

The Restoration Promised

God promises to forgive all who turn to Him in repentance.

HOSEA 14:1-9



10

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and of
ough the
e Amorite.
s for proph-
or (Nazarites,
dren of Israel?

rites wine to drink;
prophets, saying,

ISRAEL'S SINS

I am pressed under you, as a
ed *that is* full of sheaves.
ore the flight shall perish from
and the strong shall not strength-
force, "neither shall the mighty de-
himself:

Neither shall he stand that handleth
e bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall
not deliver *himself*; "neither shall he that
rideth the horse deliver himself.

¹⁶And *he that is* courageous among the
mighty shall flee away naked in that day,
saith the LORD.

GOD HAS SPOKEN

3 Hear this word that the LORD hath spo-
ken against you, O children of Israel,
against the whole family which I brought
up from the land of Egypt, saying,

²You only have I known of all the fam-
ilies of the earth: "therefore I will punish
you for all your iniquities.

³Can two walk together, except they be
agreed?

⁴Will a lion roar in the forest, when he
hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of
his den, if he have taken nothing?

on
the
father
profane

down upon
ery altar, and
condemned *in*

FAITHFULNESS

the "Amorite before
ght *was* like the height of
e *was* strong as the oaks;
ed his fruit from above, and
n beneath.

Share about a time you received good news. How did that news impact the rest of your day or life?

Some of the greatest words we can ever hear said to us are “you’re forgiven.” This is the reason the gospel is good news. It is a call to sinners to turn from their sin and be forgiven. God is a holy and just God who, because of His nature, must judge sin. At the same time, He is a compassionate and merciful God who is ready to forgive sinners.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The middle portion of Hosea’s prophecy is heavy on indictments against Israel for their sin. As Gomer’s husband, Hosea knew what it was like to experience rejection, pain, and the consequences of an unfaithful bride. In chapter 11, the focus turns toward God’s unfailing love toward Israel. The prophet described God’s relationship with Israel as that of a parent with a little child (Hosea 11:1). Like a parent, God had taken Israel by the hand and taught them to walk (11:3). He guided them in their toddler years, healing them from scraped knees and feeding them when they could not feed themselves. Even though they had rebelled against God, He asked: “How can I give you up?” (11:8). Though they would go into exile because of God’s discipline, He would settle them in their homeland again (11:11). Like a parent unwilling to give up on his prodigal child, God would see His people through the discipline phase.

Even though Israel had sinned and turned from God, He promised to ransom and redeem them (13:14). Hosea believed God would resurrect His people again even though they were enslaved in exile. The

Assyrian invasion would be a brutal time for the people of Israel. But they could put their hope in God’s unfailing love.

The ultimate hope of Israel would not be rebirth from the return of exile but rebirth through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He would take the wounds of our sin and carry them to the tomb. Jesus would demonstrate the unfailing love of God in ways Hosea could only imagine even on the darkest days of his relationship with Gomer. He would be the better Hosea, who would become sin for us so that we could become the righteousness of God (1 Corinthians 5:21).

HOSEA 14:1-9

1 Israel, return to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled in your iniquity. **2** Take words of repentance with you and return to the LORD. Say to him, “Forgive all our **iniquity**^A and accept what is good, so that we may repay you with praise from our lips. **3** Assyria will not save us, we will not ride on horses, and we will no longer proclaim, ‘Our gods!’ to the work of our hands. For the **fatherless receives compassion**^B in you.” **4** I will heal their apostasy; I will **freely love**^C them, for my anger will have turned from him. **5** I will be like **the dew to Israel**^D; he will blossom like the lily and take root like the cedars of Lebanon. **6** His new branches will spread, and his splendor will be like the olive tree, his fragrance, like the forest of Lebanon. **7** The **people will return**^E and live beneath his shade. They will grow grain and blossom like the vine. His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon. **8** Ephraim, why should I have anything more to do with idols? It is I who answer and watch over him. I am like a flourishing pine tree; **your fruit comes from me**^F. **9** Let whoever is **wise**^G understand these things, and whoever is insightful recognize them. For the ways of the LORD are right, and the righteous **walk**^H in them, but the rebellious **stumble**^I in them.

Key Words

- A. A call to confess their “wickedness” (AMP) or “sins” (NIV, NLT) before God so that He could forgive and restore them (1 John 1:9).
- B. The Lord has a special concern for the orphans and widows (Deuteronomy 10:18; James 1:27).
- C. God is under no obligation to love His people, but He still does so willingly and without bounds.
- D. Symbolic of God’s gentle provision and care.
- E. God promises a return of His people (Isaiah 14:1).
- F. Jesus explained this in terms of a “vine” and “branches” in John 15:5.
- G. A call to spiritual wisdom. Paul said believers receive spiritual wisdom by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2).
- H. A common phrase in the Bible that refers to the way a person lives his or her life. Here, it is a call to live out God’s righteous commands.
- I. Jesus is the rock on whom unbelievers will fall “because they disobey the message” (1 Peter 2:8; see also Romans 9:33).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. TRUE REPENTANCE (HOSEA 14:1-3)

People must admit their sin and need for forgiveness.

Why do people refuse to admit their wrongdoing even when they know what they did was wrong?

How does the repentance called for by Hosea compare to the repentance called for by Jesus?

2. TRUE FORGIVENESS (HOSEA 14:4-7)

People who turn to God in repentance find His love and forgiveness.

How should God's promise of love and forgiveness motivate us to repent and turn to Him?

3. TRUE WISDOM (HOSEA 14:8-9)

Wisdom is found in turning to God in repentance.

What are the blessings that true repentance brings into a person's life?

How is repentance an act of wisdom? An expression of faith?

APPLY THE TEXT

Share with the group how you came to understand your need for repentance and what you found when you turned to Jesus.

How does your experience compare with what Hosea proclaimed about God's forgiveness? How can the group celebrate the joy of repentance? How can the group help others discover the blessings of repentance?

KEY DOCTRINE: God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. (See Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:26.)

BIBLE SKILL: Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.

Hosea 14:1-9 outlines how God would bring Israel back to the land after they returned to Him. God had foretold of these things. Read Deuteronomy 30:1-10. Compare God's description of what He would do when He restored Israel from captivity with how He described it in Hosea 14:1-9. Note the similarities and differences in these passages. What does God reveal about Himself in these texts?

TALK IT OUT

Focus on Hosea 13:4. How does this function as an introduction to God?

The Lord introduces Himself again to His own people. This introduction is a shorthand version of the introduction to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2). God desires an intimate personal relationship with His people. Their existence depended on God since He alone is Savior. They had turned away from Him to the point that He had to reintroduce Himself to them. Having abandoned Him as their God, they should expect their history to end.

When have you felt like God needed to reintroduce Himself to you? How did He do so?

In Hebrew the word translated *know* can describe sexual experience. For the last time in His prophecy, Hosea portrays Israel as the adulterous wife. She should “know” no other gods, but she has gone after many gods and has turned away from her one true husband. God’s people are to love Him exclusively since He alone is our one true love.

Discuss what this verse tells us about what God expects from His people. How can we help each other remain exclusively faithful to Him?

Memorize Hosea 13:4, considering how God demonstrates His love to you.

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: Hosea 14:1

Notice how sin is described.

True restoration starts with true repentance. Hosea reserved his most impassioned plea for his final words. Directly addressing the nation, he declared: *Israel, return to the Lord your God.* Although Israel faced years of exile and hardship, the offer of repentance still remained for them. The nation was headed in the wrong direction, but Hosea held out hope that they would recognize it and turn back toward God. They had *stumbled* because of their *iniquity*. This included all the indictments that Hosea had brought against Israel in his prophecy—pagan worship, misplaced trust, injustice, unrighteousness, and many other instances of their breach with God. A person who is lost can either keep going in the wrong direction or stop and turn back to the right way. Hosea hoped Israel would do the latter.

When have you refused to admit your wrongdoing even when you've known what you did was wrong? Why did you make that choice?

Day 2: Hosea 14:2-3

Consider the format for prayer that Hosea is recommending.

The Bible does not contain a “sinner’s prayer” that is normative for all Christians to pray, but it does give examples of how sinners approach God in prayer (Dan. 9:4-19; Ps. 51; Luke 15:21). The heart, not the actual words, are the most important part of praying for repentance. The prayer in verses 2-3 involved three elements. First, there was an appeal for forgiveness. Forgiveness is directly tied to an awareness of one’s sin, and this was where the prayer of repentance started. A second element in the prayer of repentance was the renunciation of false objects of faith. A third element in the prayer of repentance was an appeal to the character of God. The heart of God is for the orphan. As God established the nation of Israel, He directed them to make sure they did not mistreat the widow or fatherless. (Ex. 22:22). The Father-heart of God was for those who had no father. As the nation prepared to enter the land of Israel, God had reminded them to bring justice to the fatherless and widow because of the grace God showed them when they were aliens in Egypt (Deut. 10:18). As Israel faced exile and apparent abandonment by God in the Assyrian exile, Hosea reminded them that God’s heart is for the fatherless and the displaced. As they turned to Him, they could trust in His character.

How does the repentance called for by Hosea compare to the repentance called for by Jesus?

Day 3: Hosea 14:4-7

Identify the ways God would show His love for the people.

In an amazing pronouncement from the same God who was preparing Assyria to exact discipline upon them, Hosea proclaimed God would *heal their apostasy*. The idea is that their apostasy needed God's intervention to correct; it required healing from God. God also promised to *freely love* Israel. He would continue to show steadfast love to them, as Hosea had shown steadfast love to Gomer. The actions of the Israelites had brought the anger of God against them, but true repentance would turn away that anger. As Israel repented and turned to God, He would bring blessing and fruitfulness again to their nation. He would *be like dew to Israel*. In a climate like Israel that is arid for many months of the year, the dew on the ground is crucial to the fruitfulness of the land. He would also help them *take root like the cedars of Lebanon*. The reason these trees grew strong were the deep roots, which gave them the ability to be healthy in times of drought. Israel would branch out like the *new branches* of an *olive tree*. Olive trees were good for food, medicine, and even shade. God would bless Israel in many ways with new growth. Verse 7 reveals the complete change repentance would bring about in Israel. He would shelter them and protect them much better than the military and leaders in whom they had put their trust. They would again be a fruitful nation, producing *grain* and blossoming like the true vine they had been (Hosea 10:1). Their reputation would be greater than the *wine of Lebanon*. Israel would be right with God, and God would unselfishly pour His love upon His people again.

How does God's promise of love and forgiveness motivate you to repent and turn to Him?

Day 4: Hosea 14:8

Contemplate the value people place on an idol.

In contrast to idols, it was God who would *answer* and *watch over* Israel. Some idols had ears but could not hear. Other idols had eyes but could not see. Some had hands but could not help, and feet but could not walk. What was the wisdom in serving a god who had no ability to help? The idols we worship today are like those idols. They may look promising, yet they leave us empty. God has eyes and can see what we are enduring. He has ears and can hear our prayers. His hands can help, and His feet can speedily lead Him to help us. What kind of wisdom exchanges the worship of a living God for a lifeless and impotent idol made by one's own hands? God described Himself as a *flourishing pine tree* that produces good fruit in Israel. This was a reference to the stone pine found in that region, known as a symbol of kingship, divinity, and fertility. Everything good in Israel would come from the Lord.

What are the blessings that true repentance has brought into your life?

Day 5: Hosea 14:9

Note how the righteous walk.

As Hosea ended his prophecy, he called on the Israelites to *understand* and *recognize* the true value of returning to the Lord. For too long they had abandoned wisdom and ignored the God who had given them the ability to be a nation in the first place. They had gone the way of folly instead of the way of wisdom. Hosea declared that *the ways of the Lord are right*. They led people in the right way rather than the wrong way. The people of Israel had a decision to make. They would either walk in the ways of God or they would walk in rebellion against Him. For those who walked in ways of the Lord, Hosea said that they would be *righteous*. Those who walked in rebellion would *stumble*. Therefore, the end of the matter was not merely knowing true wisdom but walking in it. It's not enough to know that God's ways are right; we must walk in them. Those who refuse to surrender their lives to true wisdom will fall upon the rocks of true wisdom. How did the story of Gomer and Hosea end? Did she see the error of her ways? Did she turn from her selfish pursuits to the one who loved her in spite of her unfaithfulness? We do not know the answers, but we know the answer to Israel's story. They went into captivity, and a remnant returned. Not everyone in Israel embraced the true wisdom of God. But for those who did, their lives were truly blessed by the One who made them.

How is repentance an act of wisdom? an expression of faith?

APPLY THE TEXT

Who do you know that needs to hear about God's promise to forgive sin? Create a plan for sharing with that person, including regular prayer for that person. Ask God to help you share insights from today's lesson with at least one person this week.

