

How Do We Break the Downward Sin Spiral?

Hosea 6:1-3
Hosea, Day 14

*Come, let us return to the LORD;
for he has torn us, that he may heal us;
he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.
After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him.
Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD;
his going out is sure as the dawn;
he will come to us as the showers,
as the spring rains that water the earth.”*

- Hosea 6:1-3, ESV

What good would a dentist be who could tell you that you have a nasty cavity but not do anything to fix it? This hypothetical situation was the basis an ad last year. The scene was a man in the dentist chair and his dentist telling him about his cavity but then telling him he could not actually fix it, he could just find it and tell him about it. Not much help, huh?

Last time, we looked at Hosea 5 and we described the downward sin spiral many of us have experienced to one degree or another. Sin leads to discipline from God in the form of hardship, failure, or frustration. Instead of driving us to God, we too often respond to such miseries by seeking help from the world, seeking man-made solutions to what is, at its heart, a spiritual problem. And so, God further disciplines us for not seeking Him in our distress, and the downward spiral continues.

How do we break this downward cycle? Hosea 6 opens with the invitation that is the key: “*Come, let us return to the LORD.*” We must remember the goodness of the LORD. The LORD only ever tears and strikes down His people with the longer-term purpose of healing us and binding us up. We need to remember that, if we are suffering under His discipline, even painful discipline, it is only because His purpose is to save us and heal us.

So, we remember and return, and then we trust in His resurrection power. This raises an interesting question: Is Hosea 6:2 about the resurrection of Jesus, or is it about our resurrection? The answer, of course, is yes, it is.

All salvation from the LORD to His people comes through our Savior, the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. All of our forgiveness flows from His cross, and all of our resurrections and restorations flow from His resurrection power. It is because the LORD raised Jesus to life again on the third day that we receive restoration in this life and resurrection life for eternity. One key to understanding the Gospel and appropriating its power for your life is to realize how deeply your identity and your story are tightly wrapped up in Christ.

We know God the Father raised Jesus from the dead three days after He poured out His wrath on Him on the cross. More importantly, God the Father had resurrection glory for Jesus in mind even as He poured out His wrath. This is why Jesus said of the cross, “*Now is the Son of Man glorified.*” The cross was the pathway to glory for Jesus, and it remains the pathway to glory for all who follow Him.

So, how do we break the downward cycle of sin and judgment in our lives? Simply put, **we** don't. God does. He does so through the death and resurrection power of Jesus applied to us and worked out in our lives by the Holy Spirit. What do we do? We return to the Lord, confessing our need and our utter helplessness, and pleading for His mercy in Jesus' name. That's a prayer God always answers. The power to answer it belongs to Him alone.

So, *“Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD;
his going out is sure as the dawn;
he will come to us as the showers,
as the spring rains that water the earth.”*