

**Introduction:** In a recent *Vestry Voices* article I stated one of the greatest qualities of God as Father to His children is that He disciplines them for their own good to produce His righteousness and peace in them. \*\*\* The amazing thing about God is how many great qualities He has! Today we hear from the prophet Hosea, who lived some seven hundred years before Jesus was born a human baby in Bethlehem, another way in which God is a great Father to His children who live by the faith of His Son – The Savior. Namely, even when His children, for whom He has done so many acts of gracious love, turn away from Him in adolescent rebellion, He remembers them as young dependent children, and has compassion on them. This is not because of any good that is in these rebellious adolescents, but because He brought them forth in the first place out of His great love, and patiently showed them His ways when they were still young. \*\*\* Our Gospel passage teaches a similar message to adults taking pride in being followers of Jesus. He is displeased with disciples who try to prevent parents from bringing young children to Him. He says anyone who does not become as a young child, who is dependent on his or her parents, will in NO way ever enter into The Kingdom! Then He blesses the young children, showing disciples that the people who are least in the eyes of the world are welcomed by His Father. \*\*\* With this high level overview, let's look at the details so we may know God better, and draw closer to Him.

**I. God was a loving father to His son, but He will destroy Israel for turning to idols; however, His compassion will calm His wrath. (Hosea 11:1-9)**

- A. In love, God called His son out of Egypt; but, they forsook The One who taught them to walk, going after idols; so He will destroy them. (*Verses 1-7*)
1. The Covenant God says, when Israel was a youth, I loved him; and, from Egypt I called to My son. (*Verse 1*)  
**Father love:** God relates to all the descendants of Israel as a father full of love for his son. He loved Israel after they had spent four hundred years in bondage, and called His son from slavery to Himself.
  2. 'They' called to them, so they went from 'them', sacrificing to the Baals and burning incense to idols. (*Verse 2*)  
**Rejected:** 'They/them' are God's prophets, who urged Israel to return the love their Father showed to them in Egypt. However, they rejected Father God and His prophets for the 'god of thunder' and images they made.  
**Application:** Because of God's love for His children, may we repent of anything in our life that prevents us from returning Father God's love.
  3. And I, Myself, taught Ephraim to walk, I took them by his arms; but, they did not know that I healed them. (*Verse 3*)  
**NOT know:** Ephraim was the second son of Joseph, son of Israel. God describes Himself as a father holding his young son taking his first steps. But they were ignorant that God healed them!
  4. I drew them out with the rope of man, with bonds of love; then I was to them as one who takes up a yoke from their jaws; and I stretched out to him and I fed him. (*Verse 4*)  
**LOVE in action:** Father God's love caused Him to draw His children out of slavery, taking off the yoke they were forced to wear. Then, He stretched out His hand to give them food. Even though Israel has now rebelled against Him, God reminds them of His past deeds of love to them. Because of His memory, He has compassion in spite of their current rejection of Him.

**God has compassion on His rebellious children, remembering their childhood**

5. He will not return to Egypt, but an Assyrian will be his king because they refused to return; a sword will whirl in his cities, make an end to his gate bars, and consume from their counsels. (*Verses 5-6*)  
**Destroyed by Assyria:** In 722 BC Assyria conquered Israel, killing many and scattering the rest as the 'lost tribes of Israel'. This is the discipline of God's Father love in order to bring about a change of heart in the remnant. (*Hebrews 12:5-11*)
  6. My people are bent on turning from Me and they will call to Him Most High, but together He will not be exalted. (*Verse 7*)  
**NO one exalts:** As one, all Israel is so steeped in iniquity (twisted or bent) so when they call to God Most High it is meaningless because they treat their exalted Father as a mere peer!
- B. God will not give Ephraim up because His compassion is kindled for His son, so He will not come in wrath. (*Verses 8-9*)
1. How can I give you up? How can I surrender you? How can I give you like Admah (red earth)? How can I treat you like Zeboiim (gazelle)? (*Verses 8a-d*)  
**Father's plea:** With four rhetorical questions Father God entreats them so He will not have to send them to exile. The latter two cities were in the same valley as Sodom and Gomorrah (*Genesis 14*) and were destroyed with them.
  2. His heart is turned to Him and His compassions have been kindled together. (*Verses 8e-f*)  
**Compassion:** God's Father heart is consistent and His compassions are all set on fire. God's love for His children does not change and He has an abundance of hot compassion for them.  
**Application:** Let us realize and appreciate what a loving, patient and compassionate Father God is to us, even when we scorn His grace.
  3. He shall not act in His hot anger and He shall not turn back to destroy Ephraim. (*Verses 9a-b*)  
**NOT destroy in anger:** Although God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities in righteous anger, He declares Ephraim will not be destroyed in His anger at their rejection and idolatry. He remembers their childhood and will have the compassion of a father on His now rebellious son.

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4. Because I am God and not man, holy in your midst; and, I will not come in wrath. (*Verses 9c-d*)  
**Holy One NOT come in wrath:** People always escalate to 'fight fire with fire'. But part of God's holiness is His love and compassion, especially for His children. So, as He remembers Israel's youth, when He nurtured them and trained them how to live with Him, He will come in compassion, not wrath.

**Application:** Let us be moved by The Word and The Spirit to come back to God with all our heart.

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**II. Parents bringing children to Jesus are rebuked, but He says no one enters The Kingdom without receiving it as a child; then, He is blessing them. (*Mark 10:13-16*)**

- A. Parents bringing young children to Jesus are rebuked by the disciples; but, displeased, Jesus is saying, 'Do not forbid them, let them come to Me'. (*Verses 13-14*)
  1. And they were bringing young children to Him that He might touch them. (*Verse 13a*)  
**Parents:** Parents kept bringing their children to Jesus in the hope that He would bless them by the touch of His hands.
  2. But the disciples rebuked the men; but, having seen, Jesus was displeased and said, 'You must allow the young children to come to Me, you must not hinder them. (*Verse 13b-14b*)  
**Displeased:** When the disciples rebuked the fathers, Jesus was displeased and indignant towards them. Notice, they are not called Jesus' disciples or his disciples, because they are not acting like Him  
**Allow:** Positively, He commanded them to allow the fathers to bring their young children to Him; and, negatively, He commanded them not to hinder His blessing by forbidding the fathers to seek a blessing for their young children.
  3. Because of such is The Kingdom of God. (*Verse 14*)  
**Kingdom:** Jesus clearly says young children are of God's Kingdom. Young children understand all that a strong and loving father does for them. God is THE strong and loving Father.
- B. He continues, truly I am saying that anyone not receiving The Kingdom as a young child will ever enter; then, putting hands on them, He is blessing. (*Verses 15-16*)
  1. Truly, I am telling you, whoever has not received The Kingdom of God as a young child will not ever enter into it! (*Verse 15*)  
**Rejected:** Using the strongest negative expression available to Him from human language (literally: 'no not may they ever enter in'), Jesus says proud adults who consider themselves self-sufficient are not in God's Kingdom. They will be rejected by God.
  2. Having taken them, He is blessing them, having put the hands on them (the young children). (*Verse 16*)  
**Words and actions:** Jesus is continually giving good words to the young children, and He is putting hands on them. By words and actions, He is showing disciples the fathers of the young children were right to bring them to Him to receive His welcome and blessing. The reason is that young children know full well their need for others, their dependence on their parents to meet their every need.

*Those knowing they are dependent are welcomed by Jesus*

**Application:** We must allow ourselves to be humbled by God to have child-like dependent faith in God through Jesus to be welcomed and blessed by Him.

**Conclusion:** In love The Covenant God called His son out of Egypt, but because Israel forsook Him for idols He will consume them from the land. However, His compassion for His wayward son will keep Him from coming in wrath. And, when Jesus walked the earth as God's Son, He was displeased when disciples rebuked parents bringing young children to Him. He said anyone not receiving The Kingdom as a young, dependent child will in no way ever enter The Kingdom.

Then, putting hands on them, He is blessing the children.

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