

Keys to Experiencing God

Part 2—Humility, Fasting, Prayer and Repentance

June 29, 2014

Spiritual Attitudes for Kingdom Living

- Matthew 5:3-6
 - The first four Beatitudes are the entryway.
 - Spiritual bankruptcy, mourning, meekness (humility), hungering and thirsting for righteousness are spiritual mindsets and attitudes that must make their way back into the church if we are going to see the redeeming, rescuing hand of God on our nation.
 - Now is the time for God's people in America to cry out to God in humility, and mourning while hungering and thirsting for righteousness! It is time for repentance.
 - This is critical because we are living in an increasingly compromising, apostate, deceived church and an increasingly divided, angry, bankrupt nation and a more hate-filled, violent dangerous world! We must pay attention to what's going on all around us!

National Roots of Humility, Fasting, Prayer and Repentance

- “This House being deeply impressed with Apprehension of the great Dangers to be derived to British America, from the hostile Invasion of the city of Boston, in our Sister Colony of Massachusetts Bay, whose Commerce and Harbour are on the 1st day of June next to be stopped by an armed Force, deem it highly necessary that the said first Day of June be set apart by the Members of this House as a Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, devoutly to implore the divine Interposition for averting the heavy Calamity, which threatens Destruction to our civil rights.”¹ THOMAS JEFFERSON
- “Went to church, fasted all day.”² GEORGE WASHINGTON
- “Do earnestly recommend, that Friday, the Seventeenth day of May next, be observed by the said colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by a sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease his (God's) righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain his pardon and forgiveness.”³ CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, 1776
- “For these reasons I have thought proper to recommend, and I do hereby recommend accordingly, that Thursday, the 25th day of April next, be observed throughout the United States of America as a day of solemn humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that the citizens on that day abstain as far as may be from their secular occupations, devote the time to the sacred duties of religion in public and in private; that they call to mind our numerous offenses against the Most High God, confess them before Him with the sincerest penitence, implore His pardoning mercy, through the Great Mediator and Redeemer, for our past transgressions, and that through the grace of His Holy Spirit we may be disposed and enabled to yield a more suitable obedience to His righteous requisitions in time to come; that He would interpose to arrest the progress of that impiety and licentiousness in principle and practice so offensive to Himself and so ruinous to mankind; that He would make

¹ Kevin J. Hayes, *The Road to Monticello: The Life and Mind of Thomas Jefferson*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 152

² Jared Sparks, *The Life of George Washington*, (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1853), 520

³ *Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume 4, 1776*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), 209

us deeply sensible that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people;" that He would turn us from our transgressions and turn His displeasure from us."⁴ JOHN ADAMS, 1799

- "And, insomuch as we know that by His divine law nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."⁵ ABRAHAM LINCOLN
- "To confess and to repent of their manifold sins; to implore the compassion and forgiveness of the Almighty...to implore Him, as the Supreme Ruler of the World, not to destroy us as a people, nor suffer us to be destroyed by the hostility or connivance of other nations or by obstinate adherence to our own counsels, which may be in conflict with His eternal purposes, and to implore Him to enlighten the mind of the nation to know and do His will, humbly believing that it is in accordance with His will that our place should be maintained as a united people among the family of nations;... Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, cordially concurring with the Congress of the United States in the penitential and pious sentiments expressed in the aforesaid resolution and heartily approving of the devotional design and purpose thereof, do hereby appoint the first Thursday of August next to be observed by the people of the United States as a day of national humiliation and prayer."⁶ ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1864
- "In modern presidential proclamations... a penitential spirit or recognition of the capacity for national sin or error seems lost."⁷ Dr. JOHN UEBERSAX

Biblical Roots of Humility, Fasting, Prayer and Repentance

- Our forgotten national roots of humility, fasting prayer and repentance come from Biblical roots, We must remember where we came from and where we've fallen from, repent of our sins, return to God's Word, and relinquish ourselves from our idols of apathy, ignorance and ease. Then forgiveness, healing and revival can come to the Church and healing to our nation!

King Solomon

- 2 Chronicles 7:12-14
 - Drought, devouring and pestilence come from wickedness. Forgiveness and healing come from humility and repentance.

King Hezekiah

- 2 Chronicles 29-30

⁴ James Daniel Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Vol. 1*, (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897), 275

⁵ John George Nicolay, John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: Complete Works, Vol. 2*, (New York: The Century Co., 1920), 319

⁶ Ibid, 544

⁷ www.john-uebersax.com

- He re-opened the Temple doors (Ahaz, his evil father, shut the doors and encouraged moral decline. As a result, the LORD brought Judah low). Hezekiah repaired the doors, and carried out the rubbish from the Temple.
- He confessed national sins and made a covenant with God. The result was they people bowed and worshiped the LORD.
- Revival, forgiveness, and healing took place.
- 2 Chronicles 29:36
 - God prepared the people. There was sudden repentance and revival.
 - The king made a proclamation, an invitation, to the entire nation to return to the LORD, not to be stiff-necked, and receive forgiveness. Some mocked him, others responded, and the LORD answered... "Nothing like this in Judah since days of King David."

Josiah

- 2 Chronicles 34
 - At sixteen king Josiah sought the LORD. At twenty, he began removing all idolatrous corruption and signs of disobedience. At twenty-six, he repaired the House of the LORD.
- 2 Chronicles 34:18–21
 - The Priest finds the book. God responded by delaying judgement (2 Chronicles 34:26–28).

Nehemiah

- Nehemiah 1:3–11
 - Nehemiah was one humbled man, who prayed one heartbroken prayer with one determined purpose—to see God rescue and redeem His people and the nation.
 - He had nothing to lose and everything to gain—He was “making an ask of God and of man”
 - God responded and miraculously, the wall, in spite of opposition from the enemy, was rebuilt in fifty-two days.

Summary

- We have biblical and national heritage of crying out to God with humility, fasting, prayer, and repentance when things are going to hell around us.
- If we'll adopt these practices sincerely and continuously, we have a chance of seeing God revive the church, save the lost and heal the nation.
- There is no better time than now to take spiritual inventory of ourselves, to understand the broken condition of our nation, the desperate need of the world around us and respond with humility, repentance, prayer and fasting.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:3–6. Poor in Spirit refers to those in Jesus' day who recognize and bear their desperate plight, and who long for God's restoration through the Messiah. Why is it important for us to look beyond politics and take inventory of our own spiritual condition and how we need to solely depend on Jesus?
2. How does a spirit of “gradually” grow in a nation? How does it lead a nation away from God? What are some “graduals” you seen in this nation? How does seeing these “gradual” changes lead you to pray? Be involved?

3. What did the Lord want Solomon to have firmly in mind as he entered the final portion of his reign? (1 Kin. 9:4-9; 2 Chr. 7:13-22). What does God's instruction to Solomon teach us for today and our world condition? How can we apply this teaching to our lives? Our prayers?
4. 2 Chronicles 29:36 speaks of a prepared people. How are people prepared? What could be your role in preparing yourself? Other people?
5. How do you think prayer prepared Nehemiah to lead his people? How can prayer prepare you to be involved in helping the nation humbly turn back to God and repent?
6. What can we learn from the example of Nehemiah and the Israelites who obeyed God's call to rebuild the Temple? What fears or obstacles did these people face? What fears or obstacles do you face when you begin to pray for and help our nation repent and turn back to God?
7. What is standing in your way of humbly, fasting and praying for revival in this country? How can you remove any fear or temptation to be free to habitually pray for this nation?