

Our Compassionate Father

Scripture Reading — Hosea 11

“My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.”

Hosea 11:8 —

Earlier in the book of Hosea, God compares Israel to a wayward wife. In chapter 11 God introduces a new metaphor, the picture of a heartsick father grieving over his child’s rebellion. It’s as though God is looking at a photo album, remembering earlier, better days. God had delivered Israel from Egypt. God had led Israel through many tumultuous years. But Israel wearied of God’s love and struggled to break free from the Lord.

God knows that a terrible future also awaits his child, Israel, if they do not repent—and he knows they will not. They will continue down the road of self- destruction till they are taken captive by other nations and their cities are destroyed. God will allow this because of their disobedience.

But then the message changes, because God is also compassionate. God won’t allow his child to be utterly destroyed. He resolves not to carry out the punishment to its full extent. God will not cast off his child forever.

How can God move beyond judgment to grace? He offers his Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for Israel, which now includes all who believe. Jesus takes the full punishment for people’s sin. But through his obedience, we receive God’s compassion.

If you have been away from God, come home today. Your Father will receive you!

Prayer

Father, we don’t deserve your compassion, but because of Jesus, you show us wonderful grace. Help us to live in gratitude to you. Amen.

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