

“SERIES: MEET THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU”# 8: THE REUNION OF THE TWO PRODIGALS”

HOSEA 6:1-3, 14:1-9

INTRODUCTION

[LUKE 15], RECORDS THE PARABLE OF THE YOUNG MAN WHO AFTER TAKING HIS INHERITANCE IN HAND, WALKED OUT ON HIS FATHER. WE CALL HIM THE “PRODIGAL SON”.

UNFORTUNATELY, FEW CHRISTIANS TAKE THE TIME TO LOOK UP THE WORD “PRODIGAL” IN THE DICTIONARY.

WE ASSUME, INCORRECTLY, THAT IT MEANS “WAYWARD,” “REBELLIOUS,” OR “UNRULY.” BUT THESE DEFINITIONS ARE FAR WIDE OF THE MARK.

THE PRIMARY MEANING OF “PRODIGAL” IS “RECKLESSLY EXTRAVAGANT,” OR “LAVISH”

IT DESCRIBES THE RECKLESS ABANDON WITH WHICH THE SON SPENT THIS INHERITANCE.

THE BIBLE SAYS,” HE WASTED HIS SUBSTANCE WITH RIOTOUS LIVING.”

ILLUSTRATION

LLOYD OLGILVIE, IN HIS BOOK, “AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GOD,” POINTS OUT THAT IN THE PARABLE, THE SONS “PRODIGAL LIVING” IS SET IN CONTRAST TO THE FATHER’S “PRODIGAL LOVING”.

HE WRITES: “LET THE WORD “PRODIGAL” STAND ALONE. TRADITION ASSIGNED THE WORD TO THE LOST SON, BUT IT BELONGS TO THE FATHER. HIS LOVE KNEW NO LIMITS, HIS FORGIVENESS KNEW NO BOUNDARIES, AND HIS JOY KNEW NO RESTRAINT.

TRANSITION

“PRODIGAL” DESCRIBES THE FATHER AS WELL AS THE SON. AND LIKE THE FATHER, GOD IS RECKLESSLY EXTRAVAGANT WITH HIS LOVE, HE IS LAVISH WITH HIS

**FORGIVENESS, AND HE IS GENEROUS WITH HIS GRACE. HE IS THE “*PRODIGAL GOD*”.**

### **EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT**

**IN HOSEA, “*PRODIGAL NATION*” AND “*PRODIGAL GOD*” MEET.**

**ISRAEL HAD WASTED HER INHERITANCE, (WHICH WAS THE PROMISED LAND), ON *IDOLATROUS* LIVING.**

**WITH *RECKLESS ABANDON*, SHE HAD SPENT HER AFFECTIONS ON THE *ALTARS OF PAGAN IDOLS*.**

**AND LIKE THE ‘*SON*’ IN THE ‘*PARABLE*’, *ISRAEL* SUFFERED FOR HER *INFIDELITY*.**

**HOSEA LOOKS AHEAD TO THE TIME *ISRAEL* WOULD REALIZE HOW *MUCH BETTER OFF* SHE HAD BEEN WITH *GOD*.**

**IN THE ‘*FAR COUNTRY*’ OF HER *EXILE*, SHE WOULD ARISE AND RETURN TO THE LORD.**

**WHEN SHE REACHED HIM, SHE WOULD FIND HIM RUNNING TO MEET HER WITH *OUTSTRETCHED ARMS* IN A *WELCOME EMBRACE* AND WITH A ‘*PRODIGAL*’ DISPLAY OF *FORGIVENESS* AND *GRACE*.**

**CHAPTERS 6-14 OF HOSEA REVEAL THE *ANTICIPATED* MOMENT WHEN *ISRAEL* WOULD RETURN, AND *GOD* WOULD RECEIVE HER.**

- IN [HOSEA 5:15] GOD WARNED, “*I WILL GO AND RETURN TO MY PLACE, TILL THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR OFFENCE, AND SEEK MY FACE.*”
- IN [HOSEA 6:1] ISRAEL SAYS, “*COME AND LET US RETURN UNTO THE LORD.*”
- IN [HOSEA 14:4-7] DESCRIBES GOD’S RECEPTION OF THE RETURNING NATION; “*I WILL HEAL THEIR BACKSLIDING, I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY, I WILL BE AS DEW UNTO*

*ISRAEL, AND THEY SHALL REVIVE AS THE CORN  
AND GROW AS THE VINE.”*

THE BOOK OF HOSEA ANTICIPATES THE DAY WHEN THE NATION WOULD AWAKEN TO HER FOLLY AND RETRACE HER STEPS TO THE GOD SHE ABANDONED, AND THE “PRODIGAL NATION” WILL BE WELCOMED HOME TO THE “PRODIGAL” LOVE OF GOD.

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION

SADLY, CHRISTIANS ARE NOT IMMUNE FROM WASTING THEIR SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE.

HOW OFTEN DO WE DISCOVER THAT WE HAVE BEEN SERVING THEIR IDOLS OF SELF-INDULGENCE OR SELF-SUFFICIENCY?

ONE EXAMPLE OF THIS IS OUR PRAYERLESSNESS.

- DUTY IS SUBSTITUTED FOR DEPENDENCY, AND ACTIVITY IS SUBSTITUTED FOR INTIMACY.

THIS USUALLY CONTINUES UNTIL WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A PROBLEM WE CAN'T HANDLE. THEN WE LOOK FOR GOD AND WE DISCOVER THAT HE HAS WITHDRAWN TO HIS PLACE.

WE LEFT HIM AND WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IT.

AS WE UNLOAD TEXT, WE MUST ASK OURSELVES WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR A RETURN TO THE LORD?

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT WHEN WE ADMIT DEFEAT AND PREPARE TO MAKE OUR WAY BACK HOME?

THIS IS WHAT WE WANT TO LEARN FROM THE LESSON.

(I). IN [HOSEA 6:1-3] WE SEE ISRAEL'S RESOLVE TO RETURN HOME TO GOD.

- (A). IN [VERSE 1] WE SEE ISRAEL'S PERSPECTIVE OF GOD'S DISCIPLINE.

1. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THEIR ACCOUNTABILITY.

- (a). THEY SAID, “COME AND LET US RETURN UNTO THE LORD.”
- (b). THEY REALIZED THAT THEY HAD LEFT GOD; AND HE HAD NOT ABANDONED THEM.
- (c). IN THIS SIMPLE STATEMENT, THERE IS A TACIT ADMISSION THAT THEY WERE IN THE WRONG AND GOD WAS IN THE RIGHT.

2. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED GOD’S ACTIVITY;

- (a). THEY SAID, “FOR HE HAS TORN, AND HE WILL HEAL US; HE HATH SMITTEN, AND HE WILL BIND US UP”
- (b). WHEN WE ARE OUT OF STEP WITH THE LORD, WE WANT TO BLAME OUR PROBLEMS ON “BAD LUCK,” UNFAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, OR UNFAITHFUL PEOPLE.
- (c). THE BROKEN PERSON KNOWS WHEN PROBLEMS ARE THE RESULT OF GOD’S DISCIPLINE AND ACKNOWLEDGES GOD’S FAITHFULNESS IN ADMINISTERING CORRECTION.
- (d). *[PSALM 119:75] “I KNOW, O LORD, THAT THY JUDGEMENTS ARE RIGHT, AND THAT THOU IN FAITHFULNESS HAS AFFLICTED ME.”*

(B). IN [VERSE 2-3], WE SEE THE PROCESS OF THEIR RESTORATION.

1. NOTICE THE TIME INVOLVED.

- (a). AFTER TWO DAYS HE WILL REVIVE US:

**IN THE THIRD DAY HE WILL RAISE US UP.**

- (b). **ALTHOUGH OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD IS RE-ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY, THE VISIBLE FRUIT OF THAT RELATIONSHIP TAKES TIME TO BE SEEN.**
  - (c). **IT TAKES TIME FOR GOD TO HEAL HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS STRAINED BY SINFUL, SELFISH CONDUCT.**
  - (d). **IT TAKES TIME FOR GOD TO RECOVER HEALTH BROKEN BY DISOBEDIENCE.**
  - (e). **THE REFERENCE TO TWO AND THREE DAYS REMINDS US THAT THE TIME INVOLVED IS BRIEF WHEN COMPARED TO THE PERIOD OF DISCIPLINE AND BROKENNESS.**
2. **NOTICE ALSO THE THOROUGHNESS EXPRESSED.**

- (a). **GOD DESCRIBES THE PROCESS OF RESTORATION IN TERMS OF A PHYSICIAN CARING FOR THE WOUNDED PATIENT.**
- (b). **AFTER TWO DAYS, THE PATIENT BEGINS TO REVIVE.**
- (c). **FINALLY, ON THE THIRD DAY, THE PATIENT FULLY RECOVERED AND RAISED UP TO START LIFE ANEW.**
- (d). **WHEN WE RETURN TO GOD WITH LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN WOUNDED BY MORAL FAILURES AND SELFISH LIVING, HE HEALS THE WOUNDS AND GIVES US A BRAND NEW START IN LIFE.**

- (II). IN [HOSEA 14:1-3], WE SEE GOD'S REQUIREMENT FOR ISRAEL'S RETURN.
- (A). IN [VERSE 1-2], GOD REQUIRES "CONFESSION".
1. GOD DESIRES WORDS OF CONFESSION, NOT WORKS OF CONTRITION.
    - (a). ONLY ONE WORK IS SUFFICIENT TO TAKE AWAY SIN AND THAT WAS DONE BY CHRIST ON CALVARY.
    - (b). NO AMOUNT OF GOOD WORKS COULD EVER ATONE FOR A SINGLE SIN.
    - (c). NO HUMAN EFFORT CAN EVER BE ACCEPTED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST FOR OUR SINS.

### ILLUSTRATION

IN IS A GRAVE ERROR TO THINK THAT WE CAN MAKE UP FOR OUR SINS AND FAILURES BY ANY KIND OF SERVICE OR SACRIFICE.

ALL WE CAN OFFER IS THE "CALVES" OF OUR 'LIPS' WHICH IS AN HONEST ADMISSION OF OUR GUILT.

ALL WE CAN DO IS EXPRESS AN AGREEMENT WITH GOD ABOUT THE SOURCE, NATURE, AND CONSEQUENCES OF OUR SIN.

OUR FOCUS IS NOT ON THE MESS THAT WE HAVE MADE OF OUR LIVES, NOR THE SORROW WE FEEL, BUT THE HURT WE HAVE AFFLICTED UPON THE HOLY HEART OF GOD.

IT WAS HIS LAW WE BROKE, HIS LOVE WE IGNORED, AND HIS HOLINESS WE OFFENDED.

2. **REAL CONFESSION SEEKS TWO THINGS:**

- (a). **“CLEANSING FROM SIN, “THE STAIN REMOVED FROM OUR SOUL. “TAKE AWAY ALL OUR INIQUITY”[2]**
- (b). **“RESTORATION OF FELLOWSHIP” “RECEIVE US GRACIOUSLY” [2].**

(B.) IN [VERSE 3], GOD REQUIRES **“COMMITMENT”**.

1. **WE MUST IDENTIFY AND RENOUNCE EVERYTHING WE HAVE TRUSTED IN APART FROM GOD TO MAKE OUR LIVES SUCCESSFUL AND SATISFYING.**

- (a). **FOR ISRAEL, IT WAS FOREIGN ARMIES, MILITARY READINESS, AND PAGAN IDOLS.**
- (b). **FOR CHRISTIANS, IT MAY BE A WINSOME PERSONALITY, A SPECIAL TALENT, HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION, FINANCIAL STABILITY, OR ANYTHING, OR ANYONE TO WHICH WE LOOK FOR SECURITY OR PERSONAL VALUE.**

2. **WE MUST DECLARE OUR COMPLETE DEPENDENCE UPON GOD. [3] “IN THEE THE FATHERLESS FIND MERCY.”**

- (a). **GOD WANTED ISRAEL TO SEE HERSELF AS AN ORPHAN CHILD, DESTITUTE AND DEFENCELESS, NEEDING SOMEONE ELSE TO CARE FOR HER NEEDS.**
- (b). **TOTAL COMMITMENT IS NOT PROMISING GOD THAT WE WILL DO ANYTHING. IT IS ADMITTING THAT WE CAN DO NOTHING.**
- (c). **LIKE AN ORPHAN CHILD, WE NEED HIM TO MEET OUR EVERY NEED AND TAKE**

**CONTROL OF EVERYONE AND  
EVERYTHING IN OUR LIVES.**

**(III). IN [HOSEA 14:4-9], WE SEE GOD'S  
RESPONSE TO OUR RETURN.**

**(A). IN [VERSE 4a], HE SAID, "*I WILL HEAL THEIR  
BACKSLIDING.*"**

1. **[PHILIPPIANS 2:13], SAYS THAT GOD IS AT  
WORK WITHIN US, BOTH TO WILL AND TO  
DO, OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE.**
2. **WHEN WE WALK IN DEPENDENCE UPON  
HIM, HE PROVIDES US WITH GODLY  
DESIRES (TO WILL), AND THE ABILITY (TO  
DO), TO PERFORM THEM.**
3. **OUR BACKSLIDING IS "HEALED" BY HIS  
FAITHFULNESS**
4. **WE EXPERIENCE HIS VICTORY IN THE  
AREAS OF OUR LIVES THAT WERE ONCE  
MARKED BY DEFEAT.**

**(B). IN [VERSE 4b], HE PROVIDES FORGIVENESS.  
"*I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY.*"**

1. **WHEN THE PRODIGAL IN THE PARABLE  
MAKES HIS JOURNEY HOMEWARD, WE  
READ THAT; "*WHEN HE WAS A GREAT WAY  
OFF, HIS FATHER SAW HIM, AND HAD  
COMPASSION, AND RAN, AND FELL ON HIS  
NECK AND KISSED THE SON.*"**
2. **THE RESPONSE WAS IMMEDIATE,  
ENERGETIC AND LAVISH.**
3. **ALTHOUGH THE SON SURELY BORE THE  
MARKS OF HIS FAILURE, AND HAD DONE  
MUCH TO DISGRACE HIS FATHER'S NAME,  
IT IS EVIDENT THAT EVERY OFFENCE WAS**

**INSTANTLY AND COMPLETELY FORGIVEN  
SO THAT NOTHING HINDERED THE FREE  
FLOWING OF THE FATHER'S LOVE.**

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

**THIS IS WHAT FORGIVENESS MEANS, PUTTING AWAY THE  
OFFENCE THAT BARRED THE FREE FLOW OF GOD'S LOVE.**

**THIS IS WHAT ISRAEL IS PROMISED ON HER RETURN.**

**THAT IS WHAT WE ARE PROMISED ON OUR RETURN.**

**GOD DOESN'T HOLD US AT ARMS LENGTH, PUT US ON  
PROBATION OR DEMAND RESTITUTION.**

**WHEN WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST  
TO FORGIVE US OUR SIN AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL  
UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**HE PUTS AWAY THE OFFENCE AND POURS OUT HIS LOVE.**

**(C). IN [VERSE 5-8], GOD RESTORES OUR  
FRUITFULNESS "HE SHALL GROW."**

- 1. THESE VERSES SPEAK OF NEW LIFE,  
GROWTH AND FRUITFULNESS THAT FINDS  
ITS SOURCE IN GOD.**
- 2. THAT IS WHAT WE EXPERIENCE WHEN WE  
RETURN TO GOD.**
- 3. WE DISCOVER THAT HE IS THE "DEW"  
THAT REFRESHES OUR LIVES MORNING BY  
MORNING.**
- 4. HE IS LIKE THE SHADE OR (SHADOW) OF A  
GREAT TREE THAT SHELTERS US FROM  
THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THE  
NOON DAY HEAT.**
- 5. HE GIVES A SWEET (FRAGRANCE) (SCENT)  
TO OUR LIVES, LIKE THAT OF A GARDEN  
FULL OF FRESH BLOSSOMS.**

6. HE IS THE VINE, WE ARE THE BRANCHES, AND AS WE ABIDE IN HIM, WE BRING FORTH MUCH FRUIT.

### CONCLUSION

IN [VERSE 9], HOSEA CLOSES WITH A SEARCHING QUESTION;

- (A). *“WHO IS WISE, AND HE SHALL UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS?”*
1. HE HAS TOLD US HOW AND WHY WE FAIL.
  2. HE HAS WARNED US OF WHERE SIN LEADS AND HOW IT WILL RUIN OUR LIVES.
  3. NOW, HE WANTS TO KNOW IF WE ARE SMART ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND THE MESSAGE.
- (B). AND TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE, HE TELLS US WHAT THAT MESSAGE IS IN TWO PARTS.
1. HE TELLS US THAT THE MESSAGE MEANS THAT ALL THE WAYS OF GOD ARE RIGHT, AND YOU CAN TRUST HIM.
  2. HE TELLS US THAT WE WILL EITHER WALK IN OBEDIENCE TO THE WAYS OF GOD AND EXPERIENCE HIS BLESSINGS, OR WE WILL SUFFER THE “FALL OF FAILURE THAT RESULTS FROM DISOBEDIENCE.
- (C). KNOWING THAT THERE ARE NO OTHER OPTIONS, HOSEA ENDS BY CHALLENGING US TO MAKE A CHOICE.
1. WE CAN WASTEFULLY SPEND OUR LIVES IN DISOBEDIENCE PURSUING THE THINGS THAT WILL NEVER SATISFY.
    - (a). THAT IS THE WAY OF FAILURE AND BROKENNESS

2. **OR, WE CAN WALK IN A SUBMISSIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD, DEPENDING UPON HIM TO MEET OUR EVERY NEED, KNOWING THAT ALL HIS WAYS ARE RIGHT.**
  - (a). **THAT IS THE WAY OF FRUITFULNESS AND BLESSING.**
3. **WE MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN A PRODIGAL LIFE AND GOD'S PRODIGAL LOVE.**
4. **AND I CHOSE TO CHOOSE GOD'S PRODIGAL LOVE**
  - (a). **HIS LOVE IS PLENTEOUS IN MERCY AND RICH IN GRACE.**
  - (b). **HIS LOVE IS HIGHER THAN UP; AND DEEPER THAN DOWN.**
  - (c). **HIS LOVE IS WIDER THAN AROUND AND LONGER THAN ACROSS.**
  - (d). **HIS LOVE IS MORE DIRECT THAN STRAIGHT.**
  - (e). **HIS LOVE IS MORE INSTANT THAN NOW.**
  - (f). **HIS LOVE IS MIGHTIER THAN MOUNTAINS.**
  - (g). **HIS LOVE IS CLEARER THAN CRYSTALS.**
  - (h). **HIS LOVE IS PURER THAN WATER.**
  - (i). **HIS LOVE IS SWEETER THAN HONEY.**
  - (j). **HIS LOVE IS WARMER THAN THE HEAT AND BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN.**
  - (k). **HIS LOVE IS MORE POSSESSIVE THAN A MOTHER AND MORE PROVIDING THAN**

**A FATHER.**

- (l). **HIS LOVE CANNOT BE MEASURED.**
- (m). **PHILOSOPHY CAN'T EXPLAIN IT.**
- (n). **CREATION DIDN'T BEGIN IT AND RAPTURE WON'T END IT.**
- (o). **IT IS OLDER THAN TIME , BUT YOUNGER THAN THE FUTURE.**
- (p). **FIRE CAN'T BURN IT.**
- (q). **WATER CAN'T DROWN IT.**
- (r). **DEATH CAN'T KILL IT.**

**5. "GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT  
HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON...."**

- (a). **LOVE SENT HIM TO CALVARY.**
- (b). **BUT EARLY SUNDAY MORNING, HE GOT  
UP WITH ALL POWER IN HIS HAND.**

**"LOVE LIFTED ME,  
LOVE LIFTED ME  
WHEN NOTHING ELSE COULD HELP  
LOVE LIFTED ME."**