

Hosea 10:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

Analysis

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy (זרעו לכם לצדקה קצרו לפיה)—Agricultural metaphor for covenant ethics: plant צדקה (righteousness) and harvest פֶּסֶד (covenant love). **Break up your fallow ground** (גירו לכם ניר)—uncultivated, hard-packed soil represents Israel's hardened heart needing deep plowing before new planting. Jeremiah uses the same imagery (Jeremiah 4:3). **It is time to seek the LORD** (עת לדרosh את־יההנָה)—urgent call to repentance. **Till he come and rain righteousness upon you**—God Himself will bring revival like latter rains. Paul echoes this: 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap' (Galatians 6:7).

Historical Context

Hosea's agricultural metaphor—'Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD'—employed imagery familiar to his 8th century agrarian audience. The command to 'break up fallow ground' addressed a spiritually hardened generation that had allowed hearts to become compacted and unresponsive to God's word, like neglected fields crusted over and unable to receive seed. Written during Israel's final years of independence, this exhortation called for radical spiritual renewal before divine judgment arrived. The promise that God would 'rain righteousness' upon prepared hearts anticipated the New Covenant work of the Spirit, who alone can transform human hearts from stony to receptive.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Hosea 10:12 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

לְקַרְבָּן	לְצִדְקָה	לְפִנֵּי	לְקַצְרָה	לְפִנֵּי	לְפִנֵּי
Sow	to yourselves in righteousness	reap	in	mercy	break up
H2232	H6666	H7114	H6310	H2617	H5214

לְקַרְבָּן	לְקַרְבָּן	וְעַתָּה	לְדַרְךָ וְשָׁ	אֶת	יְהִי הָ	עַד
your fallow ground	for it is time	to seek	the LORD			
H5215	H6256	H1875	H3068			H5704

לְקַמְּנָה	אֶלְקָרְבָּן	וְיָבֹא וְאֶ
till he come	and rain	righteousness
H935	H3384	H6664

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 45:8 (Righteousness): Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

James 3:18 (Righteousness): And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Proverbs 11:18 (Righteousness): The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

Isaiah 55:6 (References Lord): Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Hosea 6:3 (References Lord): Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Isaiah 44:3 (Parallel theme): For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Ecclesiastes 11:6 (Parallel theme): In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

Psalms 105:4 (References Lord): Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.

Luke 13:24 (Parallel theme): Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Amos 5:15 (Grace): Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.