

Hosea

GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE
FOR HIS FAITHLESS PEOPLE

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Full Stomachs and Empty Hearts

Hosea 13:1-8

God's blessings should result in our gratitude. Too often God's blessings result in our indifference, or worse, in our forgetting and leaving God for the shiny toys he has given us. We shouldn't hope for miserable lives, but we should realize that success is a two-edged sword that has devoured many good believers. We can find ourselves being gorged on things that fade away and ignoring the one person who can truly fill all the longing of our heart. When this happens, the spiral away from God and toward idols quickly follows. For this reason...

Don't let success destroy you

I. The Problem

A. Success leads to apathy (vv 1, 6)

Ephraim had become a powerful force to reckon with during the reign of Jeroboam II (cf 2 Kings 14:23-27). Unfortunately, Israel's physical blessings caused her to forget God. If we're not careful, the good things God gives us can turn our hearts away from our Creator when they should invite us to draw near him. Success isn't bad, but it is dangerous!

B. Apathy leads to idolatry (vv 1-2)

Rather than responding to God's goodness with humility and gratitude, Israel doubled down on her idol worship. More blessings meant more and more idols were churned out. Too often blessings in this life draw a heart of worship from God to the things of this earth.

II. The Solution

A. Fear the punishment

Part of God's solution was to punish Israel. Waking up a slumbering saint sometimes requires some pain to point us back to our true source of blessing.

1. Fear God's passive punishment (v 3)

On one hand, God threatened that the natural outcome of the people of Israel would be irrelevance. Their sin would destroy them. The consequences of their actions would be their own form of punishment.

2. Fear God's active punishment (vv 7-8)

But God also warns that he personally will show up and make things miserable for his wayward people.

B. Remember the relationship (vv 4-5)

God wants Israel to remember that he is not some stranger, he is a God with whom they have relationship, and who has already done so much for them in the past!