

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

You said, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son” (Hos 11:1). You took him by the arms and taught him to walk. You led him with cords of kindness and ties of love. You lifted the yoke of slavery from his neck and bent down to feed him. And even when he turned away from you, you still loved him and called him to come home. Praise God for love like this! Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the conclusion of Hosea’s prophecy to Israel. To the very end, Hosea kept exposing the spiritual rottenness and decay that festered in the northern kingdom. During the reign of Jeroboam II, Israel had prospered: “Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit.” But the richer Israel became “the more altars he built; as his country improved, he improved his pillars” (Hos 10:1). Israel took the wealth you gave them and used it to pursue other gods. Instead of sowing righteousness, they had “plowed iniquity.” Instead of reaping a harvest of faithful love, they had “eaten the fruit of lies.” What was the solution to their plight? “Break up the fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hos 10:12–13). You wanted more than anything to be able to do good to your people. Indeed, as you thought about the sword that was about to rage against Israel’s cities, you cried out, “How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender” (Hos 11:8). Admah and Zeboiim were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut 29:23), and you recoiled from the thought of bringing such a devastating end to your people. You would punish them, yes, but you would not destroy them completely. The time would come, in the distant future, when you would “roar like a lion.” Your children would “come trembling from the west,” and you would “return them to their homes” (Hos 11:10–11)! Praise the LORD! The last verse in Hosea serves as an epilogue to the entire prophecy: “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” (Hos 14:9). This teaches me that you want me to learn three things from reading Hosea. First, your “ways,” your covenant commands, are the “right” ways. Second, if I am wise and discerning, I will walk in your ways and obey your commands. Third, if I am foolish, I will reject your ways and ignore your commands. When I do this, your commands will become a stumbling block in my path. I will trip over them and fall to my own destruction.

Reflection

You said, “When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me” (Hos 13:6 NIV). Am I being careful to resist the pride that comes from prosperity?

Request

Father, your heart is laid bare in the book of Hosea, and I see the true depth of your love and compassion for me. Help me return that love with all my heart! May I never forget you!

Thanksgiving

How grateful I am to serve the God who said, “Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God. I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely”! (Hos 14:1, 4). I worship you today and magnify your name!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Depth of Mercy](#)” – Charles Wesley.

Meditation Verse: Hosea 14:9.