

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

You are my maker and my destroyer (Hos 8:14; 5:14). You wound me, and you heal me (Hos 6:1). In judgment, you pounce on me like a lion, and in mercy, you come to me like the spring rains (Hos 5:14; 6:3). You punish me when I sin, and you prosper me when I obey. You are everything I need, and all you do is worthy of praise! Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised! Hallelujah!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me more of Hosea's prophecy to Israel. Hosea had begun his message by telling about the unfaithfulness of his wife Gomer, and he continued by recording your case against Israel: "There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land. You make vows and break them; you kill and steal and commit adultery. There is violence everywhere—one murder after another" (Hos 4:1b–2 NLT). How had this happened? You pointed your finger first at the priests. They had rejected you and forgotten your law, and because of this, they no longer taught the people your ways. The result: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos 4:6). This shows me the importance of faithfully teaching your word to those under my leadership and authority. You pointed your finger next at the people. They had abandoned you and joined themselves to idols. They enjoyed the sensuality and prostitution that was part of worshipping other gods, and the men were just as guilty as the women (Hos 4:14). This teaches me that the desires of the flesh are dangerous, and of all the sins that ensnared your people, sex was the most deadly. What lay in store for Israel? "A people without understanding will come to ruin!" (Hos 4:14). They had sown the wind, and they would "reap the whirlwind" (Hos 8:7). Some twenty years later, they would be "swallowed up" by Assyria, the nation whom they had "paid for love" (Hos 8:8–9). As you looked with anger and frustration at the wretched state of your people, your heart was broken. You urged them to say, "Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him" (Hos 6:1–2). What a wonderful display of your mercy and grace! *You strike me down for my own good.* You know that if I'm not disciplined for sin, I will continue down the path of destruction. If Israel had embraced your desire for them to repent and turn to you, how different their future would have been!

### *Reflection*

You shook your head in sorrow and said, "What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away" (Hos 6:4). Am I like Israel, good one minute and bad the next, or am I steadfast in my commitment to you?

### *Request*

Father, give me a heart that will be loyal to you alone, and "unite my heart to fear your name" (Ps 86:11). May I never be joined to idols, and may the knowledge of your word always fill my mind!

### *Thanksgiving*

Jesus told the Pharisees: "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice'" (Matt 9:13; Hos 6:6). How grateful I am to serve a God who desires above all that my heart is right with Him!

In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: "[Come, Let Us to the Lord our God](#)" – John Morrison.*

*Meditation Verse: Hosea 9:17.*