

America and Christianity: Part 6

Do you know how to pray for our nation?

Jeremiah 29.7

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • May 13, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2019

Scripture Reader and Reading: Nash Crisp – First Timothy 2.1–4

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – No Suggestions

I. Prayer

- A. One of the best things we can do for our nation is to pray for it.
- B. Consider this quotation to understand the power of prayer:

“The only limits to prayer are the promises of God and His ability to fulfill those promises.”

– E. M. Bounds, Preacher

1. Ephesians 3 shows how far the promises of God go and
2. you will see what His ability is to fulfill them:

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

– Ephesians 3.20

3. The limits to prayer are the ones we put upon it.
 - a) Do we pray?
 - b) For what do we pray?
- C. Picture yourself as President Lincoln while your nation is at war with itself:

“I have been driven many times upon my knees by the over-whelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for that day.”

– Abraham Lincoln

1. America as a nation is greater than any one person.
2. Therefore, let us appeal to the One who is greater than America.

3. That is what Lincoln did.

D. Hosea 10 is timely:

**12 Sow for yourselves righteousness;
Reap in mercy;
Break up your fallow ground,
For it is time to seek the LORD,
Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.**

– Hosea 10.12

1. America needs your help now.
2. Seek the Lord on behalf of the land you love.

E. Listen to Robert Lee.

1. Earlier I quoted Lincoln,
 - a) who led our nation during one of her worst times, and
 - b) he saw the need for prayer.
2. As you know, General Robert Lee was on the opposite side, and
 - a) he, like Lincoln, saw the place of prayer.
 - b) America is still in desperate need of prayer.
3. I suspect that the following was said after the Civil War.

“Knowing that intercessory prayer is our mightiest weapon and the supreme call for all Christians today, I pleadingly urge our people everywhere to pray. Believing that prayer is the greatest contribution that our people can make in this critical hour, I humbly urge that we take time to pray—to really pray.

“Let there be prayer at sunup, at noonday, at sundown, at midnight—all through the day. Let us all pray for our children, our youth, our aged, our pastors, our homes. Let us pray for our churches.

“Let us pray for ourselves, that we may not lose the word ‘concern’ out of our Christian vocabulary. Let us pray for our nation. Let us pray for those who have never known Jesus Christ and redeeming love, for moral

forces everywhere, for our national leaders.

“Let prayer be our passion. Let prayer be our practice.”

– Robert E. Lee

II. The Power of Prayer

- A. Terror strikes the heart of evil when we pray.
- B. The Book of Judges shows that when God’s people pray, He hears, and acts.
- C. Second Chronicles 20 is the story of a massive army going against Judah.
 - 1. King Jehoshaphat knew that the enemy was stronger than Judah was.
 - 2. Listen to the end of the king’s prayer:

12 “O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”

– Second Chronicles 20.12

- a) God heard his humble prayer and
 - b) delivered Judah.
- D. Ezra 9 shows that it just needs to start with one person:

3 So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. 4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice. 5 At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God. 6 And I said: “O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens...”

– Ezra 9.3–6

III. Making Prayer Effective for Our Nation

- A. First, be a Christian.
- B. Second, repent of sin.

**18 If I regard iniquity in my heart,
The Lord will not hear.**

– Psalm 66.18

- C. Third, pray in the Spirit.
 - 1. That is, pray as He has directed in the Scriptures.
 - 2. We cannot pray or ask for things
 - a) that are contrary
 - b) to what the Spirit has revealed.

- D. Fourth, pray with fasting.
 - 1. Isaiah 58 shows the kind of fasting that God wants to see.
 - 2. Does this preclude literal fasting,
 - a) going without food for a set period of time?
 - b) No.

**6 Is this not the fast that I have chosen:
To loose the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the heavy burdens,
To let the oppressed go free,
And that you break every yoke?**

**7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?**

– Isaiah 58.6–7

- E. Fifth, pray, believing that God hears your prayer.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

– Hebrews 11.6

3 “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”

– Jeremiah 33.3

IV. Things to Keep in Mind As You Pray

- A. The future of our nation depends upon your prayers today.
- B. Here are three things to keep in mind as you pray for America:
 - 1. Confess the sins of our nation.

6 “...please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father’s house and I have sinned. 7 We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.”

– Nehemiah 1.6–7

- a) This includes asking for God’s forgiveness and
 - b) pleading for mercy.
- 2. Mention the leaders.

2 ...for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

– First Timothy 2.2

- a) This is greater power than voting.
- b) Include church leaders in these prayers.

3. Ask God to move the church into action.
 - a) Oregon has some scary bills pending.
 - b) Please pray for our state.

C. Insight into prayer.

“The spirit of man is more important than mere physical strength, and the spiritual fiber of a nation than its wealth.”

– Dwight Eisenhower

“The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing, but it is the chief thing. The great people of earth are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray.”

– S. Gordon

“We sometimes say that the least we can do for someone is pray for them. But really the greatest thing we can do for someone is pray for them.”

– Mae Petro (Former member of North Long Beach Church of Christ, California)

V. Specific Prayers for Our Leaders

A. There are sixteen leaders who affect our nation and your life:

1. The president,
2. our state’s two senators,
3. the congressman/woman from our district,
4. the governor of our state,
5. our state senator,
6. our state representative, and
7. the nine Supreme Court judges.

B. Pray for these things in our leaders:

1. That they break off their sins by righteousness,
2. That they recognize their inadequacy and learn to depend upon God,
3. That they reject all counsel that violates Scripture,
4. That they resist the pressure of evil men,
5. That they reverse secularism,
6. That they sacrificially serve this country,
7. That they rely upon the Bible and prayer for wisdom,
8. That they serve with righteousness,
9. That they serve as examples of good citizenship, and
10. That they remember they are accountable to God.

VI. What Made America Great

A. In 1789, George Washington said in his first inaugural address:

“The propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself has ordained.”

B. When he left the presidential office in 1797, he said:

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable support. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars.”

C. America did not become great because of:

1. our natural resources,
2. the placing of our land between two oceans, or
3. other physical things.

D. America became great because of the following:

1. We respected the dignity of human life,
2. We held to the traditional monogamous family,

3. We practiced common decency,
4. We believed in and practiced the work ethic,
5. We have been friendly to Christianity,
6. We had God-centered education, and
7. We recognized divinely established institutions:
 - a) The home,
 - b) The government, and
 - c) The church.

VII. Concluding Remarks

“The choice before us is plain, Christ or chaos, conviction or compromise, discipline or disintegration. I am rather tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as American citizens. The time is come, it now is, when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship. America’s future depends upon her accepting and demonstrating God’s government.”

– Peter Marshall, Scots-American Preacher

“Republican institutions in the hands of a virtuous and God-fearing nation are the very best in the world, but in the hands of a corrupt and irreligious people they are the very worst and the most effective weapons of destruction...”

– Philip Schaff, Church Historian

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

– Edmund Burke, British Statesman