

Hope for a Nation

God's Prescription for National Forgiveness and Healing

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What is the Hope of a Nation that has lost its way spiritually, morally and relationally?

- **2 Chronicles 7:11-15**

Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the LORD and in his own house. Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, **THEN** I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.

God's Prescription to forgive and heal a nation couldn't be clearer, yet, it has gone undone in both the church and the nation, so, we are experiencing the horrific results.

- War — 15 years, thousands killed, 10's of thousands wounded, hundreds \$ billions
- Sickness — cancer, mental issues, emotional issues, depression, anxiety
- Addiction — opioids destroying and killing, pornography
 - Pornography: 43% approval, 89% produced in US, top 4 markets for robots are top 4 consumers of pornography = South Korea, Japan, China, USA

**God calls us to connect the dots,
recognize the plagues as His judgment — and cry out to Him!
When we see drought, devouring, disease... war, sickness, addiction, etc.**

Humble ourselves

- You are God, we are not!
- Your will and ways are right, ours are not, we are sorry, we are wrong!
- We submit to your Lordship and authority in all aspects of our life!
- **Micah 6:8**
He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?
- **Matthew 5:3**
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

**There must be a return to humility in the church and the nation
if we are going to experience God's forgiveness and healing.**

Prayer

- An extension of humility — “God we need YOU, we can’t do anything apart from You?”

Question — *Is your prayer life proof that God is your only hope, or is your prayer life proof that you got it handled but a little help every now and then would be welcome?*

- **Ezekiel 22:30-31**

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

Seek My face

- *this is about intimate communion with God’s face, and not merely prayer asking for God’s hand.*
- **Psalm 27:8**
When You said, “Seek My face,” my heart said to You, “Your face, LORD, I will seek.”

**The only way for God to guide you with His eye
is by intimately seeking His face!**

- **Psalm 32:8**
I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.
- God wants to guide, lead, give strategy to us to see His kingdom come in greater ways. We must seek His face and not just His hand!

**There must be a return to seeking God’s face
in the church and the nation
if we are going to experience God’s forgiveness and healing.**

Turn from your wicked ways

- this aspect goes unspoken by Christian politicians, preachers and songwriters far too often — that’s the problem — *if we do the first three without turning from our wicked ways — it’s nothing but hypocritical religious nonsense.*

- when God confronts our wickedness as we humble ourselves, pray, seek His face — if we don't turn from wickedness, what's the point — it's the wickedness that's killing us
- we're not even sure what's wicked anymore — we call evil-good and good-evil
- holiness has become legalism — purity and piety have become irrelevant
- what we watch, what we participate in, sins of commission and omission
- Christ-confessing politicians, preachers, and entertainers living in open pride, rebellion, and sexual sin
- **Psalm 66:18**
If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

**There must be turning from our wicked ways
if we are going to see God's healing!**

PROBLEM — *“this prescription was only for Israel, it doesn't apply to us or our nation today”*

- that's ridiculous! **200 years after this was said...**
- Nineveh humbled themselves, prayed, sought God's face and turned from their wicked ways — God forgave, healed them! (wealthy, strong, violent, perverse, exporters of wickedness, see Nahum 3)
- **Jonah 3:4-10**
And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.
- **Jeremiah 18:7-8**
The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.
 - This was 150 years later
 - *don't tell me it doesn't apply to America, it applies to all nations!*

**There must be a turning from our wicked ways,
in the church and the nation
if we are going to experience God's forgiveness and healing.**

America's founding fathers realized this

Congress — Abraham Lincoln, 154 years ago:

“That the President of the United States be requested to appoint a day for humiliation and prayer by the people of the United States... 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 adhesion 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... to assemble in their preferred places of public worship on that day, and there and then to render to the almighty and merciful Ruler of the Universe such homages and such confessions and to offer to Him such supplications as the Congress of the United States have in their aforesaid resolution so solemnly, so earnestly, and so reverently recommended.

Done at the city of Washington. this 7th day of July, A. D. 1864, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-ninth. Abraham Lincoln.”¹

Woodrow Wilson- May 11th, 1918... 100 years ago... **has not happened ONCE since...**

Whereas it has always been the reverent habit of the people of the United States to turn in humble appeal to Almighty God for His guidance in the affairs of their common life;

Now, Therefore, I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Thursday, the thirtieth day of May, a day already freighted with sacred and stimulating memories, a day of public humiliation, prayer and fasting, and do exhort my fellow-citizens of all faiths and creeds to assemble on that day in their several places of worship and there, as well as in their homes, to pray Almighty God that He may forgive our sins and shortcomings as a people and purify our hearts to see and love the truth, to accept and defend all things that are just and right, and to purpose only those righteous acts and judgments which are in conformity with His will; beseeching Him that He will give victory to our armies as they fight for freedom, wisdom to those who take counsel on our behalf in these days of dark struggle and perplexity, and steadfastness to our people to make sacrifice

¹ Abraham Lincoln, *The Papers and Writings of Abraham Lincoln, Volume 2: 1860-1865* (Deutschland, Jazzybee Verlag), 388

to the utmost in support of what is just and true, bringing us at last the peace in which men's hearts can be at rest because it is founded upon mercy, justice and good will.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done in the District of Columbia this eleventh day of May, in the year of our Lord Nineteen hundred and eighteen and of the independence of the United States the one hundred and forty-second. ²

THEN...

...God will hear from heaven, forgive our sin and heal our land!

- God is so good, He gives people and nations the prescription for our forgiveness and healing... He lets us know where our hope lies.

**If we want God to hear, forgive and heal,
we must humble ourselves, pray, seek His face
and turn from our wicked ways.**

Like leaders in time past — we're giving a notice... "SURROUNDED"

**...in 25 days, August 30th 2018, Bridgestone Arena, Nashville TN, 7 pm.
Be there to humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face, turn from wicked ways.
Ask Him to hear, forgive, heal our land.**

Discussion Questions

1. How can we today "walk humbly with God"?
2. How is prayer an extension of humility?
3. Read Psalm 32:8. How can God guide you with His eye?
4. Is there any "wicked way" in you, that only you may know about, that you need to be purified from?
5. Read and discuss Psalm 66:18... this affects how God hears your prayers... or not.
6. See which members of your LifeGroup plan to participate in "Surrounded."

² William J. Federer, *Treasury of Presidential Quotations* (Amerisearch, 2004), 212