

I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY

Sunday, May 18, 2019 — Hosea: God's Scandalous Love series — Msg 13 — Pastor Andrew Coleman

Hosea 14:4-9

English Standard Version (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."*
- 4 *I will heal their apostasy [backsliding];
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.*
- 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.*

REVIEW:

THE CALL TO REPENT AND RETURN TO GOD: vs 1-3

- 1) Hosea's command for Israel to repent is a precursor to the grand call for all to repent under the new covenant of Christ's sacrifice.
- 2) SIN causes distance from God and stumbling in life. vs 1
- 3) With God, repentance involves WORDS and ACTIONS that go together. vs 2
- 4) With God, repentance involves FAITH — knowing and trusting in God's promise. vs 3

HIS HEALING; OUR HOPE — 5 Key Words of vs. 4

I will heal their backsliding;

- 1) **backsliding**: O the wretched sin of our fickle, wayward hearts! How we drift away from the intimacy of our Savior's love.
- 2) **heal**: He cures the disease and brokenness of our sinful slide. He doesn't banish or destroy his sick ones, he heals them.
- 3) **I**: The one doing the talking is God Himself. Our all-powerful Creator says that He Himself is the one who will come heal us. Exodus 15:26 YHWH Rapha 'The Lord your healer.'
- 4) **will**: The certainty of His promise is sure. God's word is ours to pledge. By faith we we say, 'Lord, you said...' John 6:37, 39, 44; 10:28; 11:25; 18:9
- 5) **their**: God's faltering but true people within the nation of Israel. In vs 2 they cry out "Take away all iniquity"

KEY QUESTIONS: Do you anquish and hate your sin? Do you want desperately to be delivered from your sin? Do you cry out for Christ to heal you from it?

If so, this promise is for you — His love will overwhelm and heal your backsliding.

"I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY"

Hosea 14:4

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

"I will love them freely." This sentence is a summation of divinity in miniature. He who understands its meaning is a theologian, and he who can dive into its fullness is a true master in Israel. It is a condensation of the glorious message of salvation which was delivered to us in Christ Jesus our Redeemer.

The full meaning of this sentence hinges upon the word *"freely."* This is the glorious, the truest, the divine way by which love streams from heaven to earth, a spontaneous love flowing forth to those who neither deserved it, purchased it, nor sought after it. It is, indeed, the *only* way in which God can love such as we are. The text is a death-blow to all sorts of self-reliance: *"I will love them freely."*

Now, if there were any fitness necessary in us, then he would not love us freely, at least, this would be a reduction and a drawback to the freeness of it. But it stands, *"I will love you freely."*

We complain, "Lord, my heart is so hard." *"I will love you freely."*

"But I do not feel my need of Christ as I should." *"I will not love you because you feel your need; I will love you freely."*

"But I do not feel that softening of spirit which I could desire." Remember, the softening of spirit is not a condition, for there are no conditions; the covenant of grace has no conditionality whatever; so that we, without any fitness, may venture upon the promise of God which was made to us in Christ Jesus, when he said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." It is blessed to know that the grace of God is free to us at all times, without preparation, without fitness, without money, and without price! *"I will love them freely."*

These words invite backsliders to return: indeed, the text was specially written for such-
"I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely."

Backslider! surely the generosity of this promise will at once break your heart, and you will return, and seek your injured Father's face.

John 3:16

***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish
but have eternal life.***