

True Repentance

Hosea 14

This is truly an amazing chapter and an incredible end to such a wonderful book in the Bible. There is no chapter in the Bible that is richer in mercy and yet more terrible in judgement. I think you will see here the need for genuine repentance, the nature of genuine repentance and God's response to genuine repentance.

¹ Return, Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall!

Hosea starts right off by telling Israel that their sins is what caused their downfall. But the beautiful thing here is that it says, "return to the Lord". He tells them to repent.

You see, God does not grudgingly offer forgiveness to sinful people. But there is a difference between forgiving sin and condoning it. The Lord wants to do more than forgive the sin; He wants to change the sinner. To automatically forgive sin with no requirements attached would be to condone it. This within itself would be an encouragement to sin. God's basic requirement for forgiveness is true repentance and change.

A Sunday School teacher once asked a class what was meant by the word "repentance." A little boy put up his hand and said, "It is being sorry for your sins." A little girl also raised her hand and said, "It is being sorry enough to quit."

That my friends is what it is all about. Changing ourselves and becoming that new creation.

² Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips."

Hosea was giving the people the exact words to say. The nature of these words is fourfold:

- a. RECEIVE – “take words with you.”
- b. REPENTANCE - "forgive all our sins"
- c. CONFESSION - "receive us graciously."
- d. COMMITMENT - "that we may offer the fruit of our lips."

Let's take a moment to look at those.

In returning to the LORD, Israel must come on God's terms, not their own. God says, "When you return to Me, **take words with you**. I want you to return to Me not with a silent feeling in your heart, but with proper words of repentance and trust in Me."

RECEIVE - When we come before the LORD, it is essential to **take words with you**. There is a place for sharing the inarticulate feelings of the heart with God, but that is not the essence of fellowship and prayer with Him. The worship of God is intelligent, and God made us able to communicate ideas and feelings with words. It isn't enough to sit before the LORD and feel love towards Him. Instead, **take words with you – tell God that you love Him**. It isn't enough to feel repentance before the LORD. Instead, **take words with you and tell God you repent before Him**.

This is the same idea that Paul expressed in Romans 10:8-10: ⁸ *But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,"^[a] that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*

REPENTANCE - You must repent of and confess your sins, confess Jesus as your Savior by grace through faith, and commit yourself to Him. However, it is not just speaking the words but living them.

CONFESSION - When we return to the LORD, taking words with us, we must first come humbly. We recognize our sin and our total dependence on the grace of God.

COMMITMENT – Let your salvation be fruitful. You must share God with others. Part of being saved is sharing.

³Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount warhorses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion."

Hosea says that Assyria was part of our downfall, and you can no longer trust in your own military power. You must cease all idol worship and refuse to recognize the idols you made with your own hands. If you do that then God is ready to come to your aid in mercy and in power.

⁴"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them."

God says He will heal their waywardness or backsliding. This shows me that God looks at sin as a sort of sickness. A disease that we carry that only the Great Physician can cure.

It is "as though He said, 'My poor people, I do remember that they are but dust; they are liable to a thousand temptations through the fall, and they soon go astray; but I will not treat them as though they were rebels, I will look upon them as patients, and they shall look upon me as a physician.

It does not say here that He might, or could, or will try to heal us but it says He will if we only turn to Him for repentance and forgiveness. God is too great a physician to allow any patient to leave His office without being healed.

It also says that He will love them freely. The love of God is free! It cost him everything, it costs us nothing.

Then it says His anger has turned away. When we change our mind, God changes His; genuine repentance restores fellowship with the father.

⁵I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots;

When it speaks about the Dew it is talking about the Holy Spirit. It is saying that the Spirit is going to come back and dwell in you and you will blossom. With that God is also going to plant your feet on a firm foundation of His Word.

Matthew 5:3 says, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

In other words, blessed are those who have the Spirit and are planted in the Word, who have come to God in repentance and have given themselves over to Him. Those people will be given the Kingdom of Heaven.

⁶ his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.

God will restore you and you will grow and bear fruit and people will know you are His.

⁷ People will dwell again in his shade; they will flourish like the grain, they will blossom like the vine—Israel’s fame will be like the wine of Lebanon.

God will restore your abundance. Not only that but people will dwell in your shade. Meaning that when you bear fruit people will follow. Not everyone but some will. Those people will blossom and flourish in their walk with God. But it starts with repentance.

⁸ Ephraim, what more have I^[c] to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a flourishing juniper; your fruitfulness comes from me.”

This was a prophecy concerning the end of idol worship among God’s people. It was fulfilled with the return of the remnant to Judah following the Babylonian exile.

When God’s people are healed from backsliding, they focus on the LORD Himself and not on any kind of idol that they may have in front of them.

Your fruitfulness comes from me can have two meanings. First, we find the fruit to nourish our soul in God, and God alone. Second, we find the fruit that we are to bear unto the world in God, and God alone.

⁹ Who is wise? Let them realize these things. Who is discerning? Let them understand. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.

From this scripture we learn that there are 2 classes of people. The sinner and the saved. The whole of humanity may be divided into these two classes. This has always been the case since Adam fell and sin entered the world.

We also learn what it is that makes the two classes different.

- a. We learn that "the just" walk in the ways of the Lord, whereas "the transgressors" walk in their own ways.
- b. This is the difference between these two classes of people. They are different in the way they walk, the path in which they walk, the one for whom they walk and the destiny to which they walk.

The most important thing we learn is that God's way is the right way and our way is wrong.

It all boils down to what it says in John 1:11-12

¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

If you have sin in your life then repent and be restored. If you believe in Him then bear fruit.