



11 | HOSEA 12

PRESSING INTO GOD

When life presses into you, press into God

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It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
2 to declare your steadfast love in the morning,
and your faithfulness by night,
...4 For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work;
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

Announcements

1. **Welcome** visitors.
2. Don't forget to fill out the volunteer service **questionnaires**. They are available in your bulletin and at the Welcome Center.
3. I'll be gone **this week**. If you need something, contact Pastor Mike or one of the elders.

Introduction

Our message today is from Hosea 12 on page 758 of your pew Bible. The title of our message today is "Pressing into God".

I've experienced an increasing uneasiness in my own life and the life of our church and in the culture of the American church regarding **prayer**. The very touchstone of Christianity is union with Christ, and the outflow of your union with Jesus is a life of weakness and total dependence on Christ through **prayer**.

Can I say something controversial? Biblical principles but they alone cannot change people. You can give Biblical principles, and very often and dead people stay spiritually dead. What's the difference? Prayer. God must move, and he chooses to move through weak, dependent, desperate praying people.

You're learning so much, but if knowledge takes away your desperation for God, then you are headed in the wrong direction. Don't let anything take away your sense of neediness for Jesus.

Satan is happy if you keep learning stuff and you don't depend on God.

Information does not necessarily equal life transformation.

You need the Spirit; and the only way to the Spirit is humility.

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Pet 5:5).

There are only two categories of Christians - you're either **desperate** or you're **deluded**.

God's wants us desperate... not deluded. If you think you are strong, you are deluded. The measure of how you view your weakness is your desperation in prayer, to press into God. How weak are you? Look at your prayer life.

Prayer is our lifeline that connects us to God.

In Hosea 12, the Lord retells the story of Jacob and how he came to be known as Israel. He went in as a proud prayerless man, and he came out of that wrestling match with a great limp as one of the greatest prayer warriors in the Bible.

Do you have a limp when you walk? Are you fully aware of just how weak you are?

Jesus said, " My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

Paul replies,

"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor 12:9).

"When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10).

Understand this dear saint. You are weak. You will always be weak. When hard times come, you are either going to press into the world or press into God.

1. WHY PRESS INTO GOD (11:12; 12:1-2)

At the end of Hosea 11 into chapter 12, we see how incredibly important a communion with God is. Israel of old had forgotten God. No fellowship. No prayer. Lots of money. Lots of comfort. They were deceived. They thought comfort equals communion.

11:12 | Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit, but Judah still walks with God and is faithful to the Holy One.

Look over at Hosea 12:8. Israel was so far from God, but they thought they were perfectly fine.

12:8 | Ephraim has said, 'Ah, but I am rich; I have found wealth for myself; in all my labors they cannot find in me iniquity or sin.

Look at Israel's meals of vanity.

12:1 | Ephraim feeds on the wind and pursues the east wind all day long; they multiply falsehood and violence; they make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt.

They think because they have outward comforts that their inner relationship with God is ok. They confuse comfort with holiness.

THE WORLD IS PRESSING IN

Here the people of Israel were being pressed in by the world. They turned to the nations to provide them with comfort.

They needed relief. They felt the pressure. **Instead of being pressed into God, they were pressed into the world.**

That's the great choice: press into the world or press into God.

A WARNING FROM GOD

Look at God's indictment. The world will eat you for lunch.

12:2 | The LORD has an indictment against Judah and will punish Jacob according to his ways; he will repay him according to his deeds.

God says: you want the world: you can have it. God repays his people by giving them what they want. The nations of Assyria with an assist from Egypt destroy both Judah and Israel. You don't want the world. The world is a terrorist who

WITHOUT GOD WE ARE DUMPSTER DIVERS

Without an intervention from God, Ephraim just keeps feeding on the wind.

12:1 | Ephraim feeds on the wind and pursues the east wind all day long...

But there is an application to God's true people today. Don't let the pressure of life press you into the world. The world promises BIG PLEASURE with small consequences. When in reality there is little pleasure with GIGANTIC consequences.

Listen to God's indictment: the world will hang you out to dry. You could lose your own soul, thinking you know Christ, but you have no real walk with him.

If you let yourself get pressed into the world, it's like thinking you are eating at **Maggiano's Little Italy**, when you're really eating from that other "M" place. Not McDonald's but the **dumpster** behind **McDonald's**!

WHY PRAY?

So why press into God? Why pray? Why put the world behind you? Why refuse to be fed by the world and be fed by God? Why pray and commune with the living God?

1. *Some things come about only through prayer and fasting.*

Mark 9:24, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

Remember the disciples were struggling with a child whose father had brought them his demon possessed boy. They said: why couldn't we cast out the demon? It was because of prayer and fasting. Prayer changes things.

Now God is immutable. He doesn't change. But he chooses to exercise his omnipotent power through praying people. All his decrees come from necessary means. That means God uses human beings who pray. Amen!

Think about our brother Ahmed from Saudi Arabia. Why did he come to Christ in Auckland, New Zealand? Why not here? There was a group of dedicated people that were praying and fasting for another person to be added to their group. They had seen Muslims from Egypt, Syria, and Dubai saved, but no one from Saudi. They were fasting and praying

for a Muslim from Saudi to come to Christ. So God moved there in time and space. That's how it works.

What is God doing here? Is he doing anything? Pray and fast and watch him work. You need to get desperate and remember: nothing's happening unless God moves.

“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it” (Psa 127:1a).

Why pray?

2. *We're commanded to pray!*

1 Thessalonians 5:17, “Pray without ceasing.”

Communion is a command, but it's also a privilege.

Colossians 4:2, 12, “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving... **v. 12** Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

Here's an example of prayer. Here's a man who is laboring in the power of the Spirit in prayer. The Spirit is flowing through him. **That's a big part of this church standing mature and complete in all the will of God.** This is not an immature church. Why? Because Epaphras is praying.

3. *Prayer shows you haven't forgotten who really has the power.*

Remember Jehoshaphat's prayer:

2 Chronicles 20:12, “O, our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are fixed on you.”

God commands Jehoshaphat to pray and for the priests to sing. So the Kohathite priest being to lift up their voice and praise the Lord, and God fights for them!

4. *Because when you live for Christ you're going to war!*

Ephesians 6:12-13, 18, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.... **18** praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

Life is war. Principalities and powers from hell are warring against you. You want to give Satan an open invitation to your life? Stay away from praying and watch your life and your ministry dry up. Without prayer you don't have the words people need. You are not going to be reaching them at the right time, because you can't hear the Spirit.

You need prayer. It's a covering in spiritual warfare. You need to have people praying for you. You are in a war. Don't go unarmed.

5. Prayer gives you a holy boldness and the very words to say.

How many times there is something you need to say to someone to help them grow, but you don't have the words to say. You know what you need to say, but you're staying quiet. How are you going to get the holy boldness to speak? Prayer! You better be praying when you get ready to do or say a hard thing.

Remember Esther? She wasn't supposed to speak to the king. She knew there was risk. But she said to her people, "I need you to fast for me." Listen to her:

Esther 4:16, "Go gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish I perish!"

Are you willing to speak the truth in love to people even if they get spitting angry at you? How are you going to have the power to do that? Sometimes you are the only person that's not only willing to speak the truth, but you're one of the very few people who even has the truth!

Do you lack courage to help others grow and change? Are you in your fleshly, protected isolation? How can you get the courage? Prayer. Fellowship. Communion.

6. Prayer cuts through the fog and gives you discernment and insight.

So many times I come to a situation, and I say, "Lord I have no idea what to do!" Saints, where can we get wisdom and discernment?

James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

Proverbs 2:6-7, "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright..."

He's got it stored up for those walking with him. You will not have wisdom unless you are walking with God.

You don't need just biblical principles. That's good, but you need wisdom to know how to apply the Word, when to apply it. When you are praying, God will just lay out a hard situation before you.

7. Prayer breaks through strongholds.

People can't just repent any time they want to. God must grant repentance. - Never forget that repentance is a **gift** from God!

2 Timothy 2:24-26, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."

Prayer breaks through strongholds. People in their own strength do not even have the **will** to change and please God!

People like change. They do! This is what people say:

"Lord, change my spouse."

"Change my boss."

"Change my child."

But you know what we need to be praying: "Lord change **me**!" You need to ask God to change you.

Philippians 2:12b-13, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure."

It's not about you working: it's about God working! Here's a good prayer to pray. Ask God to soften and incline your heart to him.

Psalms 119:36, "Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to covetousness."

Do you want to change? You've got to become **desperate** and not **deluded**. Only God can change you. Ask God to move on your heart and incline your will to his Word.

2. HOW TO PRESS INTO GOD (12:3-6)

BE WILLING TO WRESTLE WITH GOD

The diagnosis is clear and Hosea 12:3-5. Jacob is a sinner from the womb, just like all of us. But he took the opportunity when cornered and brought low to wrestle with God in his manhood. God often gets worldliness out of us by humbling us like Jacob.

12:3-5 | In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God. ⁴He strove with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us—
⁵the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial name.

Jacob the Schemer

Jacob had the reputation from birth of being a schemer, a supplanter, and a trickster. **"In the womb he took his brother by the heel"** (12:3a). He was always cutting in line taking advantage of everyone around him, beginning with his brother Esau.

Jacob, as all men are, was **"dead in his sins"** (Eph 2:1-3). Though Jacob was the grandson of Abraham, he was "a lost sheep." And so it is with us before we know Christ. We have no power within ourselves.

Without God, Jacob was a schemer. He was always the smartest one in the room, and that's not a compliment. He had plan A, B, and C. He didn't depend on God. He had some great plans too. Remember, he cheated his brother Esau out of the **birthright** and the **blessing**. Esau gave up his birthright for a mess of lentil soup. And remember how he tricked his blind father into thinking he was the oldest – Esau – when he was the youngest. He even put on the furry hand costume. Wow. He had schemes. Jacob the schemer.

But maybe the best thing for you is for God to put you in a place of total disaster and crisis, like Jacob.

Jacob was positive Esau was going to kill him for stealing the blessing. Jacob had put all his servants and family in front of him when he fled for his life. He made sure he was good and hidden in the back, behind everyone else. He weighed everything and made sure he had no liabilities or vulnerabilities.

God made him desperate. He finally came to the place where he gave up. He gave up scheming. He gave up planning. He just went to God and said, I'm done. I need your blessing.

The greatest disaster in your life right now is probably the greatest blessing. That disaster is God showing you how weak you are. What you need to know is if you belong to Christ, all things are working for your good, whether they are trouble or blessing (Rom 8:28-30).

Israel the Wrestler

Jacob goes from being a schemer to a wrestler, one of the greatest wrestlers in the history of the planet. **Who's ever wrestled God and won? Jacob. He gets a new name as a result.**

12:3b-4a | In his manhood he strove with God. ⁴He strove with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor...

As Jacob was fleeing from Esau after his father's death he came to a place where God renewed the covenant with him.

Finally, later at Penuel (Face of God), Jacob realized that **he could not depend on his wit or strategies** to get him out of his troubles but that he must call on his God! He then began to call out to God in earnest prayer, paralyzed with anxiety through the night (Gen 32:9-12).

When Jacob had finished his strategizing, God stepped in. The scripture says, **Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day!**

Who was Jacob wrestling with? A Christophany: a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. The Bible does not reveal the identity of the man here, but Jacob later stated that he had seen God face to face. Jacob saw God, later referred to as the Messenger or Angel of the Lord. Who is our **Messenger, but the Word of the Father?**

As Jacob wrestled with the man it appears that none was gaining control of the contest; as the day began to break the Angel of the Lord touched the hip joint of Jacob's thigh so that it became dislocated.

Despite this however Jacob hung on to the man. This was one battle that Jacob was not going to lose! He wanted God's blessing so bad. He would not let go till God blessed him, and God did: giving him a new name: Israel (Prevailer with God).

God says to his people in Hosea's day: wrestle with me again! Prayer is the pathway to repentance, transformation, and lasting change!

Jacob the Dreamer

Twenty years before Penuel, God made a promise to Jacob. He saw the ladder to heaven, a type of Christ.

12:4b | ...He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us.

At **Bethel** he saw a **ladder and stairway to heaven** – a shadow of Christ who is the ladder between heaven and earth – the way to “eternal life.” But 20 years would pass, and Jacob would still be on the run.

We read of Jacob:

12:4b-5 | He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us—⁵the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial name.

The Lord, YHWH is his memorial name means that YHWH is the name by which Israel was to remember him.¹ He is the “God of hosts” or God of the armies of heaven and earth. YHWH “commands the forces of heaven, both visible and invisible, rules with unrestricted omnipotence on earth as well as in heaven (*cf* 1 Sam 1:3).”² These people were trusting in foreign powers to protect them, not realizing these nations get their power from the Lord.

In other words: **Prayer opens heaven where the God of all the armies of heaven are.** He commands the angel armies, and he will open up ways of fellowship, communion, and fruitful ministry, if you will seek him like Jacob.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

You might say, “I can’t repent.” No one can on their own. That’s why the Bible refers to faith as a “gift of God” (Eph 2:8-10) as is all of our salvation. If you lack repentant faith, you need merely to ask God for it. Indeed, this is what Hosea says to God’s rebellious people. How can they do something they have no power to do?

12:6 | ‘So you, by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God.’

So what does God want from Israel, and what does God want from us? God says, “*Hold on to me! I will not let you go!*” Hold on to God’s unrelenting, unconditional **love**. We are imprinted with God’s heart. The idea of **justice** is turning back to that which is right. That’s the fruit of repentance and humility. We are to **wait continually for God**. This is an expression of living out our faith.

You cannot do this alone. You can only “return” “**by the help of your God.**” Even repentance is impossible without the divine grace that enables it.³

God will help you. If you are without Christ, he will enlighten your mind to come to Christ in repentance and surrender. Come!

HOW CAN YOU AS A CHRISTIAN TAP INTO PRAYER?

1. *You should walk with God daily.*

Daniel 6:10, “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.”

Pray for circles of influence, spouse (if married)

Pray Scripture

Pray for wisdom

Praise God and commune with him in the Psalms.

Sing to God. Make up songs. Some of you introverted people just had a panic attack.

You can do this.

¹ Lange & Schaff, et. el, *Hosea*, 90.

² Keil & Delitzsch, *Hosea*, vol 10, 96-97.

³ Ibid., 218.

If you are alive and you have a pulse, you need to get the refreshment of the Lord.

A great time to pray is when you don't know what to do.

Pray when you can't sleep. It's amazing. God gives his beloved sleep. But sometimes God gives you sleeplessness because he wants you to pray.

You need to see your God! You need to see him high and lifted up.

2. You should be praying for people in your circle of close spiritual influence.

1 Samuel 12:23, "Far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way."

Who's your **Paul**, your leaders? Are you praying for your pastors? Are you praying for your elders, your **deacons**? Are you kids praying for your youth leaders?

Who's your **Timothy**? Who are you discipling? Are you praying for them?

Who's your **Barnabas**?

3. You should pray for those around you each day.

Colossians 4:3, "Pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ."

Are you praying with your **family**? Are you praying with your **friends**? **Co-workers**? **Neighbors**? Are you inviting the Almighty presence of God into your spheres of influence? Do those around you know that you don't walk alone?

Do you know a 1-minute prayer can be life changing for your **lost neighbor**? They're hurting. Don't worry about what they think. What's the worst that can happen? You may get hit in the eye. So what 😊 They need to know that you are talking to Someone who is alive and on his throne. You can introduce them to the King of kings.

4. You should be praying during every life situation

The king says, "What do you want me to do for you?" So Nehemiah prayed...

Nehemiah 2:4-5, "... So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king..."

Send up 'flare prayers'. God gave Nehemiah the words that changed the course of a nation because he prayed!

5. You should pray when you are saying goodbye to people.

You want prayer to be the bookends that sandwich everything you're doing.

- Touch them if possible. Hold their hand. Put your hand on their shoulder.
- Praise and encourage them and affirm them in the prayer.
- Acknowledge what God is doing in their life right then and there.
- Pray Scripture.

Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord; plans for welfare and not calamity, to give you and future and a hope.”

Ephesians 3:20, “Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”

3. WHAT'S STOPPING YOU FROM PRESSING INTO GOD (12:7-9)

This life of prayer, demonstrated by Jacob seems so far from Israel, who is lost and blinded by their prosperity. They're already manufacturing their own blessings.

COMFORT MIGHT BE STOPPING YOU

12:7 | A merchant, in whose hands are false balances, he loves to oppress.

The word “**merchant**” could also be translated “Canaanite!” He's calling out the people of Israel – that they are just like the inhabitants who they were to conquer. Ephraim has the heart of a lost and unregenerate Canaanite, comforting himself with money.

Israel can't see how desperate they should be, so instead, they are deluded.

12:8 | Ephraim has said, ‘Ah, but I am rich; I have found wealth for myself; in all my labors they cannot find in me iniquity or sin.

Israel's task was to make Canaan Israel. What happened? Canaan made Israel Canaan.⁴

How sad it is that the world is now evangelizing the church. The solution for many churches to day for church growth is to put on a better show than the world. David F. Wells in his book *No Place for Truth*, describes how pragmatism has replace the truth of Christ in our churches today:

“When we listen to the church today, at least in the West, we are often left with impression that Christianity actually has very little to do with truth. Christianity is only about feeling better about ourselves, about leaping over our difficulties, about being more satisfied, about have better relationships, about getting on with our mothers-in-law, about understanding teenage rebellion, about coping with our unreasonable bosses, about finding greater sexual satisfaction, about getting rich, about receiving our own private miracles, and much else besides. It is about everything except truth, embodied in Christ.”⁵

—David Wells

We need the Gospel of the old rugged cross. Jesus never told us to get good and comfortable in this world. He tells us to pick up an instrument of death and die. We are

⁴ Boice, 98.

⁵ David Wells. *No Place for Truth Or, Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

to die and get good and uncomfortable in this world, knowing Christ and making him known. So comfort is the number one reason Christians don't pray.

Have you ever considered that your outrageous prosperity may be robbing you of what your soul really longs for: to know Christ more deeply?

IT'S NOT GOD STOPPING YOU

This is his promise if we wrestle with God: he will bring them to a place of celebration, like in the fall feasts of Israel. The "appointed feast" is specifically referring to one of the most joyous feasts in Israel: the feast of Tabernacles.

12:9 | I am the LORD your God from the land of Egypt; I will again make you dwell in tents, as in the days of the appointed feast.

This refers to the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths.⁶ This was the annual holy week in which Israel memorialized the wilderness wandering by leaving their homes and spending a week in tents or in hastily constructed, temporary lean-to shelters (Lev 23:33-44).⁷

The verse looks ahead to Israel's Diaspora. They would become, like their ancestors, homeless wanderers. Yet it is better to have nothing but God than to gain the whole world and lose your own soul.

How long has it been since you've been in the place of celebration? Where you feel at home with God? We are not of this world. We are passing through. We are God's guest, but this world is not our home. Philippians 3:20 says that "our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Let each day be a pilgrim feast for us! We ought not feast on the world!

4. THE PRIZE OF PRAYER (12:10-14)

God promises two great rewards in coming to him: **prophecy** and his **power**. He's going to speak to and enable everyone who comes to him.

GOD'S WORD AND SPIRIT

Abruptly, Hosea switches his focus from the patriarchs to the ministry of the prophets. Look at how God wants us to commune with him. He sends prophets to convince Israel, but they reject God's Word.

12:10 | I spoke to the prophets; it was I who multiplied visions, and through the prophets gave parables.

Wow, can you imagine? I've never had a vision. God gave visions to the prophets and the people, but they did not respond. The prophets had to hide God's powerful message in parables.

That's the thing about prayer: the more you do it, the more you want to do it. The more you don't do it, the more you don't want to do it.

God's given us something more than visions: he's given us a "**more sure Word of prophecy**" (2 Pet 1:19) – the 66 books of your Bible. And you have something better than

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 618.

temporary visions, though people can have those, but you have something better: the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

God bids us to commune with him today. He calls us through his Word and Spirit to commune with him. He doesn't have to multiply visions to us, though he can. But we have something better. We have the Word and the Spirit.

GOD'S AWESOME POWER IN OUR WEAKNESS

What do you get with prayer? God's awesome power in our weakness. Yet the people didn't listen. He tells them to go back to the beginning to Gilead and Gilgal. Remember God's grace there. He says, **go back and remember when you as a nation were weakest: it was then you were strongest.**

12:11a | If there is iniquity in Gilead, they shall surely come to nothing:

Gilead is the first of the Promised Land that Israel conquered, still under Moses' leadership, before his death. Gilead is the area once ruled by Sihon, King of the Amorites and Og, King of Bashan – their kingdoms straddling the Jordan River (cf Num 21). So Gilead is really **the land of victory!** . Gilead is the only victory Moses had in the Promised Land. How great a victory that was. It's celebrated in many places of the Bible (Psalm 135:11; 136:20; Neh 9:22). But if there is **iniquity**, literally wickedness (*aven*), then this victory **shall surely come to nothing**. We need to go back to Gilead, or we'll have nothing to show for our lives.

Then Hosea talks about Gilgal.

12:11b | ...in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls; their altars also are like stone heaps on the furrows of the field.

Gilgal is the land of worship. If you go to Gilgal today, it is not far from Gilead. Gilgal is the place where Joshua gathered his troops to worship before conquering the Promised Land. God told them to place twelve stones there at the entrance of their place of worship, and those twelve stones are still there to this very day. I saw them in January 2018. It is Gilgal where Joshua set up the Tabernacle for a time. It is here in the land of victory and worship that Israel's false worship is taking place.

Gilgal is the land of victory because Israel had nothing but God. That's all they had. They knew: "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Psa 127:1a). They were desperate and that desperation gave them incredible spiritual and national success.

Let's get back to the glory cloud leading us!

Jacob's Weakness

Suddenly Hosea goes back to the story of Jacob to demonstrate weakness.

12:12 | Jacob fled to the land of Aram; there Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he guarded sheep.

Remember how weak Jacob was? He didn't care much about God at that time he fled to Syria (here called by its ancient name: *Aram*). He love a girl. Waited for her for fourteen years. But God made him the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. You see what God can do with weak people?

Moses' Weakness

12:13 | By a prophet the LORD brought Israel up from Egypt, and by a prophet he was guarded.

God uses a weak prophet who can't talk to deliver a nation of two million people from the powerhouse of the ancient world.

Israel's Weakness

12:14 | Ephraim has given bitter provocation; so his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him and will repay him for his disgraceful deeds.

What was the ultimate conclusion for Israel? God has to show them how weak they are. He's got to repay him by showing how weak and sinful they are.

The story of ancient Israel is such a tragic story, because instead of pressing into God, they pressed into the world. The world didn't help them but destroyed them.

CHANGE YOUR WORLD

My prayer is that we at Living Hope will believe God that we can change our world. Even Jesus, the Almighty Son of God needed prayer as part of his constant communion with God. He was always getting away from the crowds to pray. If Christ had to pray for power, so do we!

Are you ready to make prayer a priority in your family and in your church?

Conclusion

Brad Bigney said, "Most people inside and outside the church think of prayer as a harmless but necessary starting pistol that shoots blanks and gets things going. Satan knows that prayer is a deadly weapon that binds hell and invites heaven to do the impossible."

Harmless but necessary: hey we prayed, not we can really get to the important stuff. No prayer is the important stuff.

Satan is fine if you do all your spiritual activity, but he just doesn't want you to pray. He doesn't want you to go to God in desperation and dependence.