

We need to carefully examine our lives and realize we must not change the boundaries of holiness so that we can allow ourselves to drift into sin.

2. The Punishment for Judah was damage done by worms (12b).

The worm, like the moth, works slowly in its destruction. We see it in fruit. The worm works its way into the fruit. It leaves a small hole on the way in as it eats the fruit from the inside out. We find evidence of its destruction as a portion of the fruit that has turned dark, and soft.

The appearance of sin for Judah came about earlier than in it did for Israel. The nation was not completely destroyed. They went into captivity for 70 years. This is like discovering the damage of the worm, before its work is complete, and then cutting out the diseased portion. That is what God did to Judah.

3. Judah did not seek help from God but from an enemy (13).

Much like Israel, Judah did not seek help from God when their sin first appeared, but sought it from their enemy. Unlike Israel, their destruction as a nation was not complete; therefore, when they found themselves in captivity, they sought help from God.

4. The punishment for Judah was the attack of the young lion (14).

Sometimes the young lion is more interested in the chase, and with playing with his prey. He kills, but he kills for the fun and thrill of it. He might kill and leave his prey behind, rather than to make sure he eats and devours the whole thing. I believe the picture here is slightly different from the destruction of Israel. The destruction was not complete. Yes, Judah was just as dead for a while as a nation, but there was something left that could later be revived.

5. Judah was allowed to repent and return from sin (15).

Now verse 15 could be applied to both Judah and Israel, for God will eventually redeem both. However, Judah recognized her sin quickly and acknowledged their offense and were returned to their place.

Be like Judah when God punishes -- repent and return to God quickly. Israel's destruction was complete, so they did not have as much opportunity to turn as Judah did. They eventually will, thankfully.

III. Conclusion

Today, we have focused in on the punishment for sin and how this punishment works in our lives. The warning signs of destruction can go on unseen and unchecked. Sin can be habitual and work in our lives unnoticed. Its destructive forces, when allowed to proceed unchecked, will be total. Punishment for sin sometimes happens quickly as the the attack of the lion, or it can happen over time like the destruction of the moth or worm. We need to listen for God's trumpet calls of warning. When we see the devastation of sin in our lives, we must turn to God.

We must reject the temptation to seek help from another source besides God. We must come back, seek His face, recognize our sin, and ask His forgiveness. The quicker we do this, the better off we are.

Title: The punishment for sin.