

The Righteous Live in God's Paths

‘A [rich] fellow bought a new [Lamborghini] and was out on an interstate road for a nice evening drive. The top was down, the breeze was blowing through his hair and he decided to open her up. As the needle jumped up to [90] mph he suddenly saw a flashing red and blue light behind him. “There ain’t no way they can catch a [Lamborghini]”, he thought to himself and opened her up further. The needle hit [110, 130] and finally [150] with the lights still behind him. “What am I doing?” he thought and pulled over. The cop came up to him, took his license without a word and examined it and the car. “I’ve had a tough shift and this is my last pull over. I don’t feel like more paperwork so if you can give me an excuse for your driving that I haven’t heard before, you can go!” “Last week my wife ran off with a cop”, the man said, “and I was afraid you were trying to give her back!” “Have a nice night”, said the officer.’

Folks, at this point, I seriously need to warn you all that our roads are not meant to be so abused! Highways are meant to get you from one place to another, safely and efficiently. Causing others madness and mayhem is offensive to the road, it abuses the road and will eventually cause you to wreck, sending your soul down to permanent perdition. Doubt me? Well, we have it

written down right here in Hosea 14:9, the very last verse of the whole Book of Hosea, “The paths of the Lord are true and right, and righteous people live by walking in them”. But these same paths, these same roads, lead to a very different destination for other people, namely the *unrighteous*. For the final sentence of the final verse of the final chapter of Hosea ends thus: “But in those paths sinners stumble and fall”.

Consider the previous chapter, 13. We’ve already heard much of the harsh language of judgement God pronounces against both the northern and southern kingdoms in earlier chapters. Hosea’s marriage to an “out and proud sex worker” who throws Hosea’s love for her back into his face, was a vivid object lesson as to how Israel and Judah were throwing God’s love for them back into His face! We in America can not help but see the obvious, painful parallels with how we have treated God’s love these last several decades. Look back at 13:4-5 as God yet again refreshes their memories: “I have been the Lord your God ever since I brought you out of Egypt. You must acknowledge no God but Me, for there is no other savior. I took care of you in the wilderness, in that dry and thirsty land”. Despite God’s miraculous, supernatural, bend-over-backwards tender-loving care, what did the people do? Verse 6 sums it up in just a few brief words: “But when you had eaten and were satisfied, you became proud and forgot Me”. There it is! Good times come, and what do we do? Well, most people forget God. What did America do?

Except for a faithful remnant, albeit a fairly big remnant, America not only forgot God, listened to many devils and their leader, believed their lies, but has now thrown off any pretense of ever having known God at all! Talk about the ultimate betrayal!! If it weren't for the faithful remnant, we'd be just as bad, if not worse, than Israel and Judah ever were! Worse even than Sodom and Gomorrah, and we know how God was forced to judge them.

So here in verses 7-10 God lays it out: "So now I will attack you like a lion, like a leopard that lurks along the road. Like a bear whose cubs have been taken away, I will tear out your heart. I will devour you like a hungry lioness and mangle you like a wild animal. You are about to be destroyed, O Israel—yes, by Me, your only helper. Now where is your king? Let him save you! Where are all the leaders of the land, the king and the officials you demanded of Me?" God's judgement against the traitors who mocked Him, His laws, His blessings, well, it's pronounced one final time at chapter 13's final verse 16: "The people of Samaria must bear the consequences of their guilt because they rebelled against their God. They will be killed by an invading army, their little ones dashed to death against the ground, their pregnant women ripped open by swords". Can you imagine such horror? By God's grace, did you hear that?, by God's grace, none of us here have witnessed such unspeakable atrocities. And hopefully we never will. But as horrific as such scenes could be for us now, and for the people back then, if you know Father God, then you'll

know that it hurt His heart far more. For though His people's betrayal was as vile as imaginable, yet He can not help but still love His people. That includes us, those who are, and will be in Christ.

For see how the prophecies given to Hosea end in the final chapter, 14. And not just here, but in all the prophecies given to all the prophets. Both then, and even, or especially now! Yet again, God issues a call through Hosea, in 14:1-3, for the people to repent, to return to Him. 'Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for your sins have brought you down. Bring your confessions, and return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Forgive all our sins and graciously receive us, so that we may offer You our praises. Assyria cannot save us, nor can our warhorses. Never again will we say to the idols we have made, 'you are our gods'. No, in You alone do the orphans find mercy".' And what does Father God say to that? Verses 4-5 record: 'The Lord says, "Then I will heal you of your faithlessness; My love will know no bounds, for My anger will be gone forever".' And we know how this became possible. For Christ Jesus the Messiah, the Savior, the Redeemer, the sacrificial Lamb of God, came hundreds of years later, took all of their sins and our sins, upon Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane. He carried them all the way to the Cross. And there He died, for them, for us, paying the required death penalty for all our rebellion against our Creator and Loving Father. In the process He defeated all the intricate plans and machinations of hell and the devil, rising from the dead to new, heavenly and earthly eter-

nal life, opening the door to permanent, glorious, divine life to all of us who will trade in our old, decrepit, corrupt, rotting lives to Him and receive His new life within us in return. What a trade!!

So you see, God's mercy and grace triumph over all things in the end. For He is God. He is love. He is life. And His absolutely perfect, righteous ways will end the "Day". All things will be set right and continue rightly for eternity. The Book of Hosea concludes with: "I am the One Who answers your prayers and cares for you. I am like a tree that is always green; all your fruit comes from Me". Let those who are wise understand these things. Let those with discernment listen carefully. The paths of the Lord are true and right, and righteous people live by walking in them.'

Dear ones, we are in the End Times. We're not in the final Great Tribulation yet, nor will we ever be, who are faithful. For just before that bloodcurdling seven years begins, our Lord has promised to rapture us out of this earth, so that we will not have to experience that ultimate judgement of God as He releases all the demons and devils of hell to wreak their havoc of death and destruction upon this earth, and all whom fully deserve everything that will come upon them for their vicious, unrelenting evil in full alliance with all that has opposed God from the mists of time.

Among the primary, sacred duties of pastors, is to disseminate the truth. God is truth. God's Word is truth. And since we are in the end times, God is clearing up for His people and all the world, so the world is without any excuse, all the lies that have

accrued like barnacles on our lives, on our civilizations, on our world. All of us, absolutely all of us, have been taught literally countless lies, half-truths, and deceptions for all our lives. Many things we were taught in school, things our parents and families taught us, many things they all thought were absolutely true, they're lies. I graduated from one of the most prestigious seminaries in the world. And even there, I knew that I was being taught many, many lies. But, frankly, I didn't know the half of them! I was taught there in the thinking of this world, rather, the lies of this world. Lord Jesus was our Savior, but all those miracle stories, His virgin birth, all that stuff, was just mythological accretions that get attributed to all great, larger-than-life heroes in our world. Same went with all the miracles in the whole Bible. Rationally, such things simply do not happen in real life. Or so we were all taught. And have been for all of our lives. But one day, the inexplicable evidence I could see around me and in the world, just wouldn't go away. And I said to Father God, "I give up. I can't explain it. But I just know that every last word in the Holy Bible is true. Literally. Everything happened just as it reads." And you know what? I, literally, felt a hug of approval of Holy Spirit fill me. He is truth itself. Nothing exists outside of His creative power. He exists, and we exist only as He has given us life. In whatever form our lives in this here and now take on, it is our bounden duty to give our utmost thanks and praise to Him. For He Alone is worthy! Believe Him, and His every word. Yes, even for you!

