

Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

November 6, 2022

Hosea 14:1-9

Repent of this False God: Works!

Situational Context: God's Dealing with Israel and Judah continues.

Lesson Theme: Hosea 14:1-3 Repent with true words and reject any form of self-sufficiency.

1. Reject the Work of Our Hands: Hosea 14:1-3 (ESV) ¹ Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. ² Take with you words and return to the LORD; say to him, "Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips. ³ **Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride on horses; and we will say no more, 'Our God,' to the work of our hands. In you the orphan finds mercy.**"

Interpretation: The Lord's exhortation to return is now addressed to those who have already fallen because of their sins. [Take with you words] Words of confession accompanied by obedience please God, not half-hearted sacrifices. A precise wording for confession is suggested. Israel was to give up trusting in foreign political powers and in her own military strength, and in idolatrous and syncretistic religion. [orphan finds mercy.] This alludes to the earlier theme of loss and restoration of love illustrated by Hosea's marriage and his daughter, Loruhamah.

Supporting Texts:

Hosea 5:13 (ESV) ¹³ 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.

Hosea 10:13 (ESV) ¹³ You have plowed iniquity; you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your warriors,

Psalm 33:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

Discussion Starters:

What is the issue with trying self help first?

When does self become your idol?

How did Israel's self help mentality lead them into Idolatry?

What involves return?

2. Promised Healing: Hosea 14:4-7 (ESV) ⁴ **I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.** ⁵ I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; ⁶ his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon. ⁷ They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

Interpretation: I will heal. The promise of healing began to be realized when Israel returned from its sixth-century exile in Babylon. It finds much greater fulfillment in Jesus Christ and His church, and is consummated at His Second Coming. Israel's characteristic unfaithfulness will be healed by the great Healer, whose anger is now turned away.

In this love song, we hear again the deep affection of God for His elect. This undeserved love is what the New Testament calls grace. In this section, resplendent with the language of love, colorful metaphors drawn from plant life—a blossoming lily (SS 2:1, SS 2:16), a deeply rooted, sprouting and fragrant cedar of Lebanon (Ps 92:12; Ps 104:16), a splendid olive tree (Ps 52:8; Jer 11:16), a shade tree (SS 2:3; Eze 17:22, Eze 17:23), flourishing grain (Hos 2:8, Hos 2:22), a flowering vine (Hos 10:1; Isa 5:1-7) and the fruit of the vine—depict a vigorous, renowned, stable, and prosperous Israel flourishing under God, who is likened to the life-giving dew.

Supporting Texts: Romans 5:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

Psalms 52:8 (ESV) ⁸ But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

Discussion Starters:

Who will inevitably experience restoration?

What knowledge of God is gained from this text?

3. Seek True Wisdom: Hosea 14:8-9 (ESV) ⁸ O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit. ⁹ **Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.**

Interpretation: Like a tree renowned as a symbol of life, God will give fruit to fruitless Ephraim. [Whoever is wise.] This epilogue challenges every generation to consider carefully the ways of the Lord that are presented in the book. The choices that Israel faced are also set before the reader: wisdom or folly; discipleship or rebellion; life or death. The wise will "choose life".

Supporting Texts:

Genesis 3:22 (ESV) ²² Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—"

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God,

obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

Discussion Starters:

How do we walk in God’ ways?

What is hard about repentance?