
Live Like You're Loved

Hosea 9-10

*Give them, O LORD— what will you give?
(Hosea 9:14)*

Big Idea:

What happens when you forget that God is a father? What happens when you forget that God loves us the way a good father loves his child? You act like an orphan. That is exactly what is happening to the Israelites in this passage. They are living like orphans. They're not living like they belong to God and are loved by him. So what are the marks of one living like an orphan and how does God's Fatherhood cure them?

I. Disobedient (Hosea 9:1-8, 15-17; 10:13)

First, living like an orphan is to live disobediently. The first and most obvious is disobedience. This is the lust of the eyes, the insistence on doing what seems best to you rather than what God requires. What will be the result of trying to make it as an orphan? You will be as "lonely as a wild donkey" (8:9). You will not find lasting love in those wrong places. So what must you do? You must seek the Lord again as your Father if you are already a Christian. If you are not, you must come to Christ for your righteousness as Hosea says in 10:12. Let go of your grip on your sins and your insistence on running your life and allowing others to determine your worth. Instead take hold of Christ and he will transfer his righteous record to you. That will complete the paperwork for becoming a child of God. It will bring you into a family of fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers who will love you unconditionally. It will set you on a path not just of right doing, but of human flourishing. And you will actually start living a life that blesses others and pleases your heavenly Father.

II. Degradation (Hosea 9:9-10; 10:9-10)

The second way that living like an orphan affects us is by degrading us. Rather than living according to the good design God has woven into creation and commanded us to live according to, we live according to the lust of our flesh. And because our hearts are broken with sin, this lifestyle only ends up degrading us. It makes us live more like animals than humans made in the image of God. Hosea references two major points in Israel's history where this happened. They ended in rape and murder. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ has an answer for the questions each generation is asking. It's a much better answer than any other we may find. What is true? God's Word. What is real? Life as defined by God's Word. What is good? God's design for how we are to live in the world he created. What is beautiful? The life lived according to God's design.

III. Defiant (Hosea 9:11-14; 10:1-11, 13-15)

The third manifestation of living as an orphan is defiance. This is the most frightening one. The Israelites' pride is manifest. This is to live with a fist raised to God. They "depend on their own strength" (10:13), harm people around them (10:11), and disobey all the authorities in their life (10:3) because they do not fear the Lord (10:3). How can anyone be rescued from pride? No one can humble himself. Acting humble is "false humility" which grates on everyone because it is just another way to draw praise to yourself. True humility

is believing that you are significant and what you do is significant but only because God is the sovereign Savior and giver of every good gift. So how do you get this gift of humility? You can't contrive it; you can only pray to Jesus for it. And Jesus promises to pray to the Father for it. And the Father sends his Spirit to give it to you.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you observed the negative effects of loneliness in your own life or someone you know? How does living with God as your father help bind you to a community where you can flourish?
2. Have you observed in your own life or in the life of someone you know the degrading effects of living according to sinful desires rather than submitting to God's commands? How does knowing God as a good father help compel you to want to follow his commands, even if they seem like they could be counter to your desires?
3. What is one way you may be guilty of defiance toward the Lord? Spend time praying for the humility to accept his will and live according to it.