

# Prospect to Penitents

by J. Glyn Owen

---

*The sermon emphasizes the call to repentance, the consequences of repentance, and the character of the repentant, highlighting God's promise to heal their waywardness, love them freely, and be as the dew unto Israel.*

**Duration:** 35:23

**Scripture:** Hosea 14:1

**Topics:** "Penitence"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of repentance and the prospect it holds for those who genuinely turn back to God. The sermon is based on the book of Hosea, specifically chapter 14, verses 4-7. The preacher begins by emphasizing the importance of repentance and the need to return to the Lord. He then highlights the promise of God to heal the waywardness of those who repent and turn back to Him. The sermon concludes by mentioning the reminder that even in dark times, God's love and refreshment are still present, likened to the dew that falls at night.

---

## Transcript

Will you kindly turn in the words of scripture to the book of the prophet Hosea in chapter 14, our subject this morning the prospect for penitence and we shall be basing our message on verses 4 to 7, but at this stage I think it is more important that we should read again verses 1 to 3 in the chapter. Since you have your Bibles open before you, you'll be able to follow as we look at various aspects of verses 4 to 7 as we proceed. Let me therefore read what really introduces the theme of the chapter.

You remember that at the death of Solomon the one kingdom of Israel was divided into two. Solomon's successor could only persuade two of the groups, two of the twelve tribes to be loyal to the old things and to the Davidic rule Judah and Benjamin. Ten tribes rebelled and they became known as Israel the northern of the two tribes, of the two sections Israel in the north, Judah in the south now at this particular point in time Israel has been exceedingly rebellious against God that rebellion has taken the form of the worship of false gods and of course there can be no greater offense than that in the sight of God to elevate someone or something into the place that the only true God should occupy.

Such was the sin of Israel along with that of course they sought to find some defense for themselves not being sure that God would defend them they would have to look elsewhere and so they looked to Assyria and to Egypt. They thought that by means of political alliances and the military prowess of these two

nations they would be all right if trouble came they would have a place of refuge into that situation God sends his prophet Hosea and he calls the people back to repentance my friends if I'm not mistaken God is calling his people again and he has not summoned us here today other than that we should hear his word of summons to repentance. If like Israel of old we have wandered in any way from him the call of God still is return, repent listen to it.

Return oh Israel to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall take words with you and return to the Lord say to him forgive all our sins and receive us graciously that we may offer the fruit of our lips Assyria cannot save us we will not mount war horses we will never again say our gods to what our own hands have made for in you the fatherless finds compassion. Repentance finds its consummation in that threefold renunciation.

Never again will we say never again will we say to the work of our hands you are gods, you are our gods. Assyria cannot save us neither can Egypt save us. Military power political strategy as well as our idolatries are impotent.

Now that is the climax of the repentance to which God called his ancient people the question now is this where does repentance lead us to I have had many people over the years say that repentance is a very very hard searching experience and a very hard experience to go through and so it is it means a right about turn a turning away from your sins that God condemns and a coming right back to God humbly acknowledging that you've been wrong and that's hurting to the pride, to the ego. But where does it bring us to? Now that's what I want you to see this morning repentance may be hard and your heart may be thumping at the thought of it but when you and I return to the Lord in terms of the summons of this prophet and indeed of others and of New Testament apostles when we return to the Lord there is something that awaits us which eye has not seen and the imagination of man has not conceived what is it? Well let's come to it it begins with 4a first part of verse 4 what God says he will do for those who are genuinely repentant. Now will you notice I have to leave that side of my message this morning I cannot underscore the significance of verses 1 to 3 anymore may the Spirit of God do that.

Assuming now that every man and woman every fellow and girl in our service this morning is repentant, penitent on account of sin and we want to turn back to God and we are doing it inwardly in our hearts and our presence here this morning and perhaps at this table means this that we're coming back to God from any wanderings of thought and spirit and attitude any rebellion of will we're coming back to God. All right, where will it lead us to? Oh look at these lovely words, I will heal their waywardness. Who says that? Well it's none other than the God of Israel says that the God who summoned the prophets and sent him out to call the rebels back says look you come back to me and I will heal your waywardness.

Undoubtedly underlying the action of worshipping false gods, underlying confidence in political leadership and in military power per se, as apart from God or as alternatives to God there is a grave serious condition of soul and says the Lord through the prophet look he says I'll deal with that underlying waywardness of yours that thinks that men and people and military might and strong people in the land they can shield you, they can lead you, they can contrive something to save you in the dire hour, they cannot. If you come back to me I will heal that basic stream in your spirit that makes you wayward and rebellious and evil and entertain such notions of rebellion at any given time. Now my friends I think that there is something here that touches the raw spot in all of us this morning there is a diseased area in the mind and in the spirit of many of us who bear the Lord's name and we if we were honest enough we would have to say we have more confidence in men political man and military man than we have in the Lord God Almighty and it is no

less a sin this morning in the 20th century than it was a way back in the 7th century BC or the 8th.

Men are called of course to undertake a work for God in society and in the political field and in the military field and we need to remember them and to bolster them with our prayers may it please God to send more God-fearing, righteousness-seeking men and women into these areas but for men and women of God to withdraw their confidence from their God and repose confidence in the political field or in military power is a slur upon the Almighty when the tornado comes there is no one but God himself who can save you and he says I will heal your waywardness you come back to me in penitence and I will deal with that basic streak in your attitude in your spirit I will deal with it I will heal it now the actual treatment is not stated here and so I cannot deal with it as perhaps the prophet Hosea would if he had written about it but I want to remind you that a basic factor in the dealing in dealing with this kind of thing is simply of course to live in the conscious presence of God see the only people that have greater faith in something other than God or someone other than God are the people who do not really know God see if you know God in his glory and in his greatness and in his covenant and in his promises then you do not need you're not really tempted to have confidence in anybody else if you know God and so the way to deal with this basic skepticism and unbelief is this come back to God from the avenues of wandering come to know God come to live close up to him. Now on Wednesday night we were noticing that in calling the people back literally what Hosea was doing was this he was calling the people to come back right up to God as it were face to face eyeball to eyeball that you can whisper to one another near enough to whisper. Tell me my friend believing man and woman this morning have you ever been that close to the Almighty do you know God is God.

If you don't you too will be tempted to rest in the power of some Assyria and to make idols of something or other and bow down and worship them the day will come your price will be given you as it was given Judas and that's the danger the only real answer to it is in the knowledge of God when you know him you know you have the answer to every problem Judas was tempted by 30 pieces of silver to sell his Lord do you think that the man who leaned on Jesus bosom at supper would have been tempted by 30 pieces of silver to sell his Lord not on your life. John the beloved well why not John? Well for this reason John you see knew the Christ in a way that Judas didn't or they were both with him they could both tell you the color of his hair and something about his features and his height and how much he weighed and what he ate and what he liked of course they could but the one was only physically present with him the other was spiritually united to him. My dear men and women this morning listen it is not enough to know the doctrines of God you've got to know God and that's the answer to the temptation to apostasy of every kind it's to know him, really to know him when you turn away from him you say in effect I really don't know him look next, the next thing God says is I will love them freely.

What a sweet little statement but how utterly profound. I will love them freely. I think it is Alexander McLaren, the late Dr. Alexander McLaren you know where he comes from anyway by his name.

He's in the glory today many of us thank God for him I think it was he who said that at this point the dam is down what he meant was this, when men and women rebel against God there emerges a dam between them and God. The Lord God of Israel has a myriad things he wants to give his people, a myriad things he wants to tell his people a hundred thousand things he wants to do for us and in us and through us but there emerges a dam and the tide of blessing that God wants to give us is as it were held in abeyance. Oh there are trickles of benefits coming through but when you return in genuine penitence and renounce your idols really do so.

And the dam is down and the tide of God's purposes the ocean of his love begins to flow again and you become inundated with it. That's the picture I will love them freely. You know brothers and sisters sometimes in our prayers we kind of try to coax God to love us we try to persuade him to do this and to do that you don't need to do that when you're really penitent God says so.

You only need to do that when you're uncertain of him and if you're uncertain of him then you can be certain of nothing I will love them freely says the Lord nothing shall hinder me. I will come to them, I will put my arms around them I will caress them, I will kiss them, I will bless them does that language make you uncomfortable? I know many people who are made uncomfortable by language like that and by some of our hymns that speak of this kind of thing it isn't all that long ago when I was preaching somewhere and we sang that hymn which I love immensely especially when it's sung to the right tune Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus vast, unmeasured boundless, free, rolling like a mighty ocean in its fullness over me, underneath me, all around me is the current of thy love, leaning onward ever homeward to my glorious home above somebody challenged me about the appropriateness of singing a hymn like that because what does it mean? Oh my friend don't you know you good people who believe the book, who know the catechism who have the doctrines, tell me, tell me, don't you know anything about the torrents of God's love breaking in upon you into the wilderness of your life so that God becomes the supremely conscious one in your consciousness you see we've moved now into experiential religion and it's a great step. I didn't do it the prophet didn't do it, God said I will love you freely, no holds barred I'll be so intimate with you I'll do so much for you I will love you freely, absolutely freely do you know anything my friend, is there anything in your experience this morning that corresponds to that? Do you know God? now doctrine is all important in our Christian religion God has seen fit to reveal himself to us in words written as well as in the word incarnate and so knowledge of the Bible is important but some of us have gained the idea that Christianity is learning and repeating a textbook so that we think that we are it when we've learned the scriptures now please, please let no one say that the senior minister of Knox doesn't believe that reading and repeating of scriptures may be unimportant but I tell you, you can repeat the scriptures till you're dead and yet not know God loving you freely, yet not knowing the kind of intimacy with God that the prophet holds out here a doctrine is vital, it is basic, it is important God will do nothing contrary to his word, but over and above the word is the God of the word who is a living God, who is not in chains to his own word and he's alive, and he comes to one another and if some poor woman breaks her alabaster box of precious ointment at his feet, do you think he has no alabaster boxes of precious ointment to pour upon our feet? how poverty stricken we think of our our God must be.

No, no, no things which eyes have not seen, ears heard, the heart understood or the imagination conceived of, are yet in the heart of God for those who repent and return. After all Jesus said, did he not this is life eternal, that they might know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you sent knowing him. Now you and I do not only need therefore the certainty that God loved us at a point in time where he did not withhold the only begotten of his bosom, but delivered him up on a cross to die in our place instead to redeem us from the curse of sin and eternal misery we need to know that, but brothers and sisters we need to know that God's love didn't die on Calvary you and I need to know that the river of God's love was not damned on Calvary, it's come flowing down the centuries and as the Holy Spirit came into the church and the fruit to the Spirit is love, into every part of the world into every age and time, his men his servants have gone bearing the spirit of grace and sometimes where his servants haven't gone, he's gone himself a love of God today is no less than it was on Calvary but it is for us to follow the Word of God if we want to know it, know what it meant when he said of old I will love you freely.

Now listen if he could say that and mean it before Bethlehem, before Calvary before Pentecost, brothers and sisters there's no reason why you should have to modify it now on the contrary Pentecost and all that has transpired since Jesus rose from the dead including his session at the Father's right hand means that the waters must flow, the ocean is abroad you return to me and renounce your sin and come back to me with all your heart you shall surely find me. I must close with this last word I will heal their waywardness, I will love them freely I will be as the dew unto Israel have you ever contemplated that? I will be as the dew unto Israel. The towel as it was called meant sprinkled moisture.

The Hebrew word seems to have been used indiscriminately both of dew and of night mist moist air drawn in from the sea was largely responsible for the dewfall in Western Palestine especially in coastal areas and near mountain slopes and it's more than probable that the reference here is to night mist which one scholar describes as rolling masses of vapor brought from the Mediterranean which counteracts the dry heat and keeps vegetation alive I will be as the dew unto Israel. Clearly the ministry of this kind of dew was very evident. First of all it was refreshing refreshing to man, to beast, to all nature alike and as it was refreshing it was softening it softened the soil so that you could sow in it and if plants were already sown or seeds then the soil would still remain soft and pliable and something would grow under the refreshing of the dew and then of course along with that comes the third point it was a fructifying influence.

You could expect fruit there might be no excessive rain, real rains as they call them in some parts of the world, there might be none but if you had this sufficient saturating dew you could have a sweet green garden behind your little house communion with God is the only sure means of spiritual refreshment leave your sin turn right around, come back to him beg pardon and acceptance, renounce renounce your sins in his presence and you'll come to know him and as you come to know him you will find that the more time you spend in his presence you'll receive something that can only be described as the dew it'll keep your soul fresh and your thoughts sweet I have a friend in the Anglican Church I suppose we've preached together many many many times during the year if ever we are together before we go on to a platform or to a pulpit he always says this whoever's with him this is not only for me but when I'm with him he says Glenn remember all our fresh springs are in him, he's got it all our fresh springs are in him, it's just the other way of putting this truth, I will be as the dew to Israel, are you dry this morning? are you hard this morning? do you want to enter into the singing of the praises? were those anthems touching anything in you? you wanted to praise God did some of you wish that we could just do something even more than we were doing? do you want to break the bounds?

I will be as the dew unto Israel, refreshment and with refreshment a softening process so that whatever God wants to sow in the garden of our souls he can do it we're soft we're sensitive he can put any seed in your mind any thought and it is received you see there are some people who come to church and they're just like bits of rock now don't be cross with me but it's true I know it's true and we come to the house of God and we're not prepared to hear God though he shout at us and call us by name but the penitent you see who's come really back to him it means this the abandonment of all other loyalties submission to him and now as the dew begins to saturate our souls we become pliable like the clay in the hand of the potter it's changing the metaphor it's the same basic truth and out of

all this comes fruitfulness fruitfulness even when there are no rains it's not raining anywhere else but it's raining on my soul it's parched all around but my soul is wet with the dew of heaven do you know that I sometimes wonder however whether there isn't here in Hosea 14 5 a little gentle reminder that whereas God meets his people and communicates his love to them in torrents in the daytime literally or when all is well if it means that his dew also descends in the night time you see the dew does fall at night it's all dark

nobody sees it nobody hears it but it's coming down and some of you are going through dark places at the moment and I believe that the words of the prophet are a reminder to you and to me it may be dark where you are and you may not be aware of the of the mighty

torrents of God's love breaking into your life but in the night time the dew descends and softens and fructifies and refreshes I will be as the dew unto Israel and then comes the response into which I can't go this morning let me just read to you what happens now following what God says he will do I will is the relevant verb so far I will do this I will heal their waywardness I will love them freely I will be as the dew to Israel you see it's divine action so far now what okay says God as sure as I do these things listen he will blossom like the lily see the lily blossoming in its purity in its whiteness and its uprightness he like a cedar of Lebanon will send down his shoots the lily has no shoots the lily grows upwards but its roots I'm sorry its roots are not there she has very little

roots and so says the Lord the character that I will build now is a character that has roots going down as well as growing up like the lily in beauty and in uprightness neither is that everything his young shoots shall grow out we've got the picture of a tree still and the shoots are going out the branches are going in all direction little shoots that have never come to anything now they begin to grow and there are no limits to them so you see there is beauty here the lily growing up the roots going down the branches going out and what then his young shoots will grow his splendor will be like an olive tree I can say nothing about that his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon if you've been with the cedars of Lebanon and this is they are the same today as they were in biblical times all the

trees in Lebanon the cedar area used to grow together and they were overlapping so that if you went through an area of territory where cedars grew if you went there on a warm summer's day you would find that the perfume was concentrated because there was no room for the air to pass through the foliage was so thick and it came down and it was as if the order was caged in it was concentrated and says the Lord what will happen to the person I'm describing he says his fragrance will be like that of the cedars of Lebanon he'll be condensed with a fragrance of myself and my son and my spirit he will dwell men will dwell again in his shade people will find him a shelter in a weary land people will thank God on behalf of this person there will be blessing through him to the needy and the weary

hallelujah oh Israel return unto the Lord your God if you've fallen you have fallen by your own iniquity take with you words and say to him what the prophet bids us say plead as the prophet bids you plead forgiveness acceptance renounce the objects of your false faith which is a denial of God and just begin to walk humbly with him and this is the dimension of things that you can expect the church at large this morning knows very little of this because we live in a day where not only the world is arrogant but the church is arrogant men and women want their own thing and their own way and their own glory in the very church of the almighty God and because of that we're only reading about these things whereas we ought to be experiencing them God grant us at his table to see again the extent

of his love in history on Calvary purchasing our redemption but oh may God grant us to see and to recognize that the love of God was not damned up on Calvary it's penetrating and percolating down the years of time and the author of it the God of love who is love is here today open the sluice gate in order that he may pour out upon you his sweet refreshing grace

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4610.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-glyn-owen/prospect-to-penitents/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**