

Back To The Right Way
Harmony M.B.C., August 8, 2010 (Morning)
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Hosea 14:1-9

This chapter is about Israel finding its way back to God. It is an account from the Holy Scriptures about things that go on when God's people get right. It is about an experience that every one of us go through if we live long enough. There may never have been, nor ever be, a single believer on the planet who has not strayed from the straight and narrow path and found himself at odds with the precepts and practices of God, and then discovered that humiliating experience of coming to the realization of it. When that time comes, every believer who ever goes through it can find identity with Hosea's writings here. I think the parable of the wayward son in **Luke 15** is a kind of personal story about each one of us at some time in our lives. The backsliding and descent into a degraded state may not be as severe as the young man in **Luke 15**, but the story is the same, even if we remain out of the will of God for only a few hours or a day.

Like the things that God speaks about in our text, we learn that we fall by our own iniquity (**v.1**). We also find, like **verse 2**, that when repentance finds us, we are made to understand how forgiving God is, and we are ready to ask for that forgiveness, and to recognize Him and honor Him with our words.

Like the admission in **verse 3**, we ourselves confess that the strength and power of human things will not help us out of the mess we have gotten in to, and we are ready to cough up any and all of our bowing to earthly things, things that have occupied our lives as a form of idolatry. We recognize that the Lord is the only God, and that He is the true Father to the children of the Kingdom.

So, this chapter is a kind of revelation from God coupled with a confession by believers. Then God ends the chapter with a very important question and a kind of final statement about what was reviewed in the chapter and the lessons as they relate to two different kinds of human beings. This is the subject of our message.

I. Those who are wise and prudent, understand and know how things work between a believer and his Lord. What are some of those things?

- That when there is an issue that comes between a human and his God, it is the human who is wrong **v.1**
- That there is forgiveness with the Lord, but we must be brought to realize we have done wrong and need that forgiveness **v.2**
 - > **Rom. 3:23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
 - > **1John 1:8** "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves...."
 - > **Eph. 1:7** "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"
- That above all, God is gracious and can and will take away all our iniquity **v.2**
 - > I pity the person who can never understand the infinite mercy of God (what do they do with

the 41 bible instances which say that God's mercy endures forever)

- That we owe it to the Lord to recognize this and say so **v.2**
- That the worst thing that gets between us and God is dependency on the flesh and yielding our lives to a kind of idolatry by putting fleshly things at the top of our priority list **v.3**
- That God forgives backsliding, and loves us freely despite our backsliding, because He has made peace between Him and us through Jesus Christ **v.4**
 - > “Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord” **Psalms 107:43.**
- That peace and harmony with the Lord is the power we need for spiritual growth **v.5-6**
- That regardless of the fact that we go astray, it does not do away with the ability or power of God to rejuvenate us and give us a new start **v. 8**
- That this faithfulness and forbearance of the Lord toward us is the very thing that 1) drives us away from worldliness and unfaithfulness (when we come to understand it), 2) gives us the incentive to really look at who God is and how he does **v.8** (“what have I to do any more with idols?” and “I have heard him and observed him...”), and makes us fruitful (“I am like a green fir tree” and “From me is thy fruit found (in the sense that when we are really impacted by the wonder of the Lord as to his faithfulness and how far He is willing to go for us, it makes us fruitful).”
 - > **John 15:5** I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.
- That practicing the right ways of God grows us in wisdom and prudence **v. 9**
 - > The essence of wisdom and prudence is to know what God thinks and to be savvy enough in spiritual things to do things His way
 - > A truly nutshell summary of the key to growing in wisdom and prudence was stated by Christ: “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it is of God” **John 7:17.**

II. Those who have issues with God stumble and fall in relation to the right way v.9

“transgressors” = to break away from authority, to quarrel, rebel, revolt

- Those who argue with God about how and why He does things lack wisdom and prudence
Everything that makes sense to the believer is a point of contention with people like this
 - > They contend with God about His laws, His demands, His rulership of the world, His handling of world affairs, His mercy, His grace,
 - > For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind’ **John 9:39.**
 - > And Peter; ‘Unto you which believe He is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient’ **1Peter 2:7-8.**
 - > Christ crucified was unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God’ **1Cor. 1:23-24.** The commandment, which’ was ordained ‘to life,’ Paul, when yet unregenerate, ‘found’ to be ‘unto death’ **Rom. 7:10.**