

# Hosea 5:1-15

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[ 0 : 00 ] We are continuing this evening in a series, a sermon series, in the book of Hosea.

If you want to turn there, we'll be going there, page 754. In a little while, we'll be reading our passage. So, Hosea was a prophet in about somewhere in the 8th century, so 700, 750 to 720 BC. And he was a prophet mostly to the northern kingdom of Israel. So, I thought tonight I'd begin by giving you a little bit of history about what the northern kingdom of Israel was like.

In 731 BC, the northern kingdom was established when Jeroboam rebelled against the reigning king of God's people, the grandson of David, who sat on the throne in Jerusalem. Jeroboam successfully divided the kingdom and established the northern kingdom, which is from then on called Israel as opposed to Judah in the south.

[ 1 : 25 ] Having established his state politically, Jeroboam faced a big problem. What to do with worship? Because for the people of God, the center of worship was in Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem was the temple. In the temple was the very presence of God dwelling among his people. But to go to Jerusalem from the northern kingdom would be like a Civil War Confederate soldier going to church in Washington, D.C. on a Sunday morning.

It just, it would be crazy. So, what did Jeroboam do? Well, in his wisdom, as we see in 2 Kings, I'm sorry, 1 Kings chapter 12, Jeroboam formed two golden calves.

He set them up in two places of worship, one in Dan and one in Bethel. And he said, Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

He said, you no longer need to go to Jerusalem. You could worship God in these ways as well. And so, the northern kingdom started on a journey of self-determined worship into idolatry.

[ 2 : 46 ] They worshiped the golden calves. And as the nation continued and the kings followed in these footsteps, they added to the golden calves the worship of the Baals, the idols of the Canaanite peoples around them.

They did not worship as God commanded, but instead they determined their own way of worship. So, fast forward about 200 years or so, and we find the nation of Israel steeped in idolatry.

But it has a new problem as well. And that is that it is in dire straits politically. The growing power of the Assyrian Empire to the north is squeezing them.

It's exposing their vulnerability. And it makes them wonder, where does our security as a nation come from? And so, according to, again, Isaiah 7, 1 Kings 16, the king of Israel at that time, Pekah, ran to a number of other smaller nations nearby and said, let's form a coalition.

Let's stand up against the bully of Assyria by banding together. One of the countries that they went to was Judah, the southern kingdom. But the king of Judah said, no way.

[ 4 : 06 ] No way. Assyria is way too big. I'm not going to join a coalition against them. And so, Pekah, you know, tried to invade Judah. And so, Judah ran to, lo and behold, Assyria and said, hey, will you protect us from these people who are trying to invade us?

Both Israel and Judah, in the face of a dire political situation, did not trust God or seek him for help. But instead, they chose a real politic approach of alliances with other nations to provide for their national security. These patterns in the northern kingdom showed deeply held convictions that at its root revealed a pride.

Pride that was shown in their brazen disregard for God's instructions on how he was to be worshipped. Blatantly violating even the most basic of the Ten Commandments to make no idols or fashion no image to worship.

Pride shown in the desperate maneuvers to manage their political situation, to grasp its security through alliances, disregarding God, who had over and over and over again saved them when they trusted in him.

[ 5 : 31 ] This is the story of the northern kingdom up to the point of Hosea. But I'll tell you, this account is not simply about 8th century B.C. Israel.

Because I think it's also about us. I think we, far too often and more often than we dare to admit, live with a great disregard for God, for a pride in ourselves.

We brazenly presume that we know better than God how to worship him. We trust in religious ritual and man-made practices. And when we are faced with danger or a place where our security seems at risk, we run to all sorts of other things, all sorts of pragmatic alliances and partnerships to take care of ourselves, thinking that it's up to us, that we have the power to do it.

These are expressions of pride. That we are ultimate in the world and that God is there to serve us. And our passage today dives into how God responds when we exhibit this kind of pride.

So let's read it. Hosea chapter 5. It says this, Hear this, O priests.

[ 7 : 01 ] Pay attention, O house of Israel. Give ear, O house of the king. For the judgment is for you. For you have been a snare at Mizpah and a net spread over Tabor.

And the revolvers have gone deep into slaughter. But I will discipline them all. I know Ephraim. And Israel is not hidden from me.

And now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore. Israel is defiled. Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of whoredom is within them. And they know not the Lord.

The pride of Israel testifies to his face. Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in his guilt. Judah also shall stumble with them. With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the Lord.

But they will not find him. For he has withdrawn from them. They have dealt faithlessly with the Lord. For they have born alien children. Now the new moon shall devour them with their fields.

[ 8 : 01 ] Blow the horn in Gibeah. The trumpet in Ramah. Sound the alarm at Beth-Avon. We follow you, O Benjamin. Israel shall become a desolation in the day of punishment.

Among the tribes of Israel I will make known what is sure. The princes of Judah have become like those who move the landmark. Upon them I will pour out my wrath like water.

Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment because he was determined to go after Phil. But I am like a moth to Ephraim. Like dry rot to the house of Judah. When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah his wound.

Then Ephraim went to Assyria and sent to the great king. But he is not able to cure you or heal your wound. For I will be like a lion to Ephraim. Like a young lion to the house of Judah.

I, even I, will tear and go away. I will carry off and no one shall rescue. I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face and in their distress earnestly seek me.

[ 9 : 16 ] Pray with me please. Lord, these are hard words. Lord, I pray tonight that you would help us. Lord, to have ears that will hear and hearts to receive what you have to say to us.

Lord, I pray that you would speak through me that my words would be yours. Lord, and that by your Holy Spirit your word would speak to all of our hearts tonight.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So how does God respond to this kind of pride? We're going to look at this passage.

It's kind of got two sections. Verses 1 through 7 is the first one. Verses 8 through 14 is the second section. And what we see is that in the first one it is God responding to presumptuous religion.

And the second part shows God's response to presumptuous pragmatism. So let's start by looking at verses 1 through 7 together. We'll see that God will bring wrath and ruin upon presumptuous religion.

[ 10 : 22 ] starting in verse 1 God is saying to his people listen up! Listen up all of you! The kings, the priests, all the people! Listen up from Tabor to what is it?

Mizpah! And maybe another place depending on how you translate that last phrase. God says listen up all of you! And the last phrase could be translated literally I am chastisement to you.

I am coming to discipline my people. Why? Well in verses 3 and 4 we see a restatement of what we've seen in Hosea over and over again.

God knows his people. He knows them intimately like a husband knows his wife. He knows them at their worst for they've been unfaithful to him. They've gone and mucked about in the sty with the swine spiritually and politically.

They're unclean and the relationship is broken. His people cannot return to him because of their sin. They're ensnared and they do not know him and they're estranged from him.

[ 11 : 33 ] In verse 5 the first phrase probably ought to go on tacked on to the end of that thought in verse 4 because it's not just their infidelity that's the problem but it's their pride.

The brazen bald faced rebellion the haughty arrogance with which they have carried it out that is so offensive. And we see in verses 6 and 7 this presumption this arrogance this pride shows itself in self-determining religion.

Why do I say that? Look at verse 6. It says they will with their flocks and herds they shall go and seek the Lord. They're going to show up with these animal sacrifices thinking this is how God told us.

Now God's going to respond to us. Now God's going to be there. Verse 7 adds another layer to this presumptuous religion because it refers to in the second phrase the alien children.

What does that mean? Well to worship the Canaanite the Canaanite gods of Baal they would actually have cultic prostitutes that to worship God would be to go in physically with these prostitutes so they actually bore children and so they're actually children running around as a fruit of this worship.

[ 12 : 55 ] Their self-determined worship of God produced this fruit. What you see is Israel presumptuously saying they can come to God however they want to.

Offer sacrifices local worship styles regardless of their faithfulness and God will answer them so they think. Friends the history of the church is that we are not immune to some of these impulses as well.

In some traditions the exalting of religious rituals and rites express this pride so it is seen in trusting in the baptism that I had as an infant or thinking that because I go regularly to confession God accepts me despite the actual evidence of my practical atheism during my week and my excesses on Friday or Saturday night.

In other traditions this can be the pride of wearing the badge of I prayed the prayer I made the decision I went forward at camp I was baptized in my church assuming that those events long ago those particular rituals are the things that give us a free pass with God despite our disregard for God and how we pursue our careers our relationships or the way we handle money friends not only has this been a problem in church but I fear it can be a problem even in our church here my fear for Trinity Baptist is a little different my fear for us is that we would become presumptuous about the gospel of grace without seriously considering the true state of our hearts that pride will creep in and make us hard to the reality of our sin that in our pursuit of doing church right getting our theology and our bible right getting the gospel right that this would build not a humble grateful dependence on Christ but a self-assured arrogant proud perspective towards others who maybe don't get it quite as right as we do now listen

I want us to get it right I want us to submit to God and listen to his instruction about who he is and how we are to worship him but if in our pursuit for that we begin to become proud in how we do that if we think that because we do it more right than someone else that that's a place for us to look down upon others what a terrible place we would be I see pride in my own heart because I hear the good news of God's relentless alluring love for me and it's not precious to me because I think I'm doing a lot of things right in my own life I'm a pretty decent Christian guy I think most of the time and so and so the gospel of grace is not shockingly wonderful to me to me that shows me that I have a pride that is blinding me to my sin blinding me to my presumption that but for God's grace in my life

[ 16 : 42 ] I would be the worst sinner in the world Professor D.A. Carson says this our self centeredness is deep it is so brutally idolatrous that it tries to domesticate God himself in our desperate folly we act as if we can outsmart God as if he owes us explanations as if we are wise and self determining while he exists only to meet our needs and we would bear rarely be so presumptuous or bold to say that about God that God is there for us but in our presumptuous religion our trusting and rights and rituals our trusting in events long ago our trusting in doing church right we see a pride a self orientation that we can approach God however we want and so in these ways we are like

Israel if you were here last week Hosea chapter 4 is the beginning of like a court prosecution God has put Israel on trial and saying this is what I have against you and here is the evidence chapter 5 it's kind of the pronouncement it's the therefore here's the judgment against you and in the face of that Israel is sitting in the dock and he is brazenly saying I can do whatever I want religiously God's still gonna be there Israel is mistaken verse 6 shows us that God cannot be found through this presumptuous religion verse 7 shows us that God will come with an active chastisement against his

people look at verse 6 with me for a minute though they used means that God ordained the sacrifice system what did they find

God was not there they could not find him God had withdrawn himself oh friends what a terrible thing to seek God and to find that he is not there like a cheating husband arriving home with flowers in his hand expecting to be welcomed home and finding an empty home an empty bed all the picture frames removed no evidence of the relationship left God is gone he has left the building he has withdrawn cannot be placated by mere religious ritual or shallow repentance verse 7 the last phrase points to this to an active sense if God's withdrawal is a passive sense of his discipline there is an active sense too that he will come and devour it's a notoriously difficult phrase to translate but if nothing else it seems clear that there is this devouring effect that like a plague of locusts through a field

God's wrath will come God's judgment will come upon his people and the only thing that will be left is stubble and chaff the deceit of pride is that we can domesticate God and that he will be there no matter how we approach him God will have none of it he will not allow himself to be domesticated listen to this it is because his love for his people is so great that he will bring ruin to them rather than allow them to continue unchecked in their pride he will bring a devouring judgment a chastisement as a final call to turn to turn away from these other things to turn back to him and to find him again and so we must ask ourselves when we feel like

God has withdrawn from us when we feel deep abiding frustration in our spiritual lives we have to at least ask the question God is there pride in how I am coming to you is the struggle that I am experiencing the fruit of pride and what it's done to my relationship with you or my present struggles the result of the Lord's loving ruin of my presumptuous heart so for Israel God's response to their presumptuous religion is wrath and ruin and as we look into the second half pages verses 8 through 14 we will see that he will respond to presumptuous pragmatism with the same

[ 22 : 09 ] Israel's pride reared its head in presumptuous pragmatism look in verse 13 with me here we see part of the story that I told you at the beginning all the way back to the book of Exodus when Israel became an actual nation for the first time God had called his people to see him as the God who would protect them he was to be the warrior for them he would fight their battles for them they were called simply to trust him and to obey and in these things no one could stand against God and his people not Egypt not Sihon not Og not the Philistines not the Moabites not the Enamites not Assyria nobody could stand against God and his people and God said simply trust me and I will be your warrior

I will be your protector I will be the one to give you security Israel was simply called to trust in him but in the pressure cooker of the political reality we saw both Judah and Israel ran not to God but to Assyria and to the great king for help all of this intrigue making alliances with pagan nations when the God who delivered them from Egypt stood ready to come to their aid and stand as their protector why would they do this three words presumptuous irreligious pragmatism presumptuous because they thought it's up to me to take care of this problem I am the one with both the power and the responsibility to solve my political problem irreligious because they excluded God from the solution

God cannot or will not intervene in this situation and so they acted like God wasn't there at all and pragmatically because they thought how can I manage this problem well let me look at how the world around me does it what is going to work in this situation what do the other nations do when they're squeezed like this well this is what they do they form alliances they become vassal states they try to appeasement and defiance they go back and forth this presumptuous irreligious pragmatism is profoundly dishonoring to God it is a betrayal by God's people of the loyalty that God demanded and asked for and it was also foolishness to ignore the power of the creator of the world to get into an alliance with the shady trustworthiness of Assyria it didn't take long maybe 10 years from this point for people to see that it wasn't going to work very well that Assyria was not a safe place and that there was no security there for Assyria turned on both Israel and Judah as we see at the end of verse 13 there is no cure there there is no healing balm for that wound well how can we be like this let me put before you the question of our financial security how do we think about our money let's run it through the paradigm

I just asked presumptuous irreligious pragmatic do we think that a financial problem is something that we can and should be able to handle in our own human wisdom and power do we think that God can and will intervene in our financial lives or do we think that it is entirely up to us and we

exclude God from ever intervening in our financial world do we in the face of some kind of crisis do we desperately seek how the world would work to try to solve our problem whether it be investing in a hedge fund buying a lottery ticket buying gold whatever it is doing these things but not seek God in the midst of it not ask God to take care of us in this let me press it a little further do we enter into partnerships with other people who have no goal but to make the most money so that we can try and take care of our financial situation do we play games with credit cards shell games try and cover over our debt do we hoard our money and savings and bonds and 401ks so that we can take care of ourselves do I spend more time thinking about those things than I do in prayer reading my Bible thinking and inviting God into my financial world now let me step back for a minute God tells us a lot about money in the Bible and he tells us that he's able to provide for all of our needs he tells us that he owns the cattle on a thousand hills he tells us that he loves us like a father and he will not give us stone when we ask him for bread he also tells us that the love of money is the root of all evil and that we are called to be shrewd stewards of the money that we have to invest in eternal not temporal things there's a lot of really good practical wisdom in the scriptures about how to handle financial crises that is good out there Larry Burkett Ron Blue Crown Financial these are all great things for you to know about and to avail yourself to understand and to think biblically and Christianly about how we handle our money but listen to me it will all be for naught if our fundamental approach is a presumptuous pragmatism that says we must save ourselves for God won't

[ 28 : 53 ] Jesus speaks to this in Matthew 6 he says don't be anxious about the very basics of life what you eat drink what you will wear he says the Gentiles people who don't know God they run after these things they are consumed by finding the solution and the security on their own but Jesus says but you have a heavenly father who knows what you need therefore seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you just as Israel ought to have sought God to protect and provide for their national security so we ought to seek God to protect and provide for our financial security and you know what if you're sitting here tonight and money is not your deal it's not your issue it's not your thing maybe it's something else instead maybe it's your academic career trying to get through the next hoop the next level watching your grade point average desperately trying to impress the right people to get in position yourself for the next stage up the ladder maybe it's your desire to be married and have a family maybe it's as simple as you're like walking into college and having friends and thinking how am

I going to make friends what ways am I going to do that friends it's so easy for us to be like Israel in all these different areas and how does God respond to presumptuous pragmatism in verses 8 through 10 we see the severity and urgency of the situation like a watchman standing in the tower looking out into the desert and seeing the approaching army and sounding the warning bell here it comes here it comes so God is saying sound the warning bell for I am coming I am coming to Ephraim because they run after it says in this it says filth filth isn't the right word Ephraim is run after nonsense it's a nonsense syllable it's like running after yada yada yada yada running after foolishness vanity they are running after that and Judah has become so corrupt that they disregard even a basic standard of righteousness how to set a boundary line and then not to move it for your own gain and if they can't keep that boundary line how in the world are they going to keep God's moral and spiritual boundary lines and instructions so God is coming against them verse 10 we see that when he comes he will come like a flood and the flood here the picture is not like the slowly rising waters of the lower

Mississippi and a hot summer with too much rain in the Midwest it is instead the flash flood in the hills of Appalachia the quick and sweeping flood that scours the ravine leaves nothing in its wake but scattered rubble everything is carried away and of course this is what will happen to Israel in 722 when Assyria comes there is nothing left there is nothing left of the nation the people are deported the cities are destroyed the fields are sown there is nothing left and we see this coming this active chastisement and judgment of God coming upon them and again both a passive and an active sense in verse 12 he comes like a moth the little worms in your sweater box that eat away all summer long so when you pull your sweater out it is just a pile of yarn

God says I am allowing your sin to be like that amongst you like dry rot in the beams in my garage at home like dry rot slowly eating away until that pillar becomes just a pile of dust this is what I am allowing sin to do in your nation in your heart and even more terrifying than that verse 14 verse 14 God's wrath comes like a lion his active I looked this up I didn't know what it would be like to be

attacked by a lion so I googled it don't I'm not kidding you don't it is not it is a gruesome thing I watched one or two and I turned it off but I want you to know how serious it is when a lion comes against a man he has no chance unless he has a gun maybe lots of guns or a really big gun because that lion is so swift and so powerful it is terrifying to be attacked by a lion and that is God's point in using this here you are helpless and it is terrifying

God is like that towards those who live full of presumption and pride this is the scope of God's wrath and it is terrible and this is the depth of our sin the severity of our pride in the eyes of God he will not be worshipped by those who come with an arrogant spirit he will not suffer the betrayal of his beloved who turn everywhere but to him for help he cannot let it stand I want you to see that this is the thrust of Hosea chapter 5 this is the message that God had for Israel and yet this central message fits into the larger context of the book in verse 15 we see just a glimmer on the horizon just a whisper of this thread that we've seen in this book of Hosea that he brings wrath and ruin upon proud religion and pragmatism so that he might bring and gain his people back

[ 35 : 46 ] God judges Israel but even the pronouncement of the judgment is an opportunity a final opportunity to turn back to him it's an opportunity for repentance to acknowledge our guilt and to seek him that until in the second line of verse 15 is a precious and glorious thing we've seen this in chapter 2 and chapter 3 as well as commentator Derek Kidner says the whole book of Hosea is from one angle a study of what it means to turn back to God so in this passage the nation is confronted with two unconsidered facts the stranglehold of its own habits and the hiddenness of God from worshipers who are insincere and yet his anger is that of love not of hate his relentless harrying of them is designed to bring them home so friends what do we do with this passage how do we respond this side of the cross of Jesus

Christ how do we think about what this says to us first we should see that God has demonstrated his love for proud sinners like you and me who can so easily fall into presumption whether it be religious or pragmatic God has loved us way more glorious than we could imagine for God demonstrates his love for us in this while we were still sinners Christ died for us the judgment upon sin that came to Israel through Assyria is nothing compared to the judgment that God poured out upon his son at the cross Jesus bore that wrath against sin the sin of pride the sin of presumption the sin of pragmatism and empty religion Jesus was taken out of the city and abandoned in the wilderness of Golgotha Jesus jumped in front of us to take on the onrushing wrath of God who came like a lion and Jesus was torn apart for us

Jesus cried from the cross my God my God why have you forsaken me because God withdrew his presence from his very own son as Jesus took our sin and God's wrath upon it God did this for us what a great shelter what a refuge what a savior that we have for all who are in Christ there is no longer condemnation there is no longer final judgment but hope and joy and confidence Hebrews 10 says that because of the blood of Christ we can now enter because the blood of Christ covers us we are now able to draw near to God with hearts and hands cleansed by this blood and we can come near with confidence and full assurance that we will find him because of Christ secondly we are to see that for those who have assurance in

Christ God may still oppose us when we fall prey to pride to presumption to empty religion and pragmatism but it is not with the threat of final judgment but with the loving hand of a father disciplining his child the loving rebuke of a husband calling his wife back out of her waywardness he may frustrate us when our hearts are steeped in these things but his loving heart is to woo us back and he does this in Jesus because in Jesus what we see is that in how he rescued us there is power there is power to be rescued from our pride Jesus subverts our pride breaking us of it by his humiliation and his humility he resisted the temptation to take the pragmatic shortcut when the devil tempted him in the wilderness at the beginning of his ministry he said over and over again I've come not to do my will but the will of the one who has sent me he submitted himself to his father over and over again and trusted him he did not count equality with God something to be grasped but emptied himself took on the form of a servant took on flesh and bone so that he might identify with us taking even to the cross this flesh and blood bearing the punishment for our sin on that cross and in this we find the power to be freed from our pride and our arrogance to turn back to heartfelt seeking of God acknowledging our guilt to turn away from pragmatic managing to wholehearted trusting in God for all of our lives finally we must also heed the call of Hebrews 3 that I read at the beginning of this service

[ 41 : 20 ] Hosea 5 if nothing else is a call to repentance Hebrews 3 it says today if you hear his voice do not harden your heart take care brothers lest there be in you any evil unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God we are called to examine our hearts we are called to invite God to examine our hearts to see if this pride is in our hearts and if you are in Christ then the call is to see that when we see this pride we can run to Christ we can run to the refuge that is in the blood of Christ to turn from sin and to take hold of the grace of God that has taken hold of us that his kindness has the power to lead us to repentance and that his spirit is able to work in us a humble dependence that roots out arrogant pride and self-reliance but friends if you are not in Christ tonight if you have seen tonight that your hope really is in some form of presumptuous religion some if your life is steeped in presumptuous pragmatism then the call to you is to run to Christ for the first time throw yourself on his mercy know that the only refuge from this horrible wrath of God is the blood of Christ covering over you plead with God to cover you with the blood of Christ so that you may not experience his terrible wrath against sin but instead that that would be satisfied in Christ do not harden your heart today but hear his call turn confess the futility of your religious activities renounce your self-reliant pragmatism and run to the shelter that is in Christ let's pray God we see that our sin is great and before you it is a severe thing Lord you do not treat sin lightly but the offense is deep and the response is strong God I pray tonight that your spirit would like a searchlight peer into the depths of our hearts to see where we may fall into pride presumption and how we live our lives in relationship with you Lord show us these things so that we may acknowledge our guilt and turn to you and seek your face God you are an awesome God a holy God Lord we pray that it might be that the great hope that in Christ there is a refuge for us may take root in our hearts Lord I pray that we would run to you tonight and find great comfort in that great news of the gospel Lord not to turn to that lightly or presumptuously but Lord soberly to see how wonderful your salvation is we pray these things in Jesus name Amen that Thank you.