

Chapter 14

We have come to the end in this final lesson number 20 of the wonderful book of Hosea. This book is simply Hosea's preaching and warning to Israel to repent and return to God. All we can do in America at this moment of time is preach. Neither I nor you nor any man can make America repent. However, we can preach to America. Not only America, we can preach to the world. Hosea had a difficult assignment. As we have gone verse-by-verse through this book, I found no record of even one convert. That would be discouraging to me as a preacher. However, we are not preaching to see conversion. We preach to fulfill the command of God to tell the people as did Noah "get right with God, it's going to rain." Hosea did a wonderful job for his Lord. He told Israel, both the Northern kingdom and the Southern kingdom, "get right with God, it's going to rain."

(14:1-3)

"*O Israel*" indicates this final plea of God to the people. It is a passionate plea. Hosea could be hardened and discouraged. He is not. I feel compassion in his plea "*O Israel*."

"*Return unto the Lord thy God.*" It is God's desire for every straying child of God to return. God wants you back home. He will not be pleased and neither will you be pleased until you "*return unto the Lord thy God.*" It has been a point of emphasis in our study of Hosea to make sure it is understood Israel *is* God's child. God birthed the nation Israel. He took them up on wings of eagles and delivered them out of Egypt. He held their hand on the wilderness journey. He parted the waters of the Jordan River and let them walk into the promise-land. Yes, Israel is the son of God. God wants Israel to return.

When we stray, all God can do is beckon "please come home." So that Hosea would have first-hand knowledge and passion in his heart for Israel's return to God, Hosea's own wife Gomer left him. Thus, Hosea has a deep understanding of the pain of separation from a loved one. Hosea would never be satisfied until Gomer returned. This very moment, God is not interested in the universe or a new galaxy or a new planet. His interest lies in His family. If you have forgotten, please be reminded this is a family matter. Preachers ought to weep when preaching to straying children of God. The family is broken. God's children have strayed. "Please return" is the message of God's preachers to the world today.

Calamity is coming to Israel. Calamity is coming any moment to this world. While we certainly preach to warn the sinner to get right with God, it is equally important that we summons those

already saved to get their heart right with God. Calamity is coming. If you have strayed from your heavenly father, “return today.”

What separated Israel from God? What caused their demise in the eyes of God? What caused them to fall from their lofty position of closeness to God? The ending of verse one gives us the answer—*“thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.”* Sin will always separate the child from the father. God has a zero-tolerance policy toward sin. I know He is merciful and has great, immeasurable compassion. However, God has zero tolerance for sin. Not one sin will ever be swept under the rug by Almighty God.

What is the key to returning to fellowship with God? Is money required? Are works required? Are sacrifices required? The answer to all these questions is “no.” The Lord is looking for *words*. That’s right, simple words. *“Take with you words, and turn to the Lord.”* The only hope of reconciliation for child who has strayed from the father is repentance and confession. King David sinned mightily. He took his neighbor’s wife plus more. In Psalm 51, *words* began his reconciliation with his heavenly father. When you stray from God, apologize. Don’t go join another church. Don’t be baptized a second or third time. Don’t try to get saved again. Get on your face before God and with words apologize. This is the beginning of restoration of fellowship.

What do we say to God when we are separated from him? Verse two says to ask God to *“take away all iniquity and return us graciously.”* I love the prayer of reconciliation prayed by the prodigal son in Luke Chapter 15. Luke 15:18 *“I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.”* Luke 15:19 *“make me as one of the hired servants.”* First, he confessed his sin. Secondly, he requested his father received him back.

First, confess the sin. Second, request restoration of your position with God. Third, take action. Verse three says *“neither will we say anymore to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods.”* We know well from the book of Hosea that Israel is heavy laden with idol worship. Sadly, we have no record Israel repented. There may have been a few individuals who repented. But as a nation, Israel never repented. If they had done so, I know what they would have done after they prayed. What is that, you may ask? They would have destroyed their *false gods*. You see, God is not satisfied simply with the confession, that is, words. Yes, words are the first step. But if those words are genuine, action will follow. The prodigal son left the hog pen and walked back home. He took action. Matthew 15:8 *“this people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”* How many thousand straying children promised God Saturday that they were going to start over and be in God’s house

Sunday? True confession brings a *change* in life. True confession changes the heart. Never say you have repented, and continue with the same false gods you have been worshipping. This makes mockery of God's Word. God hates how hypocrisy. Burn your false gods!

“*Asshur shall not save us,*” verse 3. There is no substitute for the heavenly father in the heart and life of a child of God. Wine is not substitute. Adultery is no substitute. Go get a new job, go to the moon, buy a brand new car; you will find no restoration with God in these substitutes. There is no substitute for confession and turning away from false gods.

(14:4-6)

When an estranged child of God confesses their sin and separates themselves from their gods and truly wants to return to fellowship with the heavenly father, God will oblige. “*I will heal their backsliding,*” verse four. A backslider requires healing. He needs healing of the mind for his thinking is distorted. He needs his soul purged of sin. Only God can do these things.

Verse four not only promises that God will heal, it promises “*I will love them freely.*” This phrase promises the wayward child God will reveal His love if they will return. Yes, God will demonstrate His love unto you. Is God upset when a child strays? Yes he was. But God is saying in this verse 4 “come on back. I was angry with you. However, I will put that anger away and replace it with love.” If you have ever strayed, repented, destroyed your false gods, and returned to the Lord you know how it feels for him to love on you once again. Wow, what a feeling! I John 1:9 “*If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

In verse 5, there is a promise dew will return. When there is dew on the ground, the rising of the sun turns the dew to diamonds. The light of the sun creates brilliant glitter. Come home to God. He will shower you with diamonds! Dew comes daily. It is fresh. It brings fragrance across the land.

Verse five mentions the lily. It is a beautiful flower of the field. Israel is promised if they will repent and rid themselves of false gods, they can bloom once again. Isn't God merciful and gracious! They can once again be a testimony unto others. They can once again be beautiful in the eyes of God and the world. Never think when you stray that all is lost. Return to God. Yes, God want to make you a flower. He has a plan for you. You can bloom again! The lily gives a satisfying fragrance. You can “smell good” in the nostrils of God once again.

The Cedar of Lebanon is spoken of in verse five. The most

significant point to make regarding the cedar is its stability. This tree is far-famed for its strength and majesty. King Solomon sent thousands to Lebanon to harvest cedars for the building of the tabernacle. A wandering child has no stability. That's why straying children try so many cures. They are unstable in their rebellious walk. Nothing can replace God in your life. Strong drink won't work. Medicine won't work. But, God can stabilize your life once again. He can make your heart to be stable as the Cedar of Lebanon.

Verse six brings us to the olive. Straying child of God, come home. The olive tree is fresh, unfading, evergreen, endearing, and fruitful. No tree in all of Palestine was more valuable than the Olive tree. Its oil was used for food. Its oil was poured on sacrifices to God. It was employed in the coronation of the king. Olive oil was used as fuel to burn for light in the darkness of night. You can shine again! You can't be beautiful again!

(14:7)

The Bible speaks of how God once had Israel gathered under His wings as a mother hen gathers her chicks. God was Israel's protection. Come home and your safety can be returned. This is a dangerous world. You don't need to be straying. We all need God's hand of protection today as never before.

(14:8-9)

Come home, wayward child. Your testimony can be restored. Ephraim has this to say to the world if he will only return to God: *"What have I to do anymore with idols?"* Some of the greatest witnesses that the Lord has are children of God who have strayed, seen the consequence of sin, and then returned to serve God. They have tasted the bitterness. They have seen the futility. They have felt the misery. Now, they are home. The prodigal son was so happy to be home he never strayed again.

Who is wise? Israel became unwise and foolish in idol worship. They consulted their enemy for help rather than God. This is mind-boggling behavior. They prayed to and sought counsel from carved sticks. Their behavior was amazingly hard to understand. Such is the behavior of the straying child of God.

Who is wise? Wisdom is from God. Prudence is from God. The wisest men and women in all the earth are those who walk with God. We even have the precious promise of James Chapter 1 if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who give it to him freely. Come home, your thinking can be restored.

Romans 3:4 reads *"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every*

man a liar...” Verse nine reminds us “*the ways of the Lord are right.*” My opinion doesn't count. What I think doesn't count. What grandpa told you doesn't matter. “*The ways of the Lord are right.*” What a powerful statement to end this amazing book in God's Word.

And I say AMEN to Brother Hosea's Preaching