

Goodness that Frustrates God

Hosea 6:4-7

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Lesson text: **Hosea 6:4-7** – “O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, And like the early dew it goes away.
 5 Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And your judgments are like light that goes forth.
 6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.
 7 "But like men they transgressed the covenant; There they dealt treacherously with Me.”
- B. Hosea prophesies in the northern kingdom . . . Called Ephraim after largest tribe.
- C. The questions which open the text show Divine frustration. Let me clarify . . . We speak of God being frustrated in an accommodative sense, not to imply any inability or lack of wisdom.
1. This is similar to our saying “What am I going to do with you?”
 2. With God this statement is not flippant . . .
 - a. He loves them but must hate their sin.
 - b. He wants to be merciful but cannot forget justice.
 - c. He does not want them to be destroyed, but their persistent sinfulness prevents His saving them.
- D. Our study of these verses from Hosea 6:4-7 is useful as we see application for our time as well. Without doubt, God may be frustrated with us as He sees our carelessness . . . Our willingness to be less than we can . . . Our flimsy excuses, etc. What about our broken promises to God?

GOD WAS FRUSTRATED BY THE TRANSIENT AND SHALLOW NATURE OF THEIR GOODNESS. Hosea 6:4

- A. Look at the figures of speech in **verse 4**.
1. “For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud.” It comes and goes and does not stay.
 2. For your faithfulness “is like the early dew it goes away.” It comes and goes and does not stay.
 3. Israel’s profession of loyalty to God, like mist and dew, evaporated suddenly and had no substance.
- B. Such had been typical of Israel’s history. What was typical of the nation was and is, typical of individuals.

1. **Luke 8:13** – “But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.”
2. **Galatians 1:6** – “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel.”

C. Consider some examples.

1. One turns to God in a time of crisis, but then forgets Him when the problem is solved.
2. Bereavement often causes revival, which may then pass as the grief diminishes.
3. People may respond out of emotionalism, then not follow through as their feelings settle down.
4. People sometimes have great resolutions while listening to a sermon, but their attention is later turned to something else.
5. Some respond out of convenience rather than conviction.

TEMPORARY AND TOKEN REVIVALS DO NOT REMOVE THE THREAT OF JUDGMENT. Hosea 6:5

- A. **Hosea 6:5** – “Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And your judgments are like light that goes forth.”
- B. The idea is that the warnings were as certain as if already carried out and were as plain as day.
- C. People who play at religion, who treat it as a passing fad, are in great danger as admitted reprobates.
- D. Israel would have to do better than “morning cloud” religion.

TEMPORARY AND TOKEN REVIVALS DO NOT REMOVE THE THREAT OF JUDGMENT. Hosea 6:6

- A. **Hosea 6:6** – “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”
 1. Jesus quoted this passage twice: (1) Matthew 9:13 (2) Matthew 12:7
 2. Jesus applied it to people who had a formal religion, but did not really understand and live by the will of God.
- B. Many have reduced religion to mere form and formality and have omitted what God intended . . . **Total surrender and life-long commitment to the Lord.**

THE PRACTICAL MEANING OF OUR TEXT. Hosea 6:4-7

- A. Commitment must be for a lifetime.
 1. Read: **Hebrews 3:6-14**
 2. **Hebrews 10:23** – “Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful.”

3. **1 Corinthians 15:58** – “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
 4. **Romans 2:5-7** – “. . . God, who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds’: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality.”
- B. It must be more than mere ritual . . . It is knowing God and being like Him.
1. **Micah 6:6-8** – “With what shall I come before the LORD , And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”
 2. **Amos 5:21-24** – “I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.”
 3. **Hebrews 13:16** – “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”
 4. **1 Samuel 15:22-23** – “So Samuel said [to King Saul]: ‘Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD ? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD , He also has rejected you from being king.’”
- C. **God didn’t want Israel’s rituals . . . He wanted their hearts!** Is that not still true today? Was your heart in your baptism? . . . Is it in your worship? . . . is it in you partaking of the Lord’s Supper? **Put your heart into it!**

CONCLUSION:

- A. The appeal of the gospel is not for a decision or change in one or two aspects of life, or for a particular time of life. It is a challenge to a complete and life-long commitment. It is a call to give oneself **WHOLLY** to the Lord. **Wholly is holy!**
- B. Sadly, the Israelites broke the agreement God made with them and proved themselves unfaithful to God. Are there not people who continue to do that today?
- C. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**