

Love Them Freely



Hosea 13:4–14; 14 · This week: I Will Love Them Freely, Hosea 1–6; 10–14; Joel

In the manual: **Come, Follow Me lesson 47, “I Will Love Them Freely,” on Gospel Library**

START

Hosea ends his book with an invitation. “O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity” (Hosea 14:1).

READ TOGETHER

Just before this, the Lord reminded Israel that “there is no saviour beside me” (Hosea 13:4). Israel had tried idols and foreign armies, and none of them could save (Hosea 14:3).

HOSEA 13:14

¹⁴I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

HOSEA 14:4–5

⁴I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. ⁵I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Hosea 14:2 tells Israel how to come back. “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord.” The Lord even gives them the prayer to say. “Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.”

His answer comes in verse 4. “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.” To love freely is to give love as a gift, before anyone earns it. Then he promises to be like dew, so that Israel will “grow as the lily” (verse 5).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf described that kind of love. “Though we are incomplete, God loves us completely. Though we are imperfect, He loves us perfectly. Though we may feel lost and without compass, God’s love encompasses us completely.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Love of God,” General conference, October 2009

Hosea 13:14 promises even more. “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death.” Paul echoed it when he testified of the Resurrection, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55). Jesus Christ paid that ransom.

TALK ABOUT IT

Hosea 14:2 says, “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord.” What words could you take to the Lord in prayer tonight?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Hosea ends with the Lord’s promise to heal backsliding and love freely. The Savior ransomed us from the grave, and his love comes before we have earned it.