

Foundation of the sermon

Purpose

Show how false goals will present devastating results from an eternal perspective.

Principle Idea:

Pursue a life based on the Word of God not on false goals

Type of Outline

Expository based on Hosea chapters 12 and 13

I. Introduction

As I began to think about the passage we will look at today verse 1 of chapter 12 struck me as the theme of the passage. In it God speaks of how Israel fed on wind, and how they pursued the east wind. What a picture of futility.

Their lives were in pursuit of something that was fleeting and can never be obtained. The passage continues the recounting of the history of Israel a history of failure to follow God. It is a history of a people with such promise, that pursued the wrong goals, sought the wrong rewards, and have judged the success by the world's standards.

The results of the life long pursuit of the wind is summarized in chapter 13 verses 15-16.

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Let's read the passage.

Hosea 12:1-13:16

12:1 Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

3 ¶He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Beth-el, and there he spake with us;

5 Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial.

6 Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

7 ¶He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

8 And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.

9 And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.

10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

11 Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

12 And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

13 And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.

14 Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

13:1 When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.

2 And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.

3 Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.

4 Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.

5 ¶I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.

6 According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.

7 Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them:

8 I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

9 ¶O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

10 I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?

11 I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.

12 The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid.

13 The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.

14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

15 ¶ Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.

16 Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

Now this is a very long paragraph in the Hebrew text and today our goal will be to summarize, and collect the salient points from the passage it will not be to do an exhaustive research of the passage. In fact chapter 13 will be covered in an extremely cursory fashion today because it recounts a familiar theme to the readers of Hosea.

II. Body

A. Israel pursues the east wind. (12:1-5)

1. The fruitless pursuit of the wind. (1)

- a) This pursuit is fruitless. Living on the Texas prairie I am sure that at some point you have seen a "dust devil." It looks like a small tornado in the middle of the field. It is impressive. It grabs your attention. It is there for a little while but then it disappears. If you analyzed what the "dust devil" really is it's nothing but a cloud of dust swirling around. It has no real value. But if you can imagine Israel is accused in this passage of chasing the wind. It would be like you and I spending our lives chasing after "dust devils"
- b) Another illustration of this might be the dandelion. As children my boys loved to get dandelions out of our yard. They would blow on the tops of the little plants and they would chase after the little white feathery tops as the wind carried them along. We as parents enjoyed watching them as they pursued these things. But imagine these same children growing up and spending their

life savings, their energy, emotions, their very life being chasing dandelions. If they did we as parents would not be so filled with joy. This is what Israel did.

- c) The east wind spoken of in verse 1 is a "parching, wasting and injurious wind" according to Adam Clarke in his commentary. Kiel and Delitzch give this description: "the east wind in Palestine a fierce tempestuous wind, which comes with burning heat from the desert of Arabia, and is very destructive to seeds and plants." The passage is speaking about the pursuit of Israel in treaties with Assyria which lay to their east and Egypt. The Expositor's commentary lays out a number of verses which speak of these treaties. Israel made these treaties based on lies and deceit. They rarely if ever produced any good for Israel. Specially while making a treaty with Assyria Israel was also sending oil to Egypt to try and gain support, or protection against Assyria.
 - d) We might call this the "covering all bases" approach, or the "hedging your bets approach" It's like someone going to the lottery booth and buying a block of lottery tickets. They believe they are increasing their odds but it rarely pays off. Think in your own lives are there areas you are hedging your bets. None of the current options are all that promising, but your trying to cover your bases. Perhaps you are pursuing goals that you shouldn't be.
2. The pursuit of the wind has a heavy price (12:2-6).
- a) As a result of its pursuits God has a controversy with Judah.

The main topic in Hosea is about the northern kingdom of Israel. This passage as well as many others groups Judah with Israel in the area of sin. Like a couple of brothers playing in times when the parents aren't watching the sins of one encourages the other to sin. One time I went back to my youngest son's room and moved the dart board that was on the wall. I found that there were holes in the wall made by a pocket knife. He and his brother had decided one day to play darts with a pocket knife. One of the two had encouraged the other to participate in their sin.

Verse 12 of the previous chapter is actually grouped with chapters 12 and 13 in this paragraph. And has lead most commentators to take it in a negative light, rather than with the positive spin put on it in the KJV.

This passage speaks specifically about Judah. I presented it as positive in last weeks sermon, but I would note that when taken in the context of verse 2 of chapter 12 I believe it points to the eventual price Judah will pay by following Israel into sin. They haven't jumped off the cliff, but they are standing there at the edge watching their brother tumble through the air, and thinking "you know I ought to try that."

- b) God has a "strife or contention" with Judah. The Hebrew here is very expressive. According to Gesenius properly this word properly is "to seize one another by the hair." It has the implication of "those who contend with the hand and blows."

In this passage God contends in a fight with Judah. This is why the passage goes on to speak about Jacob striving with Esau for supremacy at birth (Genesis 25:26) and his wrestling with God (Genesis 32:24-38).

It was in Judah's genes to fight with man and with God. God points out this history, to show the trend. Even though Jacob was God's choice over Esau, God has an issue with his pugnacious nature. Where Israel is pictured as chasing the wind, it can be said Judah was punching the wind. Both pursuits were meaningless and hurtful.

- c) Punish KJV - As a result of this nature to fight against God and man, God promises to carefully inspect Jacob. It is like a military inspection. He will call to account, and punish Jacob for its violations. It's sort of like that DI in the military who inspects the barracks, finds something out of order, and punishes the troop by making him or her do extra pushups, or police the area.
- d) Recompense KJV -- The basic word here is the word to return, or turn around. The same word we get the idea of repentance from. In this case it uses a causative stem in the Hebrew. It is saying "cause to return." We might suggest the idea of "pay back" in this passage. God is going to "pay back" Jacob for his sins. They are going to come back on his head. It is inevitable.

e) Payback is coming -- please repent God pleases in verse 6

B. God recounts why Jacob needs to repent. (12:7-14)

1. Israel is a merchant of deceit. (12:7)

a) It is interesting that the word for merchant here, or trafficker as the JPS version translates it, is derived from the same word as the name Canaan. God had told Israel when they entered into the land to drive out the inhabitants, don't do what they do, yet now in the word play here He is calling them Canaan.

b) One of the worst things you could do was to run a market with an unfair scale. That is why we certify scales with departments of government called "weights and measures." We verify that when you fill your tank via a certain pump at the gas station that when it says you are getting a gallon of gas, you are getting a gallon of gas. Israel is compared to a merchant who cheats the scales. It has to do with their deceitful dealings with Assyria and Egypt in the area of diplomacy. They lie and cheat to get advantage. This is what God might think of us if we in our daily lives deceive others to get advantage.

c) The word for oppress in verse 7 also has to do with deceit. It is to defraud, and take advantage.

2. Israel had deceived themselves by using an incorrect standard to judge its own righteousness. (12:8-9)

a) Israel used wealth as their standard. (12:8)

Israel was using material wealth to judge its status with God. I am rich therefore I am blessed, therefore I am righteous. It is a faulty logic. It uses the wrong standard to determine righteousness. This might be the source of the modern "Health and wealth" gospel. It is the same criteria that the disciples were trying to use when they saw the man born blind in the book of John.

They believed that the current physical circumstances of a man was a determination of the man or his parents spiritual

condition. They asked Christ in John 9:2: "... Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

It would be like trying to determine the spiritual condition of Job either before tragedy had struck in his life being one of the wealthiest men in the world, or judging him as a sinner as his friends did when he was scrapping himself with a potsherd.

The only standard by which we can judge our status with regard to righteousness or the lack thereof has nothing to do with our physical status but only with our lives when compared to the "Word of God." This is God's standard. This is what James is saying in James 1:23-24:

" 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."

Verses 10-13 deal with the fact that God had guided and directed them by the prophets throughout their history. Hence they received the living word of God. Yet they had ignored it as the standard they should judge themselves by.

- b) As a result of the pride they had in their own "rich" condition God would humble them. (12:9, 14)

C. The greatest sin of Israel was idolatry (chapter 13)

In Chapter 13 God returns to the most heinous crime in Israel. It is idolatry. God deals with the fruitless nature of their sin in verses (1-4). Their heart turned away from God and that is the reason they will receive punishment (5-8). They had rejected Him as their king because of their seeking the world's approval and therefore they would be judged (9-14). Lastly in verses 15-16 God summarizes the result of their pursuit of the wind including their idolatry. The result will be devastation.

It says:

"¶ Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.

16 Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.”

III. Conclusion

Today’s passage has dealt with a wasted life. Pursuing the wrong goals. Judging success or failure by the wrong standard. Not foreseeing the eternal destruction looming in the distance because of false goals.

It is a sad picture. It is perhaps an all too present reality in the lives of many. It’s like going to Vegas seeing the flashing lights and hearing the bells and whistles and not seeing the ultimate result of pursuit of gain. The momentary success at the slot machine, or the card table hides the eyes from the man sitting on the corner of one of the beautiful fountains with his head in his hands, with his eyes filled with tears.

A wasted life, in pursuit of the meaningless goal. The ultimate cost of this pursuit is not pretty or pleasant.

Title: Chasing the Wind