

# BROKEN HEARTS

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Even though sin can be like a snare, we know that the Lord can deliver us from the snares in life. Psalm 124:6-8 says, "*Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped.*" This should have been Israel's testimony, but Hosea confronts them in Hosea 5 over once again being caught in a trap that they had set in rebellion.

## SNARED!

The writer of Hebrews warns us of "...*sin which clings so closely...*" (12:1). Do you have a certain sin that often trips you up? Worry? Pride? Selfishness? Envy? Prayerlessness? Criticism? Trying to please others?

Paul referred to this kind of a spiritual fortress as a "*stronghold*" in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. God can bring it down, but it will take His power to defeat that bad boy!

Hosea chapter five addresses this kind of recurring weakness among the

people of Israel. The area of disobedience they struggled with was idolatry. It just had a grip on them!

Do you know what a *snare* is? It is a trap that is hidden to catch wild animals such as squirrels, rabbits, coyotes, foxes, beavers, raccoons, etc. It is a wire noose or anchored cable that is spring-loaded and intended to tighten around an animal as it passes through it.

Once the animal accidentally triggers the snare, it quickly squeezes them around the neck, leg or body and will

tighten more and more as the critter tries to escape.

At the very beginning of this chapter, the prophet calls it "*a snare*". The only problem was they were caught in their own sinful trap that they had hidden for others.

As we will see in our study, the problem with sin is that it often causes not only us to stumble, but it causes others around us to fall as well. You will hear several references to Judah. Israel's bad behavior was spreading!

### Categories of Snares

The Bible mentions at least eight different kinds of snares in life:

*a snare of false religions* (Ex. 23:32-33); *a snare of debt* (Prov. 6:1-11); *a snare of immorality* (Prov. 7:1-27); *the snares of death* (Prov. 13:14); *snares of a crooked man* (Prov. 22:5); *a snare of anger* (Prov. 22:24-25); *a snare of the devil* (1 Tim. 3:7) and *a snare of greed* (1 Tim. 6:9-11).

## Cautioned about Snares, 5:1-2

There are some things that one is not supposed to use a snare to trap. If you want to use a snare to trap a wild hog, then there is no problem. But, if you catch your neighbor's pet in a snare or a deer in a snare, then you will face a stiff penalty of some kind.

The Lord is cautioning Israel for using snares, nets and pits to capture fellow Jews. The Lord did not like this and was going to bring judgment upon them for trapping their neighbors in idolatrous practices.

### *Confronted over Their Snare, v. 1*

Hosea 5:1 is a prophetic confrontation of three groups of people in the northern kingdom responsible for hiding a snare to hurt people living in the southern kingdom of Judah near Mizpah and Tabor.

### *Cruelty of Their Snare, v. 2*

One reason snares should be carefully used is because they can be fatal. In verse 2 Hosea speaks on behalf of the Lord as to why He was going to discipline them. Their traps were causing the loss of human lives.

Proverbs 29:1 is perhaps the scariest verse in the Bible. It says, "*He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

How quickly does God mean when He says that the one who resists His rebukes will "*suddenly be destroyed*"? Consider how serious something is broken when even God says that it is "*without remedy*" - that is broken!

## Conscious of the Snare, 5:3

One thing that stands out in verse 3 is that God tells His people that He is aware of their sin.

*"I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me..."*

Something similar happened to Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. They tried to hide in Genesis 3:8-11, but where can one hide so that God cannot see you?

Hebrews 4:13 reminds us that we are always under constant surveillance from the eyes of the Lord.

This was where David made his tragic mistake with his adultery with Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 11: 27 simply says, "*But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.*" In chapter 12 the Lord sends Nathan the prophet to say, "*You are the man!*"

Revelation 6:12-17 predicts a future time on Earth when mankind will attempt to hide during the Tribulation.

## Caught in the Snare, 5:3-5

How strange that the ones who were setting traps for their southern neighbors were not caught in a trap of their own!

Listen to how enslaved they were to idolatry. "*Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God...*" v. 4. Sin can become so addictive that we cannot break free of it when we desire.

### **Bait for the Trap, v. 3**

The bait that lured them into the trap was probably idolatry and the wicked immoral practices that went along with the pagan festivals.

### **Blind to the Trap, v. 4**

The reason they were blind to the danger of the trap was that they did not know the Lord. Since they were not walking with Him, they walked right into a trap.

### **Blocking the Trap, v. 5**

The sad part about sin is that we cannot see how we cause others to stumble (Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 8:9).

### **Cries from the Snared, 5:6-7**

The cry from an animal caught in a snare can be pitiful or vicious.

The same can happen with a human who find himself or herself caught in one of sin's traps. You might hear sincere pleas for help, sob stories of how it all happened, angry rampages as they blame others, and so forth.

Like the little boy who cried "wolf" we may find that there is no response if we are not sincere in our cry for God to help us.

### ***Ritual Is not the Way Forward, v. 6***

Note the response that the prophet anticipated the people would attempt. They would try sacrifices.

### ***Removal of the Lord's Presence, v. 6***

It is an unnerving experience to have the Lord withdraw from a nation as a means of discipline.

### ***Radical Kids Raised Up, v. 7***

The result of their drifting as a nation was generations of young people that were unfamiliar with the ways of the Lord. They were like "*aliens*" to Him.

### **Clutch upon the Snared, 5:7-14**

The worst aspect of being snared would have to be the tightness of the grip that the wire or cable has upon the animal. Similarly, the clutches of God's judgment were about to surround the people of Israel and verses 7-14 describe the intensity:

**His judgment is urgent, v. 8**

**His judgment is certain, v. 9**

**His judgment is comprehensive, v. 10**

**His judgment is punitive, v. 11**

**His judgment is stealthy, v. 12**

**His judgment is hopeless, vs. 13-14**

### **Call to the Snared, 5:15**

What was Hosea trying to say in the very last verse of this chapter? It was a call for the people to return to the Lord in repentance.

This verse indicates that the Lord is not always quick to send relief from the harsh consequences from our own bad decisions.

However, He does wait for the rebellious to reach the end of their rope so that they will be sincere in returning to Him.

*"I will return again to My place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face, and in their distress earnestly seek Me."*

The Lord just wants things to be genuine not more games. He has seen lots of shallow repentance through the generations and knows how to spot the one who is genuinely broken over their sin and the one who is just frustrated with the limitations they are facing being caught in a snare.

Wouldn't you say that there is a big difference in someone who hates the wickedness of sin and someone who hates the miserable consequences of sin?

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 is a good passage for learning what real repentance looks like. The Lord is so ready to welcome us when we are indeed broken over sin in our life.

**Hosea 5, ESV**

- <sup>1</sup> *Hear this, O priests! 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 upon Tabor.*
- <sup>2</sup> *And the revolters have gone deep into slaughter, but I will discipline all of them.*
- <sup>3</sup> *I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me; for now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore; Israel is defiled.*
- <sup>4</sup> *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.*
- <sup>5</sup> *The pride of Israel testifies to his face; Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in his guilt; Judah also shall stumble with them.*
- <sup>6</sup> *With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the Lord, but they will not find Him; He has withdrawn from them.*
- <sup>7</sup> *They have dealt faithlessly with the Lord; for they have borne alien children. Now the new moon shall devour them with their fields.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Blow the horn in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah. Sound the alarm at Beth-aven; we follow you, O Benjamin!*
- <sup>9</sup> *Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of punishment; among the tribes of Israel I make known what is sure.*
- <sup>10</sup> *The princes of Judah have become like those who move the landmark; upon them I will pour out My wrath like water.*
- <sup>11</sup> *Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment, because he was determined to go after filth.*
- <sup>12</sup> *But I am like a moth to Ephraim, and like dry rot to the house of Judah.*
- <sup>13</sup> *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.*
- <sup>14</sup> *For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, and 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.*
- <sup>15</sup> *I will return again to My place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face, and in their distress earnestly seek Me.*