

The Restoration Promised
November 6, 2022
Allen Power

HOSEA 14:1-9

Let's begin by reading all nine verses of Hosea 14. The text begins with a call for Israel's repentance.

Hosea 14:1–9 (NLT): 1 Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for your sins have brought you down. 2 Bring your confessions, and return to the Lord. Say to him, "Forgive all our sins and graciously receive us, so that we may offer you our praises. 3 Assyria cannot save us, nor can our warhorses. Never again will we say to the idols we have made, 'You are our gods.' No, in you alone do the orphans find mercy." 4 The Lord says, "Then I will heal you of your faithlessness; my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever. 5 I will be to Israel like a refreshing dew from heaven. Israel will blossom like the lily; it will send roots deep into the soil like the cedars in Lebanon. 6 Its branches will spread out like beautiful olive trees, as fragrant as the cedars of Lebanon. 7 My people will again live under my shade. They will flourish like grain and blossom like grapevines. They will be as fragrant as the wines of Lebanon. 8 "O Israel, stay away from idols! I am the one who answers your prayers and cares for you. I am like a tree that is always green; all your fruit comes from me." 9 Let those who are wise understand these things. Let those with discernment listen carefully. The paths of the Lord are true and right, and righteous people live by walking in them. But in those paths sinners stumble and fall.

- To quote Waylon Jennings: *"I'm sick and tired of waking up sick and tired."*
- Have you ever heard someone use that expression? What kind of changes do people often make after saying they are "sick and tired of being sick and tired?"
- When someone gets "sick and tired" enough they're often motivated to improve their physical condition. In Hosea 14 God calls on Israel to take advantage of a different kind of healing. God wanted to heal them from their sin sickness.
- Ironically, the title of the Waylon Jennings song with that line in it is: "Quit Your Lowdown Ways." That sounds like sin sickness to me!
- God said, "your sins have brought you down." "Return, and I will "heal you of your faithlessness; my love will know no bounds."
- The point: Regular repentance puts us on the road to recovery from sin sickness.
- Those who refuse to repent of their sin walk a path of stumbling and falling.
- Verses one and two of Hosea 14 provide very specific instructions on how Israel should have confessed their sinful ways to God.
- In verse two He literally told them the words to say: *"Bring your confessions, and return to the Lord. Say to him, "Forgive all our sins and graciously receive us, so that we may offer you our praises."* You can't get more specific than that!
- Verse three revealed Israel's tendency to place their trust in the wrong things. God said, *"Stop relying on military power and man-made idols to save you."*

- Often the first obstacle to recognizing our need to repent of sin is trusting in earthly resources instead of turning to God. Rather than “warhorses” and “idols” we may place our faith in our jobs, our bank account, or our own abilities.
- Our first step to recover from sin sickness is to realize only God can heal it.
- Physical sickness isn’t necessarily the result of sin, but living a life of unconfessed sin not only hurts our spiritual health, it can cause stress that leads to physical symptoms. Psalm 32 begins with the promise of joy when God forgives our sins, then it contrasts that with some physical symptoms of unconfessed sins:

Psalm 32:1–5 (NLT): 1 Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! 2 Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! 3 When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. 4 Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Interlude 5 Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.” And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. [Praise God!]

- Earlier in Hosea 6:1 it appeared that Israel was finally getting a clue about why life had become so hard as they lived in rebellion to God. They said, “*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.*” Unfortunately they still didn’t repent but they seemed to realize their “wounds” were God’s judgment for their sin.
- Charles Spurgeon wrote, “*No hand can heal a sin-sick soul but the hand that wounded it, even the hand of God, through the person of Jesus Christ our Lord.*”
- If a truly saved follower of Christ falls into a pattern of unconfessed sin, God will make that person miserable until they return to Him. No man-made remedies can heal our sin sickness; that healing can only come from God Himself.
- In verses four through seven God described spiritual healing for Israel:
 - The Lord says, “Then I will heal you of your faithlessness.”
 - “My love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever.”
 - “I will be to Israel like a refreshing dew from heaven. Israel will blossom like the lily; it will send roots deep into the soil like the cedars in Lebanon.”
 - “My people will again live under my shade. They will flourish like grain and blossom like grapevines. They will be as fragrant as the wines of Lebanon.”
- This is not a promise that confessing sin and turning away from it will make us physically rich, healthy, and attractive. This is a refreshing of our spiritual health.
- A pattern of unconfessed sin in the life of a follower of Christ turns our relationship with God into a dry, dusty, desert wasteland.
- If we will regularly confess and turn from sin, that desert will become a lush, growing, vibrant relationship with God that is refreshed from the dew of Heaven.
- The last verse of Hosea 14 describes our life as a journey down a path or road.

- *“Let those who are wise understand these things. Let those with discernment listen carefully. The paths of the Lord are true and right, and righteous people live by walking in them. But in those paths sinners stumble and fall.”*
- Christ-followers and those who have so far rejected Him walk down the same road of life but the experience is very different for each.
- It’s a vibrant spiritual life for one and stumbling and falling for the other.
- One is shaded from the sun and constantly refreshed by Heaven’s dew.
- The other drags along sick and tired of being sin sick and tired.
- That road of despair can become a road to recovery through repentance.
- The change in those road conditions starts with trusting Christ as Savior and Lord and continues through regular confession and repentance.
- One of the reasons regular repentance is so effective is the power of REPETITION. If I keep having to confess the same sins over and over again I get pretty sick and tired of hearing my REPEATED regular confessions and with God’s help it motivates me to quit my “low down ways”(to quote Waylon!)
- Other thoughts?

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Sin sick Israel was going through life “sick and tired of being sick and tired.”
- God offered them the same thing He offers us all: refreshment and recovery.
- Warren Wiersbe wrote: *“When we confess our sins to the Lord, He forgives us and the “germs of sin” are cleansed away (1John 1:9), but, as with physical sickness, often there’s a period of recuperation when we get back our strength and our appetite for spiritual food. “I will love them freely” describes that period, when we’re back in fellowship with the Lord and enjoying His presence. We see the smile of His face, for His anger is turned away.”*
- To paraphrase the Psalmist: “When I refused to confess my sin, my [spiritual life] wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night [God’s] hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.” Thanks Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, we don’t have to life like that.
- We don’t have to be “sick and tired” when we can be forgiven and refreshed, because regular repentance puts us on the road to recovery from sin sickness.