

ADRIAN ROGERS

LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



2 CHRONICLES

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

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A Conversation with Abraham Lincoln

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: January 30, 1983

Main Scripture Text: 2 Chronicles 7:14

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

Outline

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Introduction

Pastor Rogers:

The cry of my heart is for revival, real revival—personal revival, family revival, citywide revival, nationwide revival, worldwide revival. God has said, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves...and seek my face, and turn from their wicked [way]; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”* (2 Chronicles 7:14). I believe that we’re seeing in America—honestly and sincerely, I believe we’re seeing—spiritual warfare as we have never seen it. I believe we’re seeing spiritual warfare in our city as we have never seen it. I believe that God is giving to us here in Memphis the foregleams, the flickerings, of a citywide awakening, and I believe, correspondingly, that Satan is letting loose with all of the artillery of hell. And, I believe the battle will be won or lost as we pray.

We have arranged tonight to have to speak to you one of the most distinguished persons that we could possibly bring to this platform, and I am so honored to be able to present to you his heart as to the need of this nation for a spiritual awakening and for genuine revival and the sovereign move of God upon America. I am pleased to present

to you, and I want you to now rise and welcome, the sixteenth president of the United States of America, Mr. Abraham Lincoln.

Fritz Klein (as Abraham Lincoln):

Good evening, my friends, fellow citizens. It is entirely my pleasure to be your guest this evening. Perhaps you'll permit me a few brief words of introduction before I proceed with my prepared message. I suppose you all know who I am now after such a kind introduction. As you know, I was born February 12, 1809, in Harden County, Kentucky. I was born and have mostly remained in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy or popular relations to recommend me. My parents were both born in Virginia of undistinguished families—second families, I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks. God bless my mother. To all that I am or ever hope to be I owe to my angel mother. I remember her prayers: they have always followed me; they have clung to me all of my life.

Now, nobody ever expected me to be President. I'm a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here, as my father's child has. However, the presidency, even to the most experienced politicians, is no bed of roses. No human can fill that station and escape censure. Why, if I were to try to read, much less answer, all the attacks made upon me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. Even to my friend, Judge Douglass, has called me a two-faced man. Well, I'll leave that to my audience. If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one? You know, I think the Lord prefers common-looking people. After all, He made so many of them.

As far as being President goes, well, sometimes I feel like the man who was tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail. And, to the man who asked him how he liked it, he said, "Well, if it weren't for the honor of the thing, I'd rather walk."

My friends, I have endured a great deal of ridicule; I was out much malice, but I have received a great deal of kindness, too—not quite free from ridicule, but I am very sure that if I did not go away from here a wiser man, I shall go away a better man from having learned here what a very poor sort of man I am. Well, my friends, if we could all just know where we are and whither we are tending, perhaps we could then better judge what to do and how to do it. We find ourselves this night in the peaceful possession of the fairest portion of the earth. We, the American people, find ourselves under the government of a system of political institutions conducting more essentially to the ends of civil and religious liberty than any of which the history of former times tells us.

Now, we here, when mounting the stage of existence, found ourselves the legal inheritors of these blessings. We toil not in the acquirement or establishment of them. They are a legacy bequeathed to us by a hardy, brave, patriotic race of ancestors. You see, on the fourth day of July, 1776, the people of a few feeble, oppressed colonies of Great Britain, inhabiting a portion of the Atlantic coast of North America, publicly

declared their national independence and made their appeal to the justice of their cause and to the God of battles for the maintenance of that declaration. Well, my friends, of our political revolution of '76, I think we can all be justly proud. We find a race of men living in that day whom we claim as our fathers and grandfathers, but they were iron men. They fought for the principle that they were contending for. Their all was staked upon it. Their destinies were inseparably linked with it. They were a fortress of strength. They were the pillars of the temple of liberty. But, my friends, what invading foes could never do the silent artillery of time has done. They've all died now. And, now that they have crumbled away, that temple must fall unless we, their descendants, supply those places with other pillars. My friends, in the American Revolutionary War, awesome sacrifices were made by the men engaged in it. There must have been something more than common that those men struggled through—something even more than national independence—because by what they then did, it has followed that the degree of prosperity which we now enjoy has come to us.

My friends, we must inquire what it is that has given us so much prosperity. What constitutes the bulwark of our liberty and independence? It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling seacoasts; it is not the guns of our war steamers, the strength of our gallant, disciplined army. My friends, these are not our reliance against a resumption of tyranny in our land. We have been preserved these many years in peace, prosperity, unprofaned by the foot of an invader, but we've forgotten God. We've forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, which multiplied, enriched, strengthened us. We have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all of these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom or virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we've become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming, preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

My friends, we cannot escape history. Those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord. And, it is fit, becoming, in all people at all times to acknowledge and revere the supreme government of God, to bow in humble submission to His chastisements—and insomuch as we know that by His divine law, nations, as well as individuals, are subject to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justly fear that the oft calamities which now desolate our land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, for our national perverseness and disobedience to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people. We seem to be surrounded this night with adverse circumstances well fitted to try our public faith and individual virtue. My friends, we are going through a great trial—a fiery trial—and this fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope on earth. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. We—even we here—hold the power and bear the responsibility.

Therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do earnestly recommend to all the people—to my fellow citizens—that they unite with me as the Chief Magistrate of the nation, with all loyal and law-abiding citizens, and reverently humble ourselves in the dust and from thence to offer up fervent prayers and supplications. We must employ the compassion, forgiveness, of the Almighty. We must implore Him in whose hands are the destinies of the nations not to destroy us as a people or 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. We must employ Him to lead the whole nation through the paths of repentance, to enlighten the mind of the nations to know and to do His will, humbly believing that our flesh should be maintained as a united people among the family of nations.

My friends, we are not now what we once were. Our republican robe is soiled, trailed in the dust. Let us re-purify it. Let us turn and wash it white in the full conviction that *“the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom”* (Psalm 111:10). Let us remember that sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures, proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord. (Psalm 33:12) And, having chosen our course without guile, with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God and go forward with manly hearts, with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right. Let us turn this government back into the channel in which the Framers of the Constitution originally placed it, that this nation under God might have a new birth of freedom. Oh, my friends, it is worth your every effort.

Pastor Rogers:

He prayed about it and decided he would do it as a means of bringing our nation back to the principles upon which we were founded. Everything that he said tonight—all of the words—were the words of Abraham Lincoln. These are words that Lincoln, in his speeches, and in his letters, and in his own conversation, had said. Mr. Klein has woven them together tonight in a dramatic presentation to remind us of our heritage.

There are those in America today who would like to remove us from that kind of a heritage. They'd like to drive us into humanism, and atheism, and heathenism, and all of these other things that would take away the heritage that is ours. Again, I want to remind you that God's Word has said in 2 Chronicles 7:14—God is speaking (with an ancient promise, but with an eternal principle): *“If my people, [who] are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”* America is sick. An America that was born in 1776, unless she's born again, will join the graveyard of the nations. And, as Mr. Lincoln said, it will not be homicide; it will be suicide. It will be what we have done to ourselves. There is no power without that can

match the danger of the corruption that is within: the horrible massacre of one and a half million babies every year by abortion, the flood tide of filth and pornography, the spiraling crime, the disregard for holy things, the mockery of our Christ and His God on public television—all of these things tell us that we need to be on our faces repenting, lest God come and spite us with His judgment.

I. The People Whom God Has

I want you to notice the people that God has. God says, *“If my people...”* (2 Chronicles 7:14). So many times we say, “Oh, if only Hollywood would clean up,” or, “If only Congress would get right,” or, “If only the Supreme Court would change,” but God says, *“If my people...[will] humble themselves, and pray...”* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Oh, we say, “God, if only You would do something,” as though we’re trying to persuade God to bless us. Ladies and gentlemen, it is not our job to persuade God to bless us but to permit God to bless us. We’re saying, “If only God...”, but God is saying, *“If my people”—“if my people...”* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Ladies and gentlemen, the fault in America is not in Washington; it is in this room. We’re the ones that God is looking to. There is no power that can withstand the onslaughts of a people who can pray, who will believe God. The people God has—that’s us.

II. The Pride That God Hates

But, notice the pride that God hates. God says, *“If my people, [who] are called by my name, shall humble themselves...”* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Now, sometimes, erroneously, we pray, “Lord, humble us.” Now, He can do that, but when He does it, it’s too late. God knows how to humble us; God has been humbling us. But, that’s not what God says that we’re to do. We’re not to wait for Him to humble us; we are to fall on our faces in repentance and faith. We are to humble ourselves.

God hates the sin of pride. In the Book of Proverbs, the Bible says, *“These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him”* (Proverbs 6:16), and number one on God’s list is *“a proud look”* (Proverbs 6:17). The Bible says, *“God resisteth the proud, but [He] giveth grace [to] the humble”* (James 4:6). Pride is an abominable sin. It is the sin that caused the fall of the human race. It’s the sin that has broken many homes. It’s the sin that has decimated many a church. It’s the sin that keeps God from answering our prayer and holding back revival. The problem with so many of us is that we’re trying to save face when we need to lose face. The pride God hates: *“If my people, [who] are called by my name, shall humble themselves...”* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

III. The Prayer That God Hears

I want you to notice the prayer that God hears. God says, *“If my people, which are*

called by my name, shall humble themselves...and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways..." (2 Chronicles 7:14). What is the prayer that God hears? He tells us two things about that prayer.

A. **The Prayer That Seeks God's Face**

First of all, it's the prayer that seeks God's face. Do you know what revival is? It is the smile of God. Do you know what lack of revival is? Is when God turns away His face from us. The Bible says, *"Your iniquities...have hid his face from you"* (Isaiah 59:2). Now, we're to seek His face. We're to come to God and say, "God, cause Your face to shine upon us."

But, do you know why we don't get our prayers answered? Very few people seek the face of God. Do you know what people seek? The hand of God. "God, do something. O God, give us something. God, keep us from something." And, we are seeking God's hand rather than God's face. We're wanting what God can do rather than wanting God. When's the last time you just sought the face of God—not for the Church's sake, not for America's sake, not for reputation's sake, but for His great name's sake, to give Him glory, to have the smile of God?

B. **The Prayer That Turns from Its Wicked Way**

The prayer that God hears is the prayer that seeks God's face and the prayer that turns from its wicked way. Clearly and simply, one reason that our prayers are not answered is that we have never repented. We want God to bless America. There's not a man in this world who would not say, "God, bless America." I suppose even an atheist whimsically and cynically would say, "Yes, we'd be glad to have some more blessings." The agnostics, the perverts, and all the rest of it want blessings. Everybody likes to have a good time. Everybody likes to have it easy. Everybody likes to have prosperity. But, you see, what we're doing is just saying, "Now Lord, bless us anyhow. We're not going to repent. We're not going to turn from our wicked way. But God, we sure would appreciate it if You'd bless us." I want to tell you something, friend: *a prayer with unconfessed sin is a religious farce.*

And, not only will God not hear it; it makes Him angry. The Bible says in the Book of Psalms, *"O LORD...how long wilt thou be angry [at] the prayers of thy people?"* (Psalm 80:4). Have you ever thought about that—prayer that angers God? Do you remember after Israel was defeated that Joshua came and he laid on his face before God? And, he said, "God, what are You doing? Lord, did You bring us out here to perish? Where are Your promises, Lord? Why did You fail us, Lord?" And, God said to Joshua, "Joshua, get up off your face. Israel has sinned." (Joshua 7:10–11) Now, what was God saying? God was saying, "Joshua, it will do you no good whatsoever to lie there on your face before Me and cry out and ask God to bless this people as long as there is sin in the

camp that you, as the commander in chief, have not dealt with. Purge out the sin; then I'll hear your prayer, forgive your land, and heal...forgive your sin and heal your land." The promise that God honors is this: "I will forgive your sin. I will heal your land."

Conclusion

I believe—I believe—that God is turning the smile of His face upon our congregation. I do not presume to say that we're finished repenting; I do not presume to say that we have arrived. But, I'm feeling in my heart—and trust God it is not just positive thinking, but I am feeling—that we are moving into an era of revival. Jack Taylor told me on the phone, "Adrian, God has told me the same thing, and I'm going around everywhere I go and announcing it: it's coming—it's coming." I've seen what the devil has been trying to do in our city; I've seen what the devil has been trying to do across our land. But, I've seen people like Mr. Klein—Frederick Klein—who was here at this platform. I've seen other preachers, men of God—pure, clean, passionate—preaching the Word of God. I've seen deacons and Christians on their face before God, giving their money, giving their love, giving their prayers, believing God. And, I believe that God's going to hear those prayers. And, I just want to announce revival to you in our church, and in our city, and, please God, in our nation, and in our world. And, we just want to take the hands of faith and take the promise of God and say, "Lord, You said it, and we're Your people. And, we're going to humble ourselves, and we're going to seek Your face. And, we're going to turn from our wicked ways, and Lord, You're going to hear from heaven. And, You're going to forgive our sin, and You, Lord, are going to heal our land." I, for one, am still a glowing optimist, for as long as there's a God in heaven, there is hope for America. But, it doesn't lie in Washington. Right here is where it lies.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we pray sincerely, O God, that You would help us to be, as individuals, prayer warriors—to seek Your face. Lord, we've had enough sermons, enough rhetoric, enough songs, enough programs, enough buildings, enough plans. We've spent enough money, and all of these have come to no avail. Lord, we cast ourselves upon You. Lord God, work in my own heart as the pastor of this people that I might, Lord, be clean and pure before Thee, your man. God, take our staff—O God, give us a baptism of holy fire. God, purge us from our sins. Lord, bind us together in a covenant and a fellowship of love. Take these, our deacon brethren, Lord—help them and their wives to be clean, yielded, pliable vessels. Take, Lord, our workers, our teachers, our leadership, our committee persons—O God, make them clean and pure. Take this people, Lord, these people in this place, as, Lord, as we bow our heads before You, and Lord, make us tonight seriously concerned about revival. For we pray in Jesus's wonderful name. Amen.

America Needs Healing

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: July 1, 1998

Main Scripture Text: 2 Chronicles 7:14

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

Outline

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- I. The People God Has
- II. The Pride God Hates
- III. The Prayer God Hears
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Introduction

Second Chronicles 7:14: *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

And I want to tell you that America needs healing. I could give you many, many examples of that, but two come to my mind right away.

A senator from Mississippi said that he felt that homosexuality was a sin. And, as a result of that, that senator himself has been lambasted, he's been criticized, he has been looked down upon, he's been called arrogant, he has been called stupid, he's been called ignorant for saying what the Bible says is an abomination is a sin.

Let me tell you where we've come to in America today. We have come in America to the place where the sin is to call sin sin. The sin in the hearts and minds of people today is to call sin sin. And the worse thing that you could be called today would be a bigot, intolerant. If you preach against sin, you're called “full of hate.” If you preach against abortion, you're saying that you are interfering with peoples' personal lives, trying to force your views on other people, mingling religion and politics. If you get involved in the civic life, you will be told to stay out, you have no right because you are a Christian; and if you believe the Bible, you are called a fundamentalist—in their mind, too much fun, too much damn, and not enough mental. We're looked on, and the Church of the Lord

Jesus Christ today has very little respect. And the reason is, we've brought it upon ourselves because we are savorless salt, and Jesus said, "If salt has lost its savor, it's good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men" (Matthew 5:13).

Now, I would say that the Church of the Lord Jesus is being trodden under the feet of men. We have lost respect in the eyes of the world. Even those who did not agree with the Church, by and large, respected the Church for her stand for morality. But I believe that more than anything else today, a sign that America is so sick is this: that there is now opening on Broadway in New York a play that depicts Jesus Christ as a homosexual and having sexual liaison with His apostles or disciples, and in a theater that, in the bottom line, the whole thing is, in many ways, being funded by tax money. And there are those who are saying that, if we say anything against it, we somehow don't believe in freedom of speech. These people talk about freedom of speech as though they fought at Valley Forge. And we, as a nation, are sick. I mean, we are sick, and we are ripe for the judgment of God.

And I could give you a litany of things. For further information, just go watch your television as people titillate themselves and talk and discuss whether or not the President of the United States had perverted sex with a young intern—a 50-something-year-old man and a young 20-something-year-old girl. And listen to the number of people who say, "Well, what difference does that make? And, if he lied about it, well, who wouldn't lie about sex?" As if, you see, I'm not saying that he is guilty or not guilty. I don't know. I have a strong opinion. I don't know, but that's not our problem. Our problem is that we have a nation that says, "So what?" That's the problem—that's the problem. The problem is not in the White House. That's only a thermometer. If these things be true of the infection that is in our national politics, we are in serious trouble.

Now, whether you believe that or not, you may think that I'm a calamity howler, but I have a deep foreboding in my heart for what is going to happen to America. And we may be much closer than we realize to the judgment of God. And the judgment of God may come in ways that we dare not suspect or would not have dreamt of. It may come with great cataclysm. It may come much sooner.

Now, there are several things I want you to notice in this text. I want to give you the text again. I want you to listen to it: *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."*

Now, I know that this was not a promise given to America; it was a promise given to Israel. But I would say that this is certainly true about anything that was said to Israel of old. Find the principle that is there, and I think you're going to find out that, when you look at something that's in the Old Testament that applied to the nation Israel, you have to ask yourself, what did it mean then? You have to ask yourself, how does it apply

now? And then, you have to ask yourself, how does it apply to me personally?

I. The People God Has

Now, there are great principles in this text, and I believe that we're not doing violence to the text to make these principles apply to us right now. The very first thing I want you to notice and write down is, the people God has—the people God has. God says, *"If my people..."* Now, we get in this problem, we say, "Well, if only television would clean up, if only Planned Parenthood would do an about-face, if only the pornographers would quit their nefarious business, if only the drug pushers were incarcerated, if only the liquor dealers and the gamblers..." And we say, "If they would do right, everything would be all right." But God doesn't say that. God says, *"If my people..."* We have put the *if* in the wrong place.

Now, folks, God relieved my heart a while back when I was all upset about things that are happening in national politics, and God spoke to me—not audibly, but God spoke to me. He said, "Adrian, when I send revival, I'm not going to route it through Washington." I mean, somehow we've gotten the idea, if we could get our man in the White House, our people in the Congress, our judges on the bench, that that would bring revival. It would not—it would not. Only God can bring revival, and when God brings revival, He's not going to bring it through the political process. The political process will be changed by revival, and will only reflect revival; it can never bring revival. God says, *"If my people..."* That's the first thing I want you to see. Revival begins not in the State House, the White House, but in the church house, and in my house, and in your house.

II. The Pride God Hates

Now, here's the second thing I want you to see: not only the people that God has, but the pride that God hates—the pride that God hates. God says, *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall"*—do what?—*"humble themselves."* God hates pride.

In the Book of Proverbs, God lists six things that He hates, *"yea, seven are an abomination unto him"* (Proverbs 6:16). Do you know what number one on God's hate parade is? Pride. Number one. Above all things, God hates pride. It was pride that made the devil the devil. It was pride that corrupted the human race. Why do you think that Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden and ate the forbidden fruit? Do you think she wanted another piece of fruit to eat? I mean, she was in a garden that was filled with fruit. That wasn't a piece of fruit. It was Satan's lie to her, who said to her, "If you will eat, you will be as God" (Genesis 3:5). That's pride.

Every time you see a hospital, you can say, "Pride did this." Every time you see an insane asylum, you could say, "Pride did this." Every time you read of a murder, you can

say, “Pride did this.” Every time you read of rape, you can say, “Pride did this.” Every time you read of lust or a broken home, pride. Because, had there been no pride, there would have been no sin. Had there been no sin, there would have been none of these other things. Pride is the route of all sin. It is the mother sin. It is the father sin. It is monstrous and hideous. And in America today, we reek with pride and humanistic haughtiness. We think that we know how to do things. We worship at the shrine of our computers, and sing praises to the Dow Jones. Now, this verse says God’s people are to humble themselves.

I hear people say, “Lord, make us humble.” Very frankly, I don’t pray that prayer. I don’t want God to humble me, because I think He has ways of doing it that I’ll not enjoy. I don’t want God to humble me, but I do want to be humble. But I have a choice to humble myself before God. The Bible says, “If we would judge ourselves, we’d not be judged, that we might be condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:31–32). We’re to humble ourselves.

Do you know the problem with many of us is we’re trying to save face when that’s the thing we need to lose? We don’t want to confess our sins. Many of us dress up, come to church, sit in church, sing, smile—haughty, unbent, unbroken. I—all of us are guilty of a certain amount of self-preservation and lack of genuine humility before God. And God has been teaching me in my own life—and I certainly don’t hold myself up as an example in that sense—but I will confess to you that God has been showing me in my prayer that I literally need not to talk about humility, or even to say, “God, I humble myself,” but to humble myself. And I can’t explain that, but there is a time when we just need to break ourselves, to bend ourselves, and to truly, sincerely humble ourselves before God. And I’ll tell you why.

The apostle James has said, in James chapter 4, verse 6—listen to this—the Bible says, *“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble”* (James 4:6). Now, that’s very interesting. God resists the proud. How would you like to have God as an adversary? I mean, how would you like to have not only God failing to come to your side as an aid to help you, but how would you like for God to say, “That’s it; stop”? How would you like for God to literally resist you? I’ll tell a good way to do it. Just be full of pride. *“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”* And grace is the desire and the ability to do the will of God. It is grace that puts that desire into your heart, and it is grace that gives you the ability to fulfill that desire. And God hates pride. Six things are an abomination unto him; yea, seven. *“Six things doth [God] hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him”* (Proverbs 6:16). Number one, according to Proverbs 6, is a proud look.

III. The Prayer God Hears

The people God has. The pride God hates. The prayer God hears. Look at it again: *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways...”* *“Seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways”* is a description of the prayer that God hears.

Now, what is the prayer that God hears? God doesn't hear every prayer. Prayer is not enough. As a matter of fact, sometimes we think that we can use prayer as an excuse for repentance. Somehow we think that we can use prayer as a smokescreen in which to hide our sin. Did you know that prayer without repentance is dangerous? Did you know that infuriates God? Did you know that God literally resists that kind of prayer, that God hates that prayer? It makes God angry.

Psalm 80 and verse 4—listen to it: *“O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?”* (Psalm 80:4). It would be better not to pray than to pray and make God angry. I mean, prayer that does not seek God's face and turn from its wicked way, not only is it ineffectual; it angers God. It stirs up. It is an affront to a holy God. Now, prayer that seeks His face—most of us are seeking God's hand, not God's face.

Do you know what revival is? It's when God turns His face toward us. Revival is the smile of God. But many times, we're saying, “O God, do something; O God, change the situation in Washington; O God, stop this; O God, stop the murder of our children in schools; stop, dear God, the debauching of our young girls, the teenage pregnancies; O God, do something.” What we want is God's hand, but what we need is God's face. We're asking God to do something. Friend, has it dawned on you that He is already doing something?

What's He doing? He's judging us. You say, “Will God judge America?” God is judging America. I mean, we're under judgment. Pick up the newspaper; read, look, see the filth, the crime, the slime, the pillage, the tears. Will rivers of blood and oceans of tears—is that what it's going to take? How is God judging America? I'll tell you how God is judging America. He's just taking down the hedge. Did you know that Satan is out there just trying to get in? And the only reason that we have the modicum of peace that we have right now is that God has still not completely removed the hedge. If God removes the hedge around America, hell will have a holiday. Just as Satan wanted to get at Job, Satan is going to try to get at this nation, this church, and your home. And we need to seek God's face. And the way we seek God's face is to turn from our wicked ways, because the Bible says our iniquities have hidden His face from you (Isaiah 64:7). The Bible says that God is *“of purer eyes than to behold iniquity”* (Habakkuk 1:13). So, how do you seek God's face? You turn from your wicked ways.

You see, so many of us want God to bless us, but our prayer is, “God bless us,

anyhow. We're not going to repent. We're not going to get right with You, but God, You're a loving God. Bless us, anyhow." God sent me here to tell you He's not going to bless us, anyhow. Prayer is not a smokescreen we can hide our sin in. When Israel came against little Ai, after they had conquered mighty Jericho, they were ignominiously defeated. Joshua went to a prayer meeting like we're going to do in just a few moments, got on his face before God, and prayed. And God said to Joshua, "Joshua, why are you lying there upon your face? Get up! Israel has sinned" (Joshua 7:10–11). What God was saying is, "Look, Joshua, don't be down there, wallowing in the ground with your face in the ground, crying out to Me when there's sin that needs to be put right in the camp. Israel has sinned." And until Joshua made it right, until that sin was purged out, God's face was turned away from His people. And when God's face was turned away from His people, there was a defeat.

Now, here's the last thing I want to talk about before we pray tonight. There's the people God has—that's us: *"If my people..."* There's the pride that God hates: *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves..."* There's the prayer that God hears: if they will *"humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways..."*

IV. The Promise God Honors

Here's the last thing: the promise God honors. What is the promise that God honors? *"Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."* Now, notice, folks, that God's *thens* are in the right place: "then I will hear from heaven," "then I will forgive their sin," "then I will heal their land." We will be heard. We will be forgiven. And we will be healed.

Conclusion

Now, I want to say this: that our prayers are not going to be heard until we truly seek God's face. I do have a motive. I want us to have revival for America's sake, but that's not a high enough motive. I want us to have revival for my grandchildren's sake, but that's still not a high enough motive. Until we are so consumed with the glory of God, we're not going to get our prayers answered. Not for America's sake, not for our family's sake—though those things are important—but for Jesus' sake—when we pray, for the will of God, for Jesus' sake. Peter Marshall, Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, said this: "May our freedom be seen not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right. May it ever be understood that our liberty is under God and can be found nowhere else." And then, this was the prayer he made: "To the extent that America honors Thee, wilt Thou bless America and keep her true, as Thou hast made her free; and make her good, as Thou hast made her rich."

I think the most patriotic thing that we can do on the threshold of the anniversary of the birthday of our nation is to sing it, and say it:

*All to Jesus, I surrender;
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.*
—JUDSON W. VAN DEWENTER

It's Prayer Time in America

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: July 04, 2004

Main Scripture Text: 2 Chronicles 7:14

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

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Introduction

Would you take your Bibles this morning and open to 2 Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14? You will recognize that verse as a timeworn verse. We've heard it over and over again, but we must, in these days, revisit that verse. I wonder if the American Dream that was placed into the bosom of our fathers will become a national nightmare. I ask this question this way: Is it too late for America? Have we already crossed the place—the state—of no return? I submit to you that we have not.

Second Chronicles 7 and verse 14—here is an ancient promise. Obviously, it was given to Israel, but the Bible says of Israel, *"All these things happened unto them for examples [to us]"* (1 Corinthians 10:11). Here's what God says: *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). This wonderful nation, born in 1776, must be born again, or it will join the graveyard of the nations. God says in Jeremiah 10, verse 10: *"at*

his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation” (Jeremiah 10:10).

Now, God, I’m certain, is indignant with America. We have insulted the Almighty, and we are ready for judgment; but we need mercy. There was a time in America, some of you can remember, when pregnancy outside of marriage was a scandal; when homosexuality was a sin; when pornography was a moral sickness; when marriage was sacred and living together without marriage was a disgrace; when child abuse was almost never heard of; when women (ladies) did not smoke or curse; when we did not have to lock our houses and our automobiles; when drugs were something you got at the drugstore; when alcoholism was considered a sin, not a disease; when Eastern religions were still in the East, and in public schools our students were allowed to pray, and the Ten Commandments were posted on the walls in public schools, where creation could be taught as an answer to godless evolution. In America, I can remember a time when high school students could read their diplomas, the Ten Commandments were still legal, and humanism—godless humanism—was considered a curse.

We have become a proud nation, wallowing in materialism and rotting in sin, in the pollution, or in the search for what we call “pleasure” and “freedom.” But, America has become the greatest moral polluter of the world with the films that we’re sending overseas, and that’s what people think of when they think of America. And, prophets of God are shunned and laughed at today. When the message that I’m going to preach this morning will be preached, if a pundit—a newspaper reporter—were here, he would call that “extreme rightwing rhetoric.” But friend, it is the Word of God. The matter is not Right or Left; the matter is right or wrong. And, God’s Word is right.

Now, there is hope for America, and I don’t stand before you this morning as a pessimist, but as a glowing optimist. But, I’ll tell you this much: America must turn to God, or she will die. Now, I want us to look at this verse of Scripture again this morning, and I have picked four truths out of this verse: *“If my people...”* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

I. The People God Has

First of all, I want you to see what I’m going to call “the people God has”—“the people God has.” God says, *“If my people...”* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Now, this whole promise that I’m about to give to you is predicated on what God’s people do. Now, so many times, we say, “Oh, if only Hollywood would... Oh, if only the government would... If only the pornographers would... If only the abortionist would...” But, God does not look to them. Folks, God is looking at us. He’s looking to you. Are you one of His people? Oh, you are? Then stop putting the blame on somebody else. Listen to me: if America falls and fails, it will be our fault.

Well, you say, “Well, if only God would...” No, we’re not waiting on God. Do you

think God is to blame for the mess that we're in? Do you think that the reason we're in the state that we're in is because God has been indifferent? Ladies and gentlemen, it is not our duty to persuade God to send revival; we must permit Him to do so. And, it begins at the house of God. *"If my people..."* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

A woman got involved in politics—and it's all right to be involved in politics—but she was so enthusiastic, she told her husband, "It looks like we're going to sweep the state." He said, "I suggest you start at the back door." And, the Church must start at the back door. The Bible says in 1 Peter 4:17: *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."* I'm telling you again that the hope of America is not in the White House. It's not in the State House. It's not in the schoolhouse. It is in God's house. That's the first thing in this promise: the people—the people—God has.

II. The Pride God Hates

Now, secondly, I want you to notice the pride God hates. He says, *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). What is wrong with America? We reek with pride. We strut in the face of God. And, God cannot bless you as an individual, God cannot bless this church, God cannot bless our nation when we have such pride. Pride is the root of all kinds of evil. We, today, in America, are filled with humanistic haughtiness, and the Bible says we're to *"humble [ourselves]"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Have you ever prayed, "God, make us humble"? Don't do that. He can—He can—bring us to humiliation, and He may. But, how much better if we would humble ourselves!

The Bible says we're to *"humble [ourselves]"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). James 4, verse 6: *"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble"* (James 4:6). Think about that: God resisting you; God resisting America; God setting Himself in battle array against us. *"God resisteth the proud"*—but now, listen—*"[He gives] grace [to] the humble"* (James 4:6). What America needs is not judgment, but grace. Do you know what grace is? Grace is both the desire and the ability to do the will of God. God puts the desire in your heart. That is grace. God gives you the strength to live as you ought to live. But, *"God [resists] the proud...[He gives] grace [to] the humble"* (James 4:6).

III. The Prayer God Hears

Let's move to the third thing in this promise—not only the people God has, not only the pride that God hates, but the prayer God hears. God doesn't hear every prayer. God puts some qualifications on His prayers. God says if we will *"pray, and seek [His] face, and turn from [our] wicked ways"* (2 Chronicles 7:14)... The prayer that God hears is the prayer that seeks God's face. You know what is wrong in America? We're not seeking

the face of God; we're seeking the hand of God. Revival is when God has not turned His back on us, when God can smile upon us, when God can find favor in us, when God can turn His countenance to us. Do you think that God can smile at America today? No. God says we need to seek His face (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Do you know what most Americans are seeking? Not God's face—they're seeking God's hand, and they say, "O God, do something." Beloved, can't you see that God is doing something? God is judging this city; God is judging this nation. And, we need to seek the hand of—not the hand of God, but the face of God. "Well," you say, "God is our only hope." Well, that is true, but I want to tell you something else: this may shock you, but God is our biggest threat. I'm not as much afraid of what some terrorist nation may do to America as I am as to what God may do to America. God is a God of vengeance, and God will judge us. And so, the Bible says we're to seek His face and we are to turn from our wicked ways (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Thus far, the message has been fairly simple, and thus far you say, "Well, I believe that I can do that." But now, listen to this: we are turn from our wicked way. *Prayer for revival without repentance is a religious farce*. So many of us have the idea that God's going to bless us. Now, we're not going to turn from our sin, but we're going to sing "God Bless America" while we're killing little babies. We're going to sing "God Bless America" when sodomy struts down main streets with pride. We're going to sing "God Bless America" when He is cursed and maligned and when He cannot be mentioned in our public concourse. Why should God bless America? He will not unless we turn from our wicked way.

Actually, to pray without repentance angers God. Listen to this verse—Psalm 80, verse 4: "*O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?*" (Psalm 80:4). Not only does God not hear the prayer; it angers God. "How long, O LORD will You be angry at the prayer of Thy people?" (Psalm 80:4).

There was a time when the Israelites had crossed Jordan. There were battles to be fought. There was mighty Jericho. And, Joshua led the children of Israel against Jericho, and the walls came a' tumbling down—you remember that. And then, they, with their pride, went against another little city, Ai. Two letters in the name—a small city, a small name. But, Israel was ignominiously defeated, and they ran like whipped puppies from the face and the army of Ai. Joshua, the leader, fell on his face and said, "O God, why have You failed us? O God, why have we been defeated?" (Joshua 7:6–7). And, God said to Joshua, "Joshua, get up off your face. Israel hath sinned" (Joshua 7:10–11). What's He saying to Joshua? "Joshua, you can pray all you want, but until you deal with repentance, prayer is not some sort of a smokescreen in which you can hide your pride and your sin. You've got to repent."

Now, *repentance* is a shopworn term, also. Let me tell you what repentance is:

friend, repentance... And, by the way, the word is used 969 times in the Bible. The first message that Jesus gave when He came preaching was, “*Repent*” (Matthew 3:2). The last message that Jesus gave from Heaven to the Church was to repent (Revelation 2:16). The message that God is giving to you today is, “Repent.” God has said in Luke 13:3: “*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*”

A. **Repentance Is More Than Conviction of Sin**

Now, what is repentance? Repentance is more than a conviction of sin. You may be, today, living in sin. This message may have convicted you. When I talk about living together without the benefit of marriage, you may have felt a little stab in your heart because that’s what you’re doing. But, repentance is more than conviction of sin. I read in the Bible where Paul preached to a man named Felix. And, the Bible teaches that Felix trembled like a leaf in a storm. Why did he tremble? Because he was convicted of sin. Acts chapter 24, verse 25: “*And as he*”—that is, “Paul”—“*reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered*”—listen to this—“*Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*” (Acts 24:25). But, history tells us that he never did call. He was convicted of sin, but he would not repent.

B. **Repentance Is More Than Confession of Sin**

Repentance is more than confession of sin. You say, “If I confess my sin, have I repented?” No, you’ve not. If that’s all there is to it, Pharaoh confessed his sin. Listen to this verse in Exodus chapter 9, verse 23. You remember that God sent plagues to Egypt to convict Pharaoh, that he might turn from his sin. And, the Bible says in Exodus chapter 9, verse 23: “*And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt*” (Exodus 9:23). Now, what happened when the fire and the hail came, when the lightning was running on the ground? Pharaoh confessed his sin. Exodus 9, verse 27: “*And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned*” (Exodus 9:27). But, what happened when the storm died? *The conviction that was born in the storm died in the calm.*

I can remember when Desert Storm—that mighty battle there with Iraq—I can remember when it was taking place, and God’s people that Sunday came to church. It seemed like there was 25% more of us in church. And, we were saying, “O God, have mercy.” But, I’m telling you, since Desert Storm, America has descended down, down, down, down, and almost reached the bottom of the garbage pail. *The repentance that was born in the storm died in the calm.* Repentance is more than conviction of sin. Repentance is more than confession of sin.

C. Repentance Is More Than Contrition for Sin

And, repentance is more than contrition—contrition—for sin. Tears may accompany repentance, but tears are not repentance. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 10 that *“godly sorrow worketh repentance”* (2 Corinthians 7:10). I’m not asking today, are you sorry for your sin? I’m asking today, will you turn from your sin?

D. Repentance Is a Wholehearted Change

What is repentance? God says we are turn—to turn—get that word—to *turn*—from our wicked way (2 Chronicles 7:14). A repentance is a turning. The word literally means “a change of mind.” Now, it is both negative and positive: we turn from our wicked way; we seek the face of God. Acts 20, verse 21: *“Testifying both to the Jews, and...to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Acts 20:21). Repentance and faith are the heads and tails of getting right with God: we seek God’s face; we turn from our wicked way.

Repentance is a heart change, and repentance—listen to this now—is a wholehearted change. Do you have the idea that you can get right with God in one area without getting right in every area? Do you think you can do it by gradualism? You say, “Well, now Lord, I’ve dealt with my cursing. Now, tomorrow I’m going to deal with my adultery.” No! It is a change—it is a wholehearted change—where you say, “Once and for all, now and forever, I’m sick of my sin; I’m tired of my sin, and I turn.” Listen to Ezekiel chapter 14 and verse 6: *“Therefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces”—*listen—*“from all”—all—“your abominations”* (Ezekiel 14:6). That’s what repentance is: it is a heart change, and it is a wholehearted change.

Don’t be like the little girl who prayed, “Lord, make me good—just good enough not to get a spanking.” Now, that’s the way some are here. You say, “Now, if I could just repent of this thing or that thing, then perhaps God would bless America.” Congregation, not only must we be broken over our sins; we must be broken from our sins. Now, look at the man in the pulpit. I am not much. I’m weak. I am made of clay, but I can testify to you there is no un-confessed, un-repent-ed-of sin in my life. You say, “Well, aren’t you wonderful!” No, that is the normal Christian life—the normal Christian life. Not a mother’s child in this building ought to go out without saying, “There is no un-confessed, un-repent-ed-of sin in my life.”

Repentance is a heart change; it is a wholehearted change. And, Jesus said, *“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:3; Luke 13:5). America will perish unless she repents. “Well,” you say, “what about the pornographer? He needs to repent. What about the dope dealer? He needs to repent.” No, God says, *“If my people”—“if my people”* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Can you image what would happen if, in America today, if our churches, from sea to shining sea, had a man of God—each one of them in the pulpit opening the Book of God with the Spirit of God, preaching the Christ of God to the people of God, and calling America to repentance? There's little that would not be changed in America almost overnight if that would happen.

"If my people, [who] are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray" (2 Chronicles 7:14). And, by the way, the reason we don't pray is because we reek with pride. Did you know that pride is number one on God's hate parade? *"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him"* (Proverbs 6:16). And, the number one thing in the list is *"a proud look"*—*"a proud look"* (Proverbs 6:17). Some people can strut sitting down. *"A proud look"* (Proverbs 6:17)—number one. Pride is behind every sin. It was pride that made the devil the devil. And, if you're not willing to humble yourselves, you're not going to get very far with God.

IV. The Promise God Honors

Listen, the people God has, the pride God hates, the prayer God hears. Now, here's the good part—the promise God honors—the promise God honors. *"If my people, [who] are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and turn from their wicked ways"*—here's the promise—*"then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Now, don't you tell me it's too late for America. The God that sent revival to England in the 16th Century, the God who sent revival on Mount Carmel, the God who sent revival to Nineveh, the God who sent revival to Jerusalem—that God is alive and well. And, I'm telling you that God will hear from Heaven because He rules in the heavens.

May I tell you that God is not a Republican and God is not a Democrat? He is King—He is King; He is Lord. Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Libertarians, and whatever need to bow before Him. And God—the mighty God who rules from the heavens—God *"will hear from heaven... [He] will forgive their sin"* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

I want to remind you of something I've already said in this message: God would rather pardon than judge. Now, God is angry at our sins, but He is full of compassion; He is full of mercy. And, God will—God will, God will—forgive our sins. God will forgive America. "Well," you say, "Pastor, what about the sins of all these wicked people? We can't—we can't—deal with that." That's right. He's not talking about the sins of all these wicked people: the liquor dealers, and Hollywood, and the pornographer, and the drug pusher. God is talking to His people. God says, *"If my people"*—*"if my people"*—*"[will] humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin"*—now, watch it—*"and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

When the Church gets right, when we begin to do what we ought to do, then we'll begin to deal with all of these other problems. Stop pointing fingers. Bow the knee before God. Get right with God. Don't worry about the man to your right or the man to your left. You want a revival? Draw a circle on the floor. Get inside that circle and say, "God, begin a revival inside this circle." "I am only one. I cannot do everything; but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything; I will not refuse to do the something that I can do" (Edward Everett Hale). And, what I can do and ought to do—that, by the grace of God, I will do. *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and [I] will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

I don't know whether we've crossed the threshold or not—whether we've crossed God's deadline or not. But, I'm telling you, if there were ever a time that we need to repent, this is the time, this is the day, this is the age. Don't put it off until tomorrow in your own personal life. Tomorrow you will only have more sin to repent of and less time to repent in—and more sin to repent of. You say, "Well, I'm saved." Well, I'm saved, too. When I was saved, I repented of my sin and I turned to the Lord Jesus Christ. But, I'm going to tell you something: I've done far more repenting after I got saved than I did when I got saved. And, the reason for that is I've learned far more about God and I have learned far more about me. I remind you again that the hope of America is not in the White House, not in the schoolhouse, not in the courthouse, but in the church house.

Now, we sing, and we mean it: "God Bless America." But, do you know what we need to do? What America needs to do is bless God—bless God. May we, as blood-bought Christians, inheritors of a great legacy, say, "O God, we want to bless You. Make this nation a blessing to Heaven."

Conclusion

Bow your heads in prayer. Heads are bowed; eyes are closed. And, would you take this text this morning and personalize it? Don't think about anybody else. Don't think about the pastor. Don't think about the pornographer. Don't think about Hollywood. Don't think about the democrats, the republicans. Don't think about the terrorists. Think about you. Beloved, would you get your heart right with God today? Say, "O God, if there is any unconfessed, un-repent-of sin in my heart and in my life, let me know it. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts. And, lead me in the way everlasting." Pray. Seek God's face. I'm going to wait just a moment while you do it.

Now, Heavenly Father, in this little, short time, we've said, "Lord, we want to be clean," and I'm grateful for this little time. But God, help us to set our hearts to seek You—Lord, not just for a few moments on Sunday morning, but God, it would be our lifestyle, that, Lord, we will live by repentance and faith. O God, have mercy upon

America and may America bless God. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Now, look up here. The most patriotic thing that you can do is not to sing “God Bless America” or to say, “America, my country, right or wrong.” The most patriotic thing you can do—the wisest thing you can do—is to get your heart right with God—to be saved. Now, I know that most of the people here this morning are confessing, professing Christians, but there are people here today who need the Lord Jesus. You need to be saved. And, I have wonderful news for you: God will save you, and God will keep you saved if you trust Him. So many times, we say, “Well, you know, if I go down there and give my heart to Jesus Christ, I may not be able to live it.” Well, you won’t be able to live it. I’m not able to live it. The God in you will live it through you and for you. You just give all you know of you to all you know of Him, and I promise you on the authority of the Word of God He will save you. To be saved means that every sin is forgiven. Christ dwells in your heart. Heaven is your home. He will save you instantaneously just like that. He will keep you eternally. He will never, never, never leave or forsake you.

Now, this morning, if I could give my heart to Jesus on your behalf, I would, but I cannot. I’ve preached the best I know how. But, God sent me to tell you that He loves you. He wants to save you. He wants to give you a new heart, a new hope, and new home, if you’ll trust Him. Now, the devil will begin to argue against this decision right now. The devil will say you’re not good enough, you don’t understand enough, the crowd is too big, or you’ll make a fool of yourself, or you’ll not be able to live it. He’ll give you all of these excuses. You listen to me: they are lies—they’re lies. Jesus says, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and [I’ll] give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28). Come to Jesus. Believe that He died on the cross for your sins. Believe that He is raised again to be proven the Son of God. Believe that He can save you, and wants to save you, and will save you if you’ll trust Him.

Now, what we’re going to do in just a moment is to sing an invitational hymn. I’m going to ask the ministers of our church to stand at the head of each of these aisles all the way across the front to welcome those of you who’ll be coming forward from the floor. Up in the balcony, there will be a minister standing under that banner there in the corner that says, “Messiah,” or this one over here that says, “Redeemer.” And, those of you who will be making decisions, you just move that way. “Now, Pastor Rogers, I’ve never done that. What do you do when you go down there?” Well, there’ll be a minister waiting to receive you, and you can say something like this: “I’m trusting Jesus,” or, “I’m giving my heart to Jesus.” I think he’ll know what you mean. Use your own words, if you wish. “Well Pastor, what will we do then?” We’ll take an open Bible, give you some scripture to stand on, make certain that you understand, and we’ll do this quietly and courteously. Nobody’s here to bully your. Nobody’s here to manipulate you. But, we’ll show you from the Word of God one more time how to know, and then we’ll seal it in

prayer. And, you can go home celebrating Independence Day with dependence upon God. Now, don't look around when we stand and sing to see what someone else is going to do. You come if no one else does. You come if you're the only one. Try to be the first one to step out and say "yes" to Jesus Christ.

Others of you—now, let me talk to those—some are saved, but you're not a member of Bellevue. God wants every believer to be a member of a local New Testament church—not with membership somewhere else, but where you live. Now, not everyone should be a member of Bellevue Baptist Church, obviously. There are many wonderful churches. But, if this is where you worship, where God speaks to your heart, where you're learning the Word of God, perhaps this is the place that God wants you to be a member. So, I'm going to ask you also, when these others are coming to say, "I'm trusting Jesus," I want you to lead the way for them, and come forward, and say to the minister, "I want to place my membership here." And, he'll tell you how you can be a member of this glorious church.

Some are coming trusting Jesus. Others are coming to place their membership here. Let's stand together as we sing. From all over the building you step out and come.

It's Prayer Time in America

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: July 04, 2004

Main Scripture Text: 2 Chronicles 7:14

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

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Introduction

Would you take God's holy Word and find 2 Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14? And, when you turn to it, you will recognize it as a shopworn verse. And, familiarity sometimes breeds contempt, but we're going to revisit that verse this morning, because if ever there were a verse that Americans need to hear and the nations of the world need to hear, it is 2 Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14.

Now, this promise was given to ancient Israel, but it applies to us also. For the Bible says concerning ancient Israel, *"All these things happened unto them for examples [to us]"* (1 Corinthians 10:11). Listen to the Word of God. Here is a sacred promise: *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Now, this nation, God-blessed America, born in the fire of revival in 1776, must be born again or the dream that was in the heart of our Founding Fathers will become a nightmare. But, if America dies—listen carefully—it will not be homicide; it will be suicide. If America dies, it will be because we

have brought it upon ourselves.

Now people, this nation has reached almost the bottom of the garbage can. There was a time in America when pregnancy outside of marriage was a scandal; when homosexuality was a sin and did not strut down main streets; when pornography was a moral sickness, not entertainment; when marriage was sacred and living together without marriage was a disgrace; when child abuse was almost unheard of; when women did not drink, smoke, or curse; when houses and automobiles could be left unlocked; when drugs were something that you went to the drugstore to get to help you when you are ill; when alcoholism was considered a sin, not a sickness; when Eastern religions were still in the East; when public school students could pray and the Ten Commandments of God were posted on the classroom walls. There was a time in America when high school students could read their diplomas when they graduated. But, things have changed, and they've not changed for the better, but for the worse. We have become a proud people. And yet, when somebody says something to us about the situation in America, we say, "Oh, well, America is a Christian nation."

Well, it's prayer time in America, and that's the subject of the message this morning: "Prayer Time in America." And, we're going to look at this verse, 2 Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14, and we're going to break it down into four divisions. And, I pray God that He will etch them upon your heart and write them indelibly upon your consciousness.

I. The People God Has

The first thing I want to lay on your heart is this: the people God has. Now, look at that verse: God says, "*If my people, [who] are called by my name*" (2 Chronicles 7:14) shall do thus-and-such. Now, we say, "Well, if only Hollywood would... If only the government would... If only the drug addict would... If only the homosexual community would..." No, ladies and gentlemen, God looks to His people. The answer to America is not in the White House. It's not in the schoolhouse. It is not in the State House. It is not in the courthouse. The answer to America is in this house, the house of God.

First Peter chapter 4, verse 17: the Bible says, "*For the time [has] come*"—"the time [has] come"—"*that judgment must begin at the house of God*" (1 Peter 4:17). There's very little that could not get right with America dramatically, almost instantaneously, if all of the Christians would get right. If all of those people who call themselves Christians would stop going to the casino, they would go out of business. If all those who call themselves Christians were to turn from beverage alcohol, a great dent would be put into their business. If all of those who are called Christians would stop attending the dirty, filthy movies, something could be done in America. God says that "*judgment must begin at the house of God*" (1 Peter 4:17).

Now, I believe—I believe—that you ought to be into politics. I believe that you ought

to take that as a sacred duty. But, listen to me: we don't need to change America without changing ourselves.

There was a woman who was involved in a great political campaign. She was very enthusiastic about it, spent a lot of time neglecting other things. She told her husband, "I believe we're going to sweep the state." He said, "I suggest that you start at the back door." And, that's what we need to do: start at our own back door and get clean.

II. The Pride God Hates

Now, the thing is this, friend: that God has a people. Now, sometimes we say, "O God, won't You please send revival? Please, O God, do it." Ladies and gentlemen, we don't have to persuade God to send revival but to permit Him to do so. He wants to revive His people. Are you willing to take His recipe? If so, let's move to the second part—not only the people God has, but the pride that God hates. God hates pride, so God says, *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). God hates pride. Had there been no pride, there would have been no devil. Had there been no pride, there would have been no sin.

The Bible teaches that God hates pride. Look in Proverbs chapter 6, verse 16: *"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him"* (Proverbs 6:16). Do you know what number one in God's hate parade is? Pride. *"These...things doth [God] hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look"* (Proverbs 6:16–17) and then the other six—"a proud look" (Proverbs 6:17). We can even be proud by the way we look. I know some people who can strut when they're sitting down. We reek with pride in America. We pat ourselves on the back, congratulate ourselves of being the greatest nation on the face of the earth. But, we are filled with pride. And, if we don't humble ourselves, we're headed to oblivion.

Now, don't pray, if you're wise, "God, make us humble." Now, He can do that, but you won't like it at all. We ought to *"judge ourselves, [that] we...be [not] judged"* (1 Corinthians 11:31). The Bible teaches, *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he [will] lift you up"* (James 4:10). If you're making notes, put in your notes "James chapter 4, verse 6 and 7": *"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble"* (James 4:6).

Now, what do you want? Do you want God's resistance, or do you want God's grace? *"God [resists] the proud"* (James 4:6). It's not merely that God doesn't hear their prayer; God sets Himself in battle array against them. Can you imagine God being your adversary, God resisting you, God standing against you? *"God resisteth the proud"*—but now listen—*"[He gives] grace [to] the humble"* (James 4:6). What is grace? Grace is both the desire and the ability to do the will of God. That's what grace is. God puts the desire in your heart. How does it get there? By grace. God helps you to live for Him.

How do you live for Him? By grace. But, unless you humble yourself before God, you're not going to receive that grace from God. *"God resisteth the proud...[He gives] grace [to] the humble"* (James 4:6). *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves"* (2 Chronicles 4:17).

III. The Prayer God Hears

Now, here's the third thing: not only the people God has, not only the pride God hates, but thirdly, the prayer God hears. Listen to it: *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Now, the reason we don't pray is we don't humble ourselves; we're quite confident that we can do it alone. But, when we see that God is our only hope, then we begin to pray and call out to Him. But, God doesn't hear every prayer. What kind of a prayer is it that God hears? Number one: It is a prayer that seeks God's face. Number two: It is a prayer that turns from wicked ways.

Now, the problem in America today is we don't want to seek God's face. What is God's face? The face of God is God smiling upon us. Revival is the smile of God. Can God look at the modern Church today and smile? Can God let His countenance shine upon us? We're to seek His face. You know what most Americans are doing? Most Americans are seeking God's hand when they pray. They're saying, "God, do something." They don't seek God's face; they seek God's hand. I'm not praying that God will do something; I'm praying that God will not do something. We stand in the need of judgment. Now, I want you to learn this: our biggest threat is not the terrorist; our biggest threat is not the pornographer; our biggest threat is not the homosexual community. Listen to me carefully: our biggest threat is God Himself. I'm not afraid of what these others will do to us; I am afraid of what a righteous and a holy God will do to us if we don't repent. The Bible says that we're to seek God's face (2 Chronicles 7:14).

And then, the Bible says we're to *"turn from [our] wicked ways"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). That word *turn* means "repent." The word *repentance* is literally "a turning away from sin." And, if you pray for things in your personal life, in your family life, in your church life, and still harbor sin in your heart, God's not going to hear you. The Bible says, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"* (Psalm 66:18). You talk about the prayer promises. Friend, that's one: *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"* (Psalm 66:18).

Listen carefully: the prayer of an unrepentant person is not only not heard, but it angers God. Do you think that you can make God angry when you pray? Indeed, you can. Listen to this scripture—Psalm 80, verse 4: *"O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?"* (Psalm 80:4). Prayer without repentance is a religious farce, and it angers Almighty God. Repentance is a theme that

goes all the way through the Bible; and over and over again, the Bible tells us to repent. The first sermon that Jesus Christ preached was on repentance. Jesus Christ's last word to the Church in the Bible is about repentance. You can read about that in Matthew 4:17 or Revelation 3, verse 19 (Revelation 3:19). Jesus came preaching, and He came preaching repentance. And, Jesus Christ said in Luke 13, verse 3: *"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3). There's no hope for America apart from the repentance of God's people.

A. **Repentance Is More Than Conviction of Sin**

Let me tell you what repentance is not: repentance is not mere conviction of sin. Now, you have to be convicted of sin to repent, but you can be convicted of sin and not repent. The Apostle Paul was preaching to a high muckety-muck, a dignitary, but he did not trim the message. He preached to him about sin. The Bible says in Acts chapter 24, verse 25: *"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix"*—that was the name of the dignitary—*"trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; [I will call for thee] when I have a [more] convenient season"* (Acts 24:25). "When it gets more convenient, I'm going to call for you, Paul." Now, the point is this man, when he heard the Apostle Paul talk about sin, trembled like a leaf in a storm. But, history tells us that he never did get right with God. He died and went to Hell, because repentance is more than conviction of sin.

B. **Repentance Is More Than Confession of Sin**

I want to say that repentance is more than confession of sin. You say, "Well, I confess my sin to the Lord." Well, did you turn from it? Did you turn from it? If you didn't turn from it, if you only confessed it, that's not repentance.

Pharaoh, who was the King of Egypt—Pharaoh, high, wide, and handsome—put God's people to suffering. God sent plagues upon Egypt, and one of the plagues was this—in Exodus chapter 9, verse 23: *"And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent"*—listen to this—*"thunder and hail, and the fire ran along...the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt"* (Exodus 9:23). Can you imagine this? What a dark night in Egypt as it thunders, as lightening flashes across the bosom of the sky, as hail falls from Heaven like bullets, and fire ran along the ground! When Pharaoh saw all of that, what did he do? Well, look in chapter 9 and verse 27: *"And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them"*—now, listen to this—*"I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked"* (Exodus 9:27). That was a good confession, but it wasn't repentance, because the Bible says this: that when the storm was over, when the thunder and the lightning was gone, when the hail ceased, when the fire no longer ran upon the ground, Pharaoh went right back to his sin—Exodus chapter 9, verse 34: *"when Pharaoh saw that the*

rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants” (Exodus 9:34). The “repentance,” so-called, that was born in the storm died in the calm.

Do you remember a number of years ago we had something called Desert Storm in America and our people went to war against Iraq? I’m not talking about this war that we are facing today, but another war. We called it “Desert Storm.” I can well remember the first Sunday after that war was engaged. This church had at least 25 or 30% more than normal, and people wept and prayed. People said, “O God, bless America. God, have mercy upon us. God, get us through the storm.” And, God did. Do you know what happened to America? We began to go down, down, down, down; and today, we’re eating through the very bottom of the garbage can. Unspeakable things are happening in America. Why? Because *the so-called “repentance” in the storm dies in the calm.* No. What is repentance? It is more than confession of sin; it is more than simply being afraid.

C. Repentance Is More Than Contrition for Sin

Repentance is more, ladies and gentlemen, than contrition for sin. You say, “Well, I’m broken over my sin.” That’s not repentance. You say, “I’m sorry for my sin.” That’s not repentance. The Bible says, “*Godly sorrow worketh repentance*” (2 Corinthians 7:10). Now, I’m glad if you weep over sin. And well, we ought to weep in America over sin. But, sorrow—contrition—is not repentance from sin. Confession of sin is not repentance without turning from sin. Ladies and gentlemen, not only do we need to be broken over our sins; we are to broken from our sins.

D. Repentance Is a Wholehearted Change

Now, what is repentance? Repentance is a heart change. The Greek word *repentance* (*metanoia*) means “a change of heart, a change of mind,” where I’m going this way, and I turn now, and I go that way. Repentance is not only turning from sin, but it’s turning to God—and not only turning to God, it is turning from sin. That’s the reason the Bible says we’re to “*seek [His] face, and turn from [our] wicked ways*” (2 Chronicles 7:14). You cannot have one without the other. They are the heads and tails of the same thing.

Acts chapter 20, verse 21: Paul was “*testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 20:21). Repentance is a heart change; but friend, it is a wholehearted change. And, faith is the heads and tails of getting right with God. We seek God’s face. We turn from our wicked way. Ezekiel chapter 14 and verse 6: “*Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols*”—and now, listen to this—“*and turn away your faces from all your abominations*” (Ezekiel 14:6)—from all, not some. Do you think that you can get right with God in this area and not be right with

God there? Do you think if you give up alcohol but still hold a grudge to your family that you'll get right with God? Do you feel that you can use profanity but since you no longer commit adultery that you can get right with God? Do you think that you can repent in compartments? Friend, it is a change, and it is a wholehearted change. With all your heart you turn from every abomination.

I want you to look up here at your pastor, this morning. In my heart, there is no un-confessed, un-repented-of sin that I know of. Weaknesses—yes; faults—plenty of them. “Well,” you say, “aren’t you—aren’t you—something! Look at you, talking about how good you are.” You missed it 1,000%. Friend, I would be a fool to stand up here and try and preach with un-confessed, un-repented-of sin in my heart and in my life. You say, “Well, that’s because you’re a pastor.” Every mother’s child in this place needs to turn from their wicked ways. It’s not up to someone else; it’s up to you.

You want to have revival? Draw a circle on the floor. Step inside that circle and say, “God, let revival begin in this circle.” And, it will begin when we not only confess our sin, not only tremble, not only weep over our sin, but when we literally turn from our sin. Turn from your wicked way. You say, “Well, I hope all those other people will do it.” God’s not talking to them. God is talking to His people. God is talking to us. If all the Christians would get right, this world would be changed—and changed dramatically.

E. Repentance Is a Continuing Change

Now, not only is it a wholehearted change; it is a continuing change. We live lives of repentance and faith. The Bible says, “*As [you] have received...the Lord, so walk ye in him*” (Colossians 2:6). How did you receive Him? By repentance and faith. How do you live the Christian life? By repentance and faith. It’s not that I never sin. I have to repent constantly. I have done more repenting after I got saved than I ever did before I got saved, because after I got saved I’ve learned a whole lot more about God and a whole lot more about me. We live a life of continual repentance. It is a life that we live. When we’re aware that there is any un-confessed sin, we turn from it immediately. And, I want to remind you again, God is talking to the Church; more specifically, He’s talking to you.

IV. The Promise God Honors

Now, let’s come to the fourth thing. We’ve talked about the people God has. We’ve talked about the pride that God hates. We are talking about the prayer that God hears. I want you to see now the promise that God honors: the rock-ribbed promise of the Word of God. “*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray...and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land*” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Again, we must disabuse ourselves of the idea that it’s too late in America, and we

must disabuse ourselves of the idea that the government or someone else can help us. Beloved, God is not a Democrat. He's not a Republican. He's not an Independent. He is not a Libertarian. He is God. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He rules in the Heaven, and He is able to do whatever He wants. God is not weak. God is not impotent. God is not unable to send revival. God has sent revival in dark days. And, I could give you a litany, a history, of how God stepped into human history and God sent revival, and it came like an unexpected tornado when there were people—the people of God—who began to pray and get their hearts right with God.

You see, we don't have to have everybody right with God in the world to have revival. We don't have to have everybody right with God in America to have revival. God says, *"If my people"—"my people"—"[will] humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face...then I will hear from heaven"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). He is the God who rules the Heaven. He is not limited in power. He is Almighty God. Do you believe that? God says, *"[I] will hear from heaven"*—and then He says—*"[I] will forgive their sin"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). God had much rather forgive than He had to judge. God loves us, and God is a God of mercy—infinite mercy. He is a God of judgment and justice, but He is a God of mercy.

Would you like to be forgiven? Would you like to be clean and pure as that crystal river that these girls sang about? Would you like to have the peace of God reigning in your heart? Would you like to be able to say, "O thank You, God, thank You for forgiveness"? Not only will He hear from Heaven, not only will He forgive our sin, but God will heal our land. Our land is sick. We are sin-sick. We have sinned against God. We have lifted a clenched fist in the face of God. But, God will heal our land; God will give us America back again. We sing it: "God Bless America." Well, I hope He will, but you know what we really need to sing? "Help America to Bless God"—to bless God, to give Him praise, to give Him glory, and then He can heal our land. Don't you want to see revival in America? I wonder sometimes what kind of an America will my grandchildren have ten years from now unless God sends revival. I'm telling you, God is our biggest threat, and God is our only hope.

Conclusion

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed; eyes are closed. I want to remind you that God is not speaking to the sinners out there in the world. He's speaking to His Church. And, I want to remind you that He's not speaking to the Church in general; He's speaking to the Church with specificity. He is speaking to you. Say to yourself this morning, "The sermon is to me. God is speaking to me. I'm the one. I am the one that must humble myself. I am the one that must seek God's face. I am the one that must pray and turn from my wicked way. I'm the one that needs to be healed."

Would you pray, “O God, seal this message to my heart”? And, make God a promise that you’ll have a quiet time of seeking Him in a fuller way when you get home. Would you make that promise? I’m going to wait a moment while you pray. Amen and amen. Look up here—every eye right up here for a moment.

Before we go home, I want to give an invitation to those in this building who might not yet have received Jesus Christ into their lives, who still don’t have a personal relationship with God, who still have no promise of Heaven. I’ve got wonderful news for you: God can save you today. And, the most patriotic thing that you can do is not say, “God Bless America” or, “My country, right or wrong.” The most patriotic thing you can do is to get right with God. And, if you’re not saved, that’s step number one.

What does it mean to be saved? It means that every sin is buried in the grave of God’s forgetfulness. Isn’t that wonderful? Every sin is buried. *“Their...iniquities will I remember [against them] no more”* (Hebrews 10:17). Secondly, it means that Jesus Christ comes into your heart, into your life, to give you peace, and power, and purpose, and keeping power. He will keep you all the days of your life. I promise that He will, if you give your heart to Him. You say, “Well Pastor, I just can’t live the Christian life.” Neither can I. But, the God in me can; and when you receive Him, He’ll do it in you. You’re not going to get a halo and sprout wings. You’ve got to *“grow in [the] grace...and...knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”* (2 Peter 3:18). But friend, He will forgive your sin. He will come into you to give you power. And, when you die, or when Jesus Christ comes again, He’ll take you home to Heaven—down by the riverside, down by that crystal spring, down to look upon the face of Jesus forever and ever. Now listen—all of this is possible because the Lord Jesus on the cross poured out His rich, red, royal blood for you. If you saw the film *The Passion*, He did all of that—and more—for you, that you might be saved.

Now, I’ve preached as best I know how today. If I could make a decision for you this morning, I would, but I can’t. But, you can if you want to. And, if you need Jesus—listen to me—there are not enough devils in Hell or out of Hell to keep you from coming this morning. But, God would not allow any angel to drag you down this aisle either. It is your decision. And, if you’ll trust Him, the Bible says, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and [you will] be saved”* (Acts 16:31).

Now, here’s what we’re going to do: we’re going to ask the ministers of our church to come and stand at the head of each of these aisles all the way across the front to receive those of you who’ll be coming forward. And, if you’re in the balcony, there will be a minister under that banner that says, “Messiah” on this side or that says, “Redeemer” on that side to welcome those of you in the balcony who’ll be coming. And if, today, once and for all, now and forever, you’re willing to give your heart to Jesus Christ and receive Him as your Lord and Savior and become a part of the family of God, I’m going

to ask you to move down these aisles or to move to these banners. A man of God will be waiting there. You say, “Pastor, if I’m coming, giving my heart to Jesus, what should I say?” You can say just that “I’m trusting Jesus. I’m giving my heart to Christ.” Put it in your own words. He’ll know what you’ve come for. “Well, what will happen then?” We will deal with you kindly and courteously. We’ll take an open Bible and answer any questions that you have and then seal it in prayer. And, you can go home saying, “Yes, I trusted Jesus enough to make it public. I’m not ashamed of Jesus.” And, I want you to do that.

Now, the devil will give you 1,001 excuses for not doing it. He’ll say you’re not good enough, you don’t understand enough, there are too many people here, the crowd is too big, you can’t live it, you don’t have the right feeling—all of those. You listen to me—all of those things are lies. They are lies from the devil. Jesus said, “Whosoever will may come” (Revelation 22:17). There’ll never, ever be a better time for you to be saved than today—never, ever. Tomorrow you’ll have more sin to repent of and less time to repent in, and your heart will be harder tomorrow than it is today. Come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, there’s another category I’m going to ask to come forward, and these are they who know that they’re saved but they need a church home. Perhaps their church home is back there in that country, that land, or that city, and they left it there—you left it there when you moved here. Listen to me, friend—God’s plan is for you to be a member of a local New Testament church. That’s God’s plan. If not Bellevue, one somewhere. If you come here and this is where God speaks to your heart, where you learn, where you feel the Spirit of God, then, mostly likely, it’s the church that you need to belong to. And so, when we stand and sing, I want you to come down these aisles and say to one of these ministers, “I want to place my membership here.” And, we’ll rejoice with you and tell you how you can become a member of this glorious church.

Some are coming, saying, “I’m trusting Christ.” Others are coming, saying, “I want to place my membership here.” No one will leave during the invitation, I trust, unless it is an absolute emergency. We’ll all be praying. Pray. Let’s pray one more time. Father God, open the hearts of these who need You, Lord, and give them the courage, and the obedience, and the will—whatever they need—to say “yes” to Jesus. In His dear name.

Let’s stand together as we sing. You step out and come.

National Repentance

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: September 12, 2001

Main Scripture Text: 2 Chronicles 7:14

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

Outline

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Introduction

Life is not a problem to be solved; it is a mystery to be lived. And when answers aren't enough, there is Jesus. Our text tonight is one that is so familiar that you may pass over it, because we have heard it, we have quoted it, we perhaps have used it so much that it has become commonplace, perhaps shopworn. But I know of no other text to turn to than 2 Chronicles 7, verse 14, where God says, *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2

Chronicles 7:14).

America is sick, sick unto death. And the great American dream has turned these last few days into a national nightmare. And I believe that our nation that was born in 1776 must be born again, or we too will join the graveyard of the nations.

Now, this promise that I have read to you is a promise that was given to Israel a long time ago. And sometimes Bible scholars will say, you don't have any right to claim 2 Chronicles 7:14, because it was given to Israel, not given to America. I am well aware of the fact that it was given to Israel, but I am also well aware of the fact of who gave it. And this verse shows the heart of God. God doesn't merely want to bless Israel. He wants to bless any nation whose God is the Lord. And you see the heartbeat of Almighty God here.

I. The People that God Has

There are several things I want you to see. First of all, I want you to see what I am going to call "the people that God has." Look at it. God says, *"If My people..."* So many times we say, if only the government would do this or that; if only Hollywood would do this or that; if only the liquor industry, or the gambling people, or these people, or those people... But God doesn't look to them. God looks to His people.

You see, look, folks. It is not our duty to persuade God to bless this nation, but to permit Him to do so. The Bible teaches that judgment must begin at the house of God. Take your Bibles, and look, if you will, in 1 Peter chapter 4, and look in verses 17 and 18: *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"* (1 Peter 4:17–18). It is time for us to stop looking at the abortionists, the pornographer, the sexual pervert, the adulterer, the liars, and begin to look at our own hearts. The people God has.

II. The Pride that God Hates

The second thing—notice: the pride that God hates. God says, *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves..."* God is waiting for us to humble ourselves. Now, don't ever pray, "God, humble me." He can, and He may, but you would be much wiser to do it yourself, to humble yourself before God. Of the six things, yea seven, that are an abomination to God, number one is pride: *"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him"* (Proverbs 6:16), the Bible says. Number one on that list is a proud look. Pride is the root of all other sins. It is pride that made the devil the devil.

America, our beloved nation, reeks with humanistic haughtiness. We worship at the

shrine of our computers. Our tongue walks through the earth. We are strutting, as a nation, to hell. And it is time for genuine humility. The Bible says that we are to humble ourselves. The problem with America and many nations is we are trying to save face when the very thing that we need to do is to lose face.

One of the most insightful verses, in my estimation, in the entire Bible is James 4, verse 6. It says this: *“But...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble”* (James 4:6). Did you hear that? God resists the proud. That doesn't mean that God refuses to help the proud. God resists the proud. Do you want God to resist you? Do you want God as your adversary? But God gives grace to the humble.

Now, what does that mean—grace? We are not talking about saving grace. We are talking about serving, sanctifying grace. Yes, we are saved by grace, but He is talking now to His people. What is grace? Grace is the desire and the ability to do the will of God. God will put the desire in your heart, and God will give you the strength to serve Him, if you will humble yourself before Him, and lay your pride in the dust.

III. The Prayer that God Hears

Now, here is a third thing I want you to see. I want you to see the prayer that God hears. *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and seek my face...”*

Now, right now, most Americans are not seeking the face of God. They are seeking revenge; they are seeking rectification; they are seeking comfort; they are seeking a way out; they are seeking safety; they are seeking security. It is the face of God that we need. The Bible says, “Our iniquities have hid His face from us” (Isaiah 59:2).

A definition of revival is the smile of God, the countenance of God. Now, prayer that does not repent, that does not turn from its wicked way, prayer that does not seek the face of God in opposition to sin, actually angers God. Have you ever thought about prayer making God angry?

Psalm 80, verse 4—listen to it: *“O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?”* (Psalm 80:4). Unmitigated gall is the mark of somebody who asks Almighty God to do thus-and-such for him or her, and yet harbor sin that nailed the darling Son of God on the cross in that one's heart. The Bible says, *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me”* (Psalm 66:18). God resists the proud, and the prayer of an unrepentant person makes God angry. The gifts of such a person are a stench in the nostrils of God.

IV. The Promise that God Honors

The people God has. The pride God hates. The prayer God hears. And the promise God honors. Here is the promise that God honors. God says, He *“will hear from*

heaven.” God wants to bless. God had rather bless than judge. He will forgive our sin. Thank God we do not have to carry the load of sin. God longs to forgive. He wants to forgive, and He will heal our land. America is sick. I said before in preaching, I wonder if oceans of tears and rivers of blood will be the price that this nation pays for flaunting itself in the eyes of a righteous and a holy God.

Now, I want us to extract out of what I have just said only a portion, and that is the portion that says, “*and turn from their wicked ways,*” and the rest of the message is going to deal with that. The rest of the message is going to deal with something called *repentance*. And repentance is the order of the day in America today.

A. **The Meaning of Repentance**

Now, what is the meaning of repentance? What is the meaning of repentance? Friend, *repentance* means a change of mind that leads to a change of heart.

1. **What Repentance Is Not**

Now, we need to learn what repentance is not, because there are a lot of things that are called repentance that are not repentance.

a. **Repentance Is More Than Conviction of Sin**

Repentance is more than conviction of sin. I can preach to you under conviction tonight if God, the Holy Spirit, would help me, and you still may not have repented. There was a man in the Bible whose name was Felix. Paul preached to Felix. He was a governmental leader. When Paul preached to Felix, Felix trembled like a leaf in a storm. He was under conviction, but he never repented.

Acts 24, verse 25—put this scripture back up there, if you will. And the Bible tells about Paul speaking to this man: “*As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*” (Acts 24:25). I have seen that happen many times. I have seen people come to a service. I have watched them. You cannot preach as I have preached through the years without watching the faces of people. I have seen the hand of God move upon people; I have seen people grip the back of the pew until their knuckles turn white under the conviction of sin, and then move out, saying, “Next Sunday, next month, next year, when I get this thing or that thing in order, then I will repent.”

b. **Repentance Is More Than Confession of Sin**

Now, repentance is more than conviction of sin. Number two: repentance is more than confession of sin. You say, well, I confess my sin. Well, you need to confess your sin. Confess it to God, but that is not necessarily repentance.

Pharaoh was evil, wicked. God sent Moses to Pharaoh. Pharaoh needed to repent, but notice the scripture, Exodus chapter 9, beginning in verse 22, and we will scroll

through this: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail”* (Exodus 9:22–26).

Now, notice this confession of Pharaoh: *“And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked”* (Exodus 9:27). That was a confession of sin, but it was not repentance. How long did it last? When the hail was gone, the lightning was gone, the fire no longer ran along the ground. When the plague was lifted, notice what happened in Exodus chapter 9 and in verse 34: *“And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants”* (Exodus 9:34).

Ladies and gentlemen, we don’t normally have this kind of a crowd on Wednesday night. Do you know why we have this kind of a crowd? Obvious—obvious: we are in difficulty. Do you remember Desert Storm? I can tell you that our attendance was up 30%, and not only in our preaching services, and not only in this church, but churches across the land. But as soon as Desert Storm was over, we began to swagger, and to boast, and talk about those patriot missiles, and how we kicked their you-know-what.

Do you remember that? Did God get the glory? Did God get the praise? No, and there is no longer any fire, and hail, and storm. Since that time, this nation has gone deeper and deeper and deeper into filth and debauchery than any time since I have been alive. Television is getting more and more filthy. God’s name is bandied about. We are experimenting on the little embryos, killing babies in the womb halfway born. And we then have the audacity to say, “God bless America.” Who are we kidding? Who are we kidding? Friend, I am telling you that conviction of sin is not repentance. And I am telling you that confession of sin is not repentance.

c. Repentance Is More Than Contrition for Sin

And I will tell you something else repentance is not: repentance is more than contrition for sin. You say, “Well, people are just not sorry enough.” No, you can have contrition and still not be a repent. Now, tears often accompany repentance, but sometimes people cry, and they still don’t repent. We ought to weep. Let me tell you what the Scripture says—2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 10: *“For godly sorrow worketh*

repentance...—it doesn't say that godly sorrow *is* repentance. It says that—*“godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of:”*—that is, you don't repent about getting saved—*“but the sorrow of the world worketh death”* (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Now, friend, our nation tonight is baptized in salty tears, and if you don't have tears, it is because you've got a hard heart. There are people tonight who don't even know whether their loved ones are alive or dead. There are people tonight under tons of steel and concrete hoping that somebody will find them. There are people who know that their loved ones got on an airplane and became a guided missile of death to bring death to other people. There are people who are in bewilderment and confusion and heartache, and you talk about sorrow—friend, they are filled with sorrow. But they may not be repenting. Godly sorrow works repentance, but that is not repentance.

2. What Repentance Is

Repentance is not mere conviction of sin. It is not confession of sin. It is not contrition of sin. What is repentance?

a. Repentance Is a Heart Change

I want to tell you that repentance is a heart change—repentance is a heart change. Let me give you some scriptures. When Paul preached, Paul talked about repentance, and he preached, *“testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Acts 20:21).

Now, repentance and faith are heads and tails of the same coin. You cannot turn truly from sin unless you turn to Jesus, and you cannot turn to Jesus unless you turn from sin, and there is a positive and a negative part to repentance. First Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 9 says this: *“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”* (1 Thessalonians 1:9). *When you turn to God, you turn from idols. When you turn from idols, you turn to God. Repentance and faith are the heads and tails of the same coin.*

b. Repentance Is a Whole-Hearted Heart Change

What I am trying to say is that repentance is a heart change. And I want to say something else: it is a whole-hearted heart change. Now, Ezekiel chapter 14 and verse 6: *“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations”* (Ezekiel 14:6). The big word in that is *turn*; the next big word is *from all*.

What man, what woman, wants to be married to a man who is 95% faithful? What does God want of Adrian Rogers tonight? He wants 100%, and He deserves it. I would be an unmitigated fool tonight to stand before you trying to preach with sin in my heart and in my life. “Well,” you say, “aren't you holy?” No, that is a normal natural Christian life. It is the way we are supposed to live, not like the little girl who prayed, “Lord, make me good, just not too good, just good enough not to get a whipping”—no.

Repentance is a heart change, a positive and a negative, and it is a whole-hearted change. Not only are we to be broken over our sins; we are to be broken from our sins.

c. Repentance Is a Continuing Change

I want to say something else. Repentance is a continuing change—repentance is a continuing change. Now, you don't just say, "Well, you know, I repented. Now that is done." No, we live by repentance, just as we live by faith. The Bible says, "As you received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him" (Colossians 2:6). How did you receive the Lord Jesus Christ? You received Him by repentance and faith. Therefore, how do you walk in Him? Repentance and faith. Repentance and faith. Repentance and faith. "As you have received Him, so walk ye in Him."

I am going to tell you something. I repented when I gave my heart to Jesus Christ, though I did not even know the meaning of the word. I knew that I needed God. I was a teen. I gave all I knew of me to all I knew of Jesus, and, friend, that was enough. But I tell you, since that time, I have learned a whole lot more about Jesus, and I have learned a whole lot more about me.

And I will tell you something else. I've done far more repenting after I got saved than I did when I got saved. Do you know what I am talking about? I am telling you, it is a change, it is a whole-hearted change, and it is a continuing change. And with or without the problem in New York City and around the world, if we had not this problem, we would have needed this sermon. We need to do business with God. We need to repent.

B. The Motive for Repentance

Now, I want to talk to you not only about the meaning of repentance, but I want to talk to you about the motive for repentance.

1. The Command of God

Why should we repent? Well, number one: the very command of God. God has commanded that we repent. Acts 17, verse 30: "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent*" (Acts 17:30). Since all are sinners, none is excluded. The rich man is poor, and the moral man is wicked, and the educated man is a fool, until he repents. The unsaved need to repent and be saved. The saved need to repent constantly, and to be sanctified, and to serve the Lord Jesus with a clean heart. So God has commanded it.

2. The Curse of Guilt

Number two: not only the command of God, but we need to repent because of the curse of guilt. Your heart will never ever be at rest, if you harbor sin. Guilt engulfs a person who doesn't know how to repent. The Bible says, "*The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*" (Isaiah 57:20).

Do you know why you have such disquietude? Do you know why you can't

concentrate? Why you can't sleep? Why you can't laugh? Why you can't digest food? Why you can't be at peace with yourself, and with your family, and everybody else? Because on the inside, there is that upheaval, that sin that's there like the wicked sea when it cannot rest, belching up filth, and dirt, and the sediment that's there in your soul.

People are spending thousands and thousands and thousands, and millions of dollars on psychiatrists, and counselors, and psychologists, and there are times when people need those. But most people could save a lot of money if they'd just learn to repent. So, learn to repent. They go to some doctor, and he says, "You've got a guilt problem; you've been down there listening to Adrian Rogers. He's put that stuff on you. You've got a guilt feeling. Now, what we have got to do is deaden this feeling; then you will be okay." That would be like going to a doctor, and you've got a fever, and he says, "My, you have got a fever. What I need to do is to palliate this fever. What I need to do is to kill this pain, and to kill this fever," and he deadens the pain, and kills the fever, and never deals with the infection. That's what happening to a lot of people today.

You ask the average person, "What is guilt?" and the average person will say, "Well, guilt is the feeling that you get when you do something wrong." No. That's a guilt feeling.

If you put your hand on a hot stove, I want to ask you a question: What is the burn? Is the burn what races up the nerve to your head, to your brain, and back to the hand, and the hand says, "It's hot here," sends a message to the head, and the head says, "Well, move your hand"? It happens just like that. Oh, is that a burn? No. That is a burn feeling. The burn is the blister and the raw skin.

Now, we have a generation today that is not dealing with guilt, and you can never deal with guilt apart from repentance. There is the curse of guilt. Now, let me give you the scripture. Friend, the Bible teaches so clearly and plainly again that the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Somebody wrote these words: "Trust me, no tortures which the poets feign can match the fierce unutterable pain he feels, who night and day, devoid of rest, carries his own accuser in his breast" (Juvenal). That accuser is guilt. Would you like to download it? It is so simple: Repent!

3. The Condition of Grace

I'll give you a third reason to need to repent: not only the command of God, not only the curse of guilt, but the condition of grace. We need the grace of God. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*" And I gave you the scripture before about the grace of God and repentance—James 4, verses 6 and 7: "*But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:6–7).

You say, "Well, Pastor, I am not afraid of the devil." The devil ought to be afraid of

you. Resist the devil. He will flee from you. How would you like to be a person so full of the grace of God that Satan is terrified of your presence? How would you like it? Well, that is what James says. You draw nigh unto God, and God will draw nigh to you. You resist the devil—he will flee from you (James 4:7–8). That is repentance.

Not merely conviction of sin, confession of sin, or contrition for sin, but dealing with God; and *“the time is come that judgment [will] begin at the house of God”* (1 Peter 4:17). I don’t know what is going to happen, but I know that if we get our hearts right with God, I know if we are not intimidated by Satan who says, you know, that you are not right with God, and we are not haunted by the ghosts of guilt, if our heart is clean and pure, no matter what happens—no matter what happens—we can face what comes, can’t we? That’ll work. But if our hearts are not clean, and trouble really starts big time, we are going to have a queasy feeling.

Conclusion

Now, I don’t believe that it’s too late for America, and I am going to preach a different kind of message Sunday when I talk about “A Time of Terror and a Word of Hope,” because I believe God has a plan for us, and I believe God still wants to bless America. I believe that, but I believe that God has brought us here tonight that we, as individuals, will repent. And then, corporately as a church, we will pray for our church, and pray for our nation.

Now, time has come to pray, and I don’t know how we are going to do this, because the position of your heart is far more important than the position of your body. Jim, we’ll sing something in just a moment to stand, but not quite yet. And then, after we stand, I’m going to let you find a prayer place. It may be that you can just turn around, and, if you are small of frame, you might be able to kneel right there where you are. There is nothing wrong with just coming and kneeling all the way across here. There is nothing wrong with getting on your face on the carpet, if you want to. There is nothing wrong with getting a friend, and standing together, and holding hands and praying; nothing wrong with praying in a little group, if you want to, or praying by yourself, if you want to. There is nothing wrong with just being quiet; nothing wrong with groaning. We are not here to impress one another, not anybody here but us. But we are going to pray. We need God. We need God. We are going to pray. Let’s stand and sing, Brother Jim, something.

Now, thank you. Will you assume a position of prayer, wherever and however you want to do it, and I am going to lead us in a time of prayer.

Lord Jesus—would you lift to Him tonight the purest praise that the Holy Spirit in you can muster. He is worthy of our praise. Give Him praise. Give Him honor. Praise Him. Bless His holy name. Now, will you humble your heart before Him. I mean, humble it. Don’t ask Him to humble you. That is dangerous. He’ll do it, but don’t ask Him to. Just

humble your heart. Humble yourself to Him. Don't compare yourself to anyone else. Forget about all your past accomplishments. You are standing in the presence of the King, Almighty God. Humble yourself. God resists the proud; He gives grace to the humble. Now, ask God to smile upon you. Seek His face. Seek the smile of God. Lord, turn Your face toward me. Lord, more than I want peace and comfort, fame and pleasure and protection, I want you. I want you, dear Lord, to be my portion, my lot, my God. Seek His face. Smile on me, Jesus. I seek you God. As the hart pants after the water grove, I long for you, dear God (Psalm 42:1). I'm tired of playing church; I'm tired of playing religion; I'm tired of posturing; I'm tired of pretending. I want you, God, in reality. Now, will you turn from your wicked way? *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be [some] wicked way in me"* (Psalm 139:23–24). Pride, envy, selfishness, bitterness, dishonesty, exaggeration, lust, disobedience, coldness, racial superiority, unfaithfulness—call it by name. You turn to God from idols. You turn from idols to God. You can't have both. Turn from your wicked way. Now, I want you to pray in faith: "Lord, thank You for hearing me tonight. Thank You. Thank You that You have heard from heaven. Thank You, Lord, that You have forgiven my sin. Oh, thank You, Jesus. I don't look for a feeling; I don't ask for a sign. I just thank You by faith because You won't lie."

And now, Lord, heal our land. Heal America. We are sick, Lord. We are sick, and we are at a crisis where the fever will break, or it will get worse. Heal our land, Lord. Now, would you pray for the corporate sin of America. Would you tell God how our land has been stained with the blood of little innocent babies, and tell Him that you are sorry, even though you may not have done it. Would you confess the filth and the debauchery and the absolute blasphemy that we call entertainment in America. What an affront to a holy God who as so blessed us. Would you confess how we have made a sin of the political arena, and laughed at the spin doctors when we know they are lying. Confess that we have elected leaders who have flaunted their adultery and their perversion. Confess it as a sin. Would you confess the racial hatred, the pride, the bigotry. We know that with God there is no respect of persons. Would you confess our neglect of the poor and the needy, the down and out. Would you confess our dependence upon military might and cunning rather than upon Almighty God. Ask God to have mercy.

Now, Father God, Lord, we prayed individually, and we are praying corporately. We just pray, dear Lord, in the strong name of Jesus that You will hear. Lord, don't let me preach what I do not practice. And Lord, I join these in personal repentance and in corporate repentance. Lord, I am so weak. Have mercy upon me, dear Lord. May I be the kind of a man and pastor that I need to be and ought to be. Bless our church, our dear church. Lord, cause the church to grow and prosper, but, dear Lord God, first of all, to be true to You, to Your holy Word. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Praise Your Way to Victory

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: January 22, 1997

Main Scripture Text: 2 Chronicles 19:11; 20:1–25

“And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.”

2 CHRONICLES 20:22

Outline

Introduction

- I. He Encountered a Problem
- II. He Established a Purpose
- III. He Examined His Past
- IV. He Embraced the Promise
- V. He Exposed His Powerlessness
- VI. He Enlisted His Protection
- VII. He Engaged His Protection
- VIII. He Expressed His Praise
- IX. He Enjoyed His Provisions

Conclusion

Introduction

Be finding 2 Chronicles chapter 20. If you are familiar with the Old Testament, you know this is a classic passage on praise and worship. Now, let me give you the background of 2 Chronicles chapter 20. And, without trying to be facetious, it's preceded by chapter 19, and in chapter 19 is the story of revival under a good king whose name was Jehoshaphat.

Now, you might think that if we have revival, that will be the end of our troubles. It will be, but it will be the frontend, because when we have spiritual blessing, it is just a fact that when God opens the windows of Heaven to bless us, the devil opens the doors of Hell to blast us. Is that not true? Certainly, it's true. If you've ever been there, you know that the devil will fire up all of his artillery if a revival is going on. That doesn't mean that we're to fold up and go away; it just simply means that we're to stand up and pray, and we will have, can have, should have a victory, if we learn how to praise.

Now, look at the last verse of chapter 19—the last phrase in that verse. Here's what good king Jehoshaphat said to the people: he said, *“Deal courageously, and the LORD*

shall be with the good" (2 Chronicles 19:11). That was a promise, and that was true; but it certainly did not mean that they would not have any trouble, because we're going to see, right after this revival and right after this injunction to live courageously and to be good, there comes incredible problems.

And so, how many of you here have a problem or know somebody that's in a problem? Let me see your hands. Okay, so pay attention. You want victory. God did not cause us and call us to fail, but to be victorious. And, I love the New Testament that says that "our Lord Jesus causes us always to triumph"—not *sometimes*—"always to triumph" (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Now, let me give you what happened to good king Jehoshaphat. It's one of the greatest blessings in all of the Bible. This is a magnificent chapter. You will be incredibly blessed and instructed if you will open your Bible now, and follow along with me, and find out what happened to good king Jehoshaphat, and what he did about it, and what you can do when similar things happen to you.

I. He Encountered a Problem

Number one: Notice in verses 1 and 2 that he encountered a problem. In verse 1: *"It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi"* (2 Chronicles 20:1–2). Now, here's the problem: they just had revival, and then here comes the herald to say, "Look out, you've got some enemies that are coming."

Now, you will encounter a problem, and when you encounter a problem, you need to see it as it really is: a blessing in disguise. Now, you say, "There you go with some of that happiness talk that preachers always give me when I have problems." No—a blessing in disguise. Let me give you a better authority than Adrian Rogers; let me give you James. In James chapter 1, verses 2 through 4: *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations"*—that means "different kinds of trials"—*"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"* (James 1:2–4). God does not allow problems to come to you to hurt you, to harm you, but to build you.

Now, Jehoshaphat learned that there were three wicked kings that were coming against him, and all of us have three wicked kings that come against us: sin, sorrow, and death. And, he just simply encountered a problem, and that's the first thing—put it down big, plain, and straight: if you are a Christian or a non-Christian (makes no difference), you will encounter a problem.

II. He Established a Purpose

Second thing: When he encountered a problem, he established a purpose. Look now in verses 3 and 4: *“And Jehoshaphat feared”*—now, that doesn’t mean that he was afraid of the enemy; it means, primarily, that he has the fear of God—*“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came”*—this is underscored twice in Bible—*“to seek the LORD”* (2 Chronicles 20:3–4). They came together in convocation. They came together in fasting. They came together with a focused purpose to seek God. He established his purpose.

Now, he didn’t do this after he tried everything else. Prayer, fasting, a focused fellowship was not his last resort; it was his very first thought. The problem with many of us—we want to use God—do we not?—as the spare tire rather than the steering wheel. We want to wait until we have the spiritual blowout and see if God will come and help us, rather than doing as Jesus taught us to do, and as Jehoshaphat did: that is, to *“seek...first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all [of] these [other] things [will] be added [to us]”* (Matthew 6:33).

By the way, why does God allow us to have problems? To cause us to do exactly what Jehoshaphat did—to see Him. Did you know that if we never had problems, most likely we would not seek God? When are the times when you’ve grown the most? Be honest. When everything was fine? No. The times that God was the nearest and dearest and most real to you, the times when you agonized in prayer and found God to be faithful, is it not true that it’s when you were going through trouble? That’s what David said: *“thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress”* (Psalm 4:1).

Back in the Garden of Eden, God told Adam and Eve, *“Cursed is the ground for [your] sake”* (Genesis 3:17). He didn’t say “for your punishment”—“for your welfare.” Why? Because if Adam and Eve had continued to live in the Garden of Eden with sin in their heart, they never would have sought God. But, God puts us in a world of heartache, tears, and turmoil in order to bring us to Him.

And, when Jehoshaphat had trouble, what was the next thing? When he encountered a problem, he established a purpose, and that purpose was to seek the face of Almighty God.

Now, some of you are counselors. And, if you’re a counselor, as I am and others are, people come to you with their problems. If you help that person to solve that problem but you do not bring that person to an encounter with God, you have miserably failed as a counselor. Your purpose as a counselor is not primarily to solve people’s problems but to bring people to a face-to-face encounter with Almighty God, to cause you to seek the Lord. And, this is exactly what the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 4, verse 16: *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain*

mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). It’s in the time of need that we come to the throne of grace.

What did he do? He encountered a problem. What did he do? He established a purpose—to seek the Lord.

III. He Examined His Past

Third thing he did is he examined his past. Look, if you will now, in verses 5 through 7: *“And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?”*—now, look at verse 7—*“Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?”* (2 Chronicles 20:5–7). You know what he’s doing? He’s just reviewing the past; he’s looking backward. And, he says, “God, You have all power. You have power over all the nations—over the heathen. You are the One who gave this land to Abraham. You are the One who drove out the Canaanites in the past. Lord, You have done it before.”

Now, when you come to a problem, once you establish your purpose—to seek the Lord—stop and think about those times when you’ve had difficulty before, and think of those times when God was with you and God did not fail you. He has never failed you, and He will not fail you. And, what He has done before He will do again. What He’s done for others He will do for you. He is the Lord. He changes not (Psalm 15:4). And, God did not die for you, shed His blood for you, to abandon you. Look back and remember those other times, and see how God came through for you. *Today is the tomorrow that you worried about yesterday.* God will take care of you.

IV. He Embraced the Promise

He encountered a problem. He established a purpose. He examined his past. And then, he embraced the promise. Look, if you will now, beginning in verse 8: he speaks of what God did for the ancient people, and it says, *“And they dwelt therein”*—that is, “in the land that God gave them”—*“and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit”* (2 Chronicles 20:8–11).

Now, what's he saying? He's saying, "Lord, You gave us this land. And Lord, You told us that when trouble, difficulty, pestilence, famine, enemies came, Lord, if we would seek Your face, that Lord, You would hear, and Lord, You would deliver us. And now, Lord, I am holding You to it. I am reminding You, Almighty God, of Your promise. You gave us this land, and this crowd has come to kick us out of the possession, Lord, that You have given to us." Look in verse 11: *"Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit"* (2 Chronicles 20:11).

Now listen, God has given us something better than the land of Canaan: God has given us victory in the Lord Jesus Christ. And, the devil would love to kick you out of the land of victory and have you to live in the wilderness of defeat. And, you don't have to take it—you don't have to take it. You have to get a promise from God and stand on that promise of God. You are not going to embarrass God by embracing His promise. You cannot do it.

As a matter of fact, I was reading today from Hebrews chapter 13, verses 5 and 6. They really blessed me. Here's what the writer of Hebrews is saying in this passage: *"Let your conversation"*—that is, "your behavior" is what that literally means—*"be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have"*—and, by the way, that's a good injunction for all of us—*"for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper"* (Hebrews 13:5–6). Now, put those together: *"he hath said...that we may boldly say"* (Hebrews 13:5–6). Find something that God has said, and say it boldly. If God says it, you can say it. That's what Jehoshaphat did: he said, "God, this is what You said, and because You said it, Lord, I am going to boldly say it. I am not going to let these people take away from me that which You have given me" in verse 11 (2 Chronicles 20:11). "It is mine. They're trying to take it away from me, Lord, but You gave it to me, and they cannot have it. I am standing on Your promise."

He encountered a problem. He established a purpose. He examined his past and found out what God has done. He embraced a promise; he found a promise of God, and he said, "I'm going to stand on that promise." *"He hath said...that [I might] boldly say"* (Hebrews 13:5–6).

V. He Exposed His Powerlessness

Now, here's the fifth thing he did: he exposed his powerlessness. You see, he's not an arrogant man. This is not self-confidence. Look in verses 12 and 13: *"O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee"*—now friend, that's underlined in my Bible—*"we [don't know] what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children"* (2

Chronicles 20:12–13). Can you see them standing there with their little children, saying, “God, we don’t know what to do. But God, we’ve got a promise from You. And God, our eyes are upon You. Our eyes are not upon ourselves. Our eyes are not upon our enemy. Our eyes are not upon circumstances. Our eyes are on You. And Lord, if we die, we’re going to die with our eyes on You”? Do you think God’s going to forsake people like that? He can’t do it. They’ve gotten a promise, and they are standing on the promise of God, exposing their own powerlessness. “We don’t know what to do. We don’t have any strength, but we are looking to You.”

This afternoon, when I was meditating on this verse, an old hymn came to me. And, I got up, and got my hymnal, and just wrote these words out of it:

*Abide with Me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

—HENRY F. LYTE

I’m helpless, but Lord, my eyes are on You.

VI. He Enlisted His Protection

Now, not only did he expose his powerlessness, but he enlisted, therefore, his protection. Now, begin, if you will, in verses 14 and following: “*Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; And he said*”—here’s a man now that God’s Spirit comes upon him, and he says—“*Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s*”—that ought to be underscored; it is in my Bible—“*To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you*” (2 Chronicles 20:14–17).

What he does now—as he exposes his powerlessness, he, at this time, enlists his own protection. And, God is saying to him through this man... And, by the way, I love this: the Spirit of God comes upon one man in the congregation, and that man stands up to encourage all of the rest of them to take the promise of God and make it live in their hearts. Has God ever done that to you? Have you been in a problem and some preacher, or some song, or some scripture, or some book has just taken the Word of God and made it alive to you, makes it vibrant to you, makes it real to you, and God just

speaks to you, and God says, “It’s going to be all right”?

“The battle is not yours, [Jehoshaphat]” (2 Chronicles 20:15). And, by the way, the battle never has been ours. It doesn’t depend on our ability; it depends upon His ability, and our response to His ability, which is our responsibility to depend upon Him.

VII. He Engaged His Protection

Now, he enlisted his protection, and then, as we sharpen the focus—look at this: he engaged his preparation. He’s getting ready for a battle now, and notice what he does in verses 18 and 19: *“And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD”—*that also is underscored in my Bible—*“worshipping the LORD”—*that’s what we’ve been talking about—*“And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high. And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD” (2 Chronicles 20:18–21).*

Now, what he did—he just engaged his preparation; he began to worship God. Whenever you have any kind of a problem, any kind of a battle, any kind of a situation, you establish your purpose to seek God, you get a promise from God, you stand on that promise—let the Holy Spirit of God make that promise real to you—and then you just simply begin to worship God. It will be a great day when we learn that worship comes before either work or war—that we must worship.

VIII. He Expressed His Praise

Now, what did he do after he engaged his preparation and began to worship? He expressed his praise. Look again now in verses 20 and following: *“And they rose early in the morning”—*and I read part of this, but let me read it again—*“and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever”—*and notice verse 22—*“And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and*

destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another”—now, what happens is this: when they began to praise... Well, let's go onto verse 24—“And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped” (2 Chronicles 20:20–24).

As they're going forth to sing and to praise the beauty of holiness, after they worship the Lord, they begin to praise the Lord. And, as they do, a strange thing happens: the enemy turns on himself. Now, let me tell you this about praise: *praise infuses the energy of God, and praise confuses the enemies of God.* There's something about praise that sends the enemy into consternation and confusion. I have seen there's a pattern in the Bible that when God's people begin to praise Him, when God's people say, “Our eyes are upon You,” God sends confusion into the camp of the enemy. I can take my Bible tonight and show you four or five incidences where this precise thing happened—where people began to trust God, look to God, praise God, and the enemy turns on himself and destroys himself.

Now, if you're in the middle of a problem, begin to praise God, because God says, “The battle is not yours, but it's Mine. But, you're going to have a part in the battle, and your part in the battle is praise.” And, you can't hide until the battle is over and then praise the Lord. You say, “Lord, when You've done it all, and when You've given me the victory, I'm going to praise You,” and God says, “You're not going to have any victory until you start praising—until you start singing.” “Well,” you say, “I can't sing, and I can't praise yet, because I don't have any victory yet,” and God says, “All right. I'm not going to do anything yet.” You say, “Well, I can't praise God in the middle of my problems,” and God says, “Okay, live with them.” Now folks, I'm telling you, it's praise that comes not after the victory; it is praise that comes before the victory. Why is this? That is the ultimate faith—when we begin to praise God before we see the answer, because that's our way of saying, “God, we don't know how You're going to do it. It's none of our business to know. But God, You're bigger than this problem; therefore, I praise You.” He just expressed his praise.

You see, lack of praise when we pray is unbelief. Philippians 4, verse 6: “*Be careful for nothing*”—that means “don't worry about anything”—“*but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*” (Philippians 4:6). Or, Colossians 4, verse 2: “*Continue in prayer...watch in the same with thanksgiving*” (Colossians 4:2). What kind of thanksgiving? Just “Thank You, Lord, for the victory. I praise You, Lord, for the victory.” Prayer and praise are the two wings of spiritual power.

IX. He Enjoyed His Provisions

Now, here's the next thing he did after he expressed his praise: he enjoyed the provisions. Look, if you will, in verses 25 and following: *"And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them"—by the way, the enemy just decimated himself—"And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much"* (2 Chronicles 20:25).

Now, not only did Jehoshaphat have victory over the enemy, but he ended up with the enemy's possessions. That's just like our God. Did you know that Satan, in a very real way, is God's messenger-boy to bring you blessings? You say, "Not the devil." Yes he was. Paul called him "a messenger of Satan, an angel of Satan, coming to tempt to me" (2 Corinthians 12:7). But, he was really a servant of the Lord. And, it happens so many times that when somebody comes against us to hurt us, to harm us, whether it be the world, the flesh, or the devil, and we really and truly begin to praise God, at that time, we are enriched.

I know that one time in Florida, when I was pastor there at Merritt Island, somebody—the reporter in the local newspaper there—said to me, "Mr. Rogers, I'm going to do a profile on you." And, I said, "What is a profile?" "I'm going to do an investigative story on you." Our church was growing fast, and we were kind of a higher profile church there. Now, this man hated Christians. He hated the Baptists particularly, and he hated Baptist preachers most of all. And, he had that kind of ability—very sarcastic and very cutting. And, he said, "I'm going to do a profile on you." He said, "You can cooperate with me if you want to, or not—it makes no difference to me. But," he said, "I'm going to find out everything about you, and I'm going to put it in the paper." I didn't have anything I was particularly ashamed of, and I said, "I don't have any secrets. Anything you want to know...you're free to follow me around, ask any questions, come sit in my office sometime if you want, and watch me do what I do." So, people at the newspaper that worked over there who knew me and loved me said, "Pastor, we know this man—he's really out to do you in. He's got a vendetta, and he's going to write a scurrilous story about you."

Well, I told Jesus on him. And then, I went to the Word of God to do exactly what I'm telling you that Jehoshaphat did. I went to the Word of God to find a promise, and God gave me a promise. Now, has God ever just taken a word out of the Word and made that word good to you? God gave me this promise, and it's Isaiah 54, verse 17—here's what it said: *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is [from] me, saith the LORD"* (Isaiah

54:17). Isn't that a good verse? That's Isaiah chapter 54, verse 17. That would have been a good verse any time, but God just took that verse and God made that verse my verse. I read that verse frequently, over and over again, and prayed it back to the Lord, and just stood upon that verse, just as Jehoshaphat got a word from God to stand upon. And, God told me, "My son, the battle is not yours; it's Mine. You just trust Me."

And so, people were telling me, "Pastor, we've read snippets of this story. This man is doing a real hatchet job on you." And, I just kept praising the Lord. Upon a time, he came to the First Baptist Church of Merritt Island where I was pastor, and he came in scraggly old clothes. And, he had his photographer there with him, and he was kindly, gently making a nuisance of himself while I was preaching—out around taking shots and so forth. I got through the service, and God blessed the service in a wonderful way. And, the people were just so happy in the Lord, and I was glad for that testimony.

And, I stood at the front door shaking hands. And, our church was much smaller; it just had one door where I could stand there and shake hands. He was there with his photographer, making shots of me shaking hands. And, it so happened—I don't know why it happened that Sunday...well, just by the providence of God—that a man who was in his very zenith in football showed up at our church that morning. His name was Johnny Unitas. Johnny Unitas, at that time, was the best-known football player in the world. He showed up at the First Baptist Church of Merritt Island. He'd never been there before, and never since. What he's doing in my services, I have no idea. One of the ushers came up and whispered to me. I didn't even know he was there when I was preaching. "Pastor, Johnny Unitas was in the service this morning." I said, "You've got to be kidding!" He said, "No." So, I'm there shaking hands, and this man and his photographer is right behind me. And, out comes Johnny Unitas. I said, "Good morning, John. Good to have you this morning." He said, "Great sermon, Pastor." I said, "Thank you very much," and I said, "How are you, Ms. Jones?" and so forth. The guy behind me said, "Who is that?" I said, "That was Johnny Unitas." He said, "What is he doing here?" I said, "He came to worship. How are you, Ms. Smith? Good to see you." You know, well, that blew him out of the saddle. And, you know, I was thinking, "Oh good night! Johnny Unitas is here, and I don't even have a camera." But, the guy right behind me got a picture for me of me shaking hands with Johnny Unites, which picture I have. And, I just thought, "God does little neat things like that."

So, after it was over, I got a letter from him—this scurrilous reporter—and he said, "Well, I guess you will be happy to know that I have been fired." He said, "They didn't like my story." He said, "They have rewritten it; they've done a puff job on you." And, I just thought to myself, "Uh huh—*'no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is [from] me, saith the*

LORD” (Isaiah 54:17).

Now, that doesn’t mean that we always get out unscathed. But, I’m telling you, folks, we have to learn to praise God in times of trouble. And, until we begin to praise God with our troubles, we just live with them. God brings us these problems to bring us to Him, and the very things that we dread are those things that break with blessings on our heads. And, here was old King Jehoshaphat—it took them three days to carry away the booty of the battle, because they learned to go forth and praise the Lord. And, we can—we shall—praise our way to victory.

Conclusion

I wrote down here ten things that you ought to do when trouble comes. Number one: Learn to see all satanic oppositions as an opportunity. Number two: Seek the face of God before taking any action; this may include fasting. Number three: Remember those times when God has already shown Himself faithful to you. Number four: Go to the Word of God, and look for a promise to stand on. Number five: Let the Holy Spirit of God make that promise a burning reality in your heart. Number six: Refuse any confidence in the flesh, and put your eyes upon God. Number seven: Give yourself to worship. Number eight: Then, begin to praise God in the face of opposition. Number nine: Expect God to send confusion to the enemy. Number ten: Get ready for a blessing. Just do it! Just take this chapter, and read it through, and learn to praise your way to victory.

Father, seal this to our hearts. We pray in Jesus’ wonderful name. Amen.

How to Praise Your Way to Victory

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: November 11, 2001

Main Scripture Text: 2 Chronicles 20:1–26

“And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.”

2 CHRONICLES 20:22

Outline

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Conclusion

Introduction

Total praise—and that’s what we’re going to be thinking about tonight: “How to Praise Your Way to Victory.” Would you turn, please, in the Old Testament, to 2 Chronicles chapter 20? And, I’m going to rush through this message tonight, but I pray God He will cause it to sink into your heart.

Now, there had been a mighty revival under King Jehoshaphat, but there was an enemy that came against him. And, when an enemy comes against you, that does not mean that God has forsaken you or that God is not with you. The enemy may come against you because God is with you. And, when God opens the windows of Heaven to bless you, the devil will open the doors of Hell to blast you. And, you’re going to know trouble if you serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but when that trouble comes, it will draw you closer to Him; and you can turn praise into victory.

Now, let’s study this thing and see what happened to King Jehoshaphat so long ago.

But, this is not history; this is devotional literature, because the Bible says, *“All these things happened [to] them for examples [to us]”* (1 Corinthians 10:11). And, if you don’t have a problem right now, just wait a while, okay?

I. Jehoshaphat Encountered a Problem

Now, notice in 2 Chronicles chapter 20, verses 1 and 2, and notice what Jehoshaphat did; he encountered a problem: *“[And] it came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. [And] then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from [behind]”—“from beyond”—“the sea on this side of Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi”* (2 Chronicles 20:1–2).

Now, do you have a problem, or are you about to have a problem? Well, that problem is a blessing in disguise. James said, *“Count it all joy when [you] fall into divers [trials or tests]”* (James 1:2). That’s a very hard thing for me to do. Now, you say, “Well, Adrian, you never have any problems.” I do, and I have to remember that problems come to the children of God. And, James told us, “Count it all joy”—not *if*, but—*“when you come into these diverse trials and temptations”* (James 1:2).

I’ve looked around tonight at the congregation. Some of you, I know, are going through excruciating problems at this very moment. As a matter of fact, Joyce, you and I were talking about some of our dear church members coming up here to church tonight who are going through great problems.

II. Jehoshaphat Established His Purpose

All right. First thing he did—he encountered a problem. Now, here’s the second thing he did: he established his purpose. It’s very important that you establish your purpose when a problem comes. Look, if you will now, in verses 3 and 4: *“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD”—*may I stop right there and ask you this question: Have you ever really, one time in your life, ever just set yourself to seek the Lord, to say, “With all of my might—every inch, every nerve, every fiber, with my total being—I am set to seek the Lord?”—*“and [he] proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD”* (2 Chronicles 20:3–4). Would to God that America would do the same thing—out of all of our cities, just come to seek the Lord!

Now, this man’s first thought was not his last resort. He didn’t turn to the Lord after he’d tried everything else, like so many of us do. The very first thing he did when trouble came—he set himself to seek the Lord. That’s what Jesus told us to do: *“seek...first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness”* (Matthew 6:33).

Now, a lot of us want to be counselors, and some of us fancy ourselves as counselors. May I tell you that if you're a counselor, you may do a bad job, if you solve a problem for the individual that you're counseling with. Did you know that that problem may be God's way to bring that individual to the Lord? And, rather than trying to solve his or her problem, the best thing you could ever do as a counselor is to encourage that individual in his or her problems to seek the Lord—to seek the Lord. When a problem comes, that is an opportunity to seek God in time of trouble. Good verse—here it is: Hebrews 4, verse 16: *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”* (Hebrews 4:16). We have times of need. We can come boldly to the Lord like Jehoshaphat did and establish our purpose to seek Him.

III. Jehoshaphat Examined His Past

Here's the third thing he did: he examined his past. Now, when you come into a problem, look back over your shoulder and see what God has done for you in the past. That's what this man did. Begin now in verse 5: *“And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to [thy] seed...Abraham [and to] thy friend for ever?”* (2 Chronicles 20:5–7). Now, what he does—he says, “Now God, You're so awesome. You're so great. You have power and might. There is nothing, there is nobody, who can stand against You—none whatsoever. And Lord, You gave us this land. Lord, You put us here, and You solved our problems in the past.” Now folks, whenever a problem comes, seek the Lord, and then turn around and think what God has already done for you.

Now, I have reached some mature years, and as I look back over those years, I can see time after time after time after time after time where problems, heartaches, have come. You say, “Pastor, I didn't know you ever had any problems.” I just don't talk about them very much. But folks, you couldn't be a pastor of a church like this without meeting problems every day, many of them—some of them—king size. But folks, when I turn around and I look back to the past, I can tell you that God has been faithful—God has been faithful. Over and over and over again, Joyce and I have seen the hand of God as God has moved in the past. And, I want you to remember that what God has done He will do, because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and God did not save you to abandon you. So, examine your past.

IV. Jehoshaphat Embraced a Promise

Now, next, he embraced a promise. And, I want you to find a promise in the Word of God. Look, if you will, beginning in verse 8: and he says, *“And they dwelt therein”—that is, “in the land that You gave them”—“and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come [against]”—“to come [to] cast”—“us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit” (2 Chronicles 20:8–11).*

Now, what’s he doing? He’s saying, “O God, You gave us this land. It’s the Promised Land. God, You brought us here, and this bunch has come to try to take away from us what You have given us, dear God—the promise that You have given to us.” Now folks, I’ve learned this about God: you’re not going to embarrass God by standing on His promises. When trouble comes, do like old King Jehoshaphat did, and set yourself to seek the Lord. Look back in your past, and see what God has done, how God has brought you thus far. Then, find a promise in the Word of God, and stand on it.

Let me give you a good one—Hebrews 13, verses 5 and 6: *“Let your conversation”—that means “your behavior”—“be without covetousness...be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said”—listen to this; I love it—“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”—now friend, either that’s true, or it’s not true. How many believe it’s true? Let me see your hand—“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper...I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Hebrews 13:5–6). Now friend, these are promises in the Word of God. They are great promises. And, they’re not mottos to be hung on the wall; they’re checks to be carried to the bank and cashed. You can stand on the Word of God.*

And, what Jehoshaphat is saying is, “Look, God, this crowd has come to take away the possessions that You’ve given us.” And, I want to tell you that Satan wants to drive you out of the land of victory. Satan wants to keep you from possessing the land that He has given you, your spiritual Canaan, and you don’t have to let him do it. And, when Satan comes like these people come, and when problems come and they are originated of the devil, you can boldly say, *“The Lord is my helper...I will not fear what man shall do [to] me” (Hebrews 13:6).* And, you can say, “Satan, I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. I am His purchased possession. My sins are under the blood. You have no right, no authority, in my life. You’re trespassing on my Father’s property. And, in the name of Jesus, be gone.” You say, “Well, that’s like praying to the devil.” I’m not praying to a cat when I say,

“Scat.” I’m telling you something, folks; you listen to me: you get a promise, and you stand on that promise. Find a promise in the Word of God. He embraced his promise.

V. Jehoshaphat Exposed His Powerlessness

Next, he exposed his powerlessness—he exposed his powerlessness. He didn’t strut. He wasn’t cocky. Look, beginning now in verse 12, if you will: *“O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but”*—I love this next phrase, friend. I’ve prayed it so many times—*“our eyes are upon thee”*—*“our eyes are upon thee”*—*“And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children”* (2 Chronicles 20:12–13). Can you see them? “God, we don’t have any strength. Lord, we don’t know what to do.” They take their little children, and they look up and say, “God, our eyes are on You.” Friend, do you think God is going to forsake a people like that? Do you think God is going to let a people like that suffer, when they say, “God, if they kill us, our eyes are on You. Lord, no matter what they do to us, O God, our eyes are upon You. We’re trusting You and You alone. Our eyes are not on ourselves. Our eyes are not on our enemies. Our eyes are not on our circumstances. Our eyes are upon You”?

VI. Jehoshaphat Enlisted His Protection

Then, here’s the next thing he did: he enlisted his protection. Begin now in verse 14, and look: *“Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came in the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s”*—now friend, that’s a great verse for you to memorize right there—*“the battle is not yours, but God’s. To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. [And] ye...need [not] fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you”* (2 Chronicles 20:14–17).

Now, what he did—he got a promise from God. And friend, I’ve been there; and if you’ve been a Christian very long, you’ve been there. How wonderful when the Holy Spirit of God takes some promise from the Word and makes it real to you, and God says, “Look, Adrian, just trust Me. It’s not your battle; it’s My battle. Adrian, you don’t have to pray for victory; you pray from victory. I have already won the victory.” Do you know what your victory depends upon? Not your ability. That’s not your responsibility. It is your response to God’s ability, which is your greatest ability. You just simply say,

“Lord God, our eyes are upon You,” and God says, “That’s right, My child—the battle is not yours; it is Mine.” And so, here is Jehoshaphat. He enlists his protection.

VII. Jehoshaphat Engaged His Preparation

And then, he engaged his preparation. I want you to see how he prepared now for this strange battle. Begin now in verse 18: *“And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high”* (2 Chronicles 20:18–19). Now, this is what he’s doing now: he’s getting ready just to praise the Lord. He just falls on his face. Now, he’s going into battle. But, nothing will prepare you for the battle like worship. The man who can kneel before God—truly kneel before God—can stand before any problem. And, it will be a great day when we learn that worship comes before either work or warfare, when we worship the Lord.

So many times we just want to get at it without worshiping God. It reminds me of the little boys who were playing ball, and they only had one ball. And, they lost it, and they were out in the weeds looking for it. And, after a while, one of them said, “Forget the ball. Let’s get on with the game.” I think sometimes that’s what we do as a church: we forget worship and think we can just go on doing what we’re doing.

VIII. Jehoshaphat Expressed His Praise

So, what he did—he engaged his preparation, and then he expressed his praise. Notice, beginning in verse 20: *“And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O [Jerusalem], and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God”*—that’s another good one to underscore right there—*“Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army...to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and...praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; for they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped...destroy another”*—that is, they got so confused they turned on one another when God’s people began to praise. And, notice verse 24—*“And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, [there] were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped”* (2 Chronicles 20:20–24).

Now, the battle is the Lord's, but God says, "You're going to have a part. Well, what is your part, Jehoshaphat? You are going to praise. The battle is Mine, but I'm not going to do one solitary thing until you praise. So, get a choir out there, and start marching, and start singing." And, they would say, perhaps, "Well, now Lord, as soon as You give us the victory, we're going to sing." He says, "No, I'm not going to give you any victory until you start singing." "Well, Lord, I don't see the victory...because I can't praise You yet, because I can't see the victory." "Then, just go and live with the problem."

Friend, are you willing to praise God in the midst of your problems—I mean, in the face of your enemy, when you don't have anything but the promise of God, who says, "I will not leave you, nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). The battle is not yours; it's Mine. Now, get out there and praise the Lord"? You see, your lack of praise is really unbelief. And, the Bible teaches that when we praise the Lord, we're really expressing our faith in God.

Prayer and praise go together. Colossians 4, verse 2: "*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*" (Colossians 4:2). Prayer and praise are the two wings of spiritual power. Prayer infuses us with the energy of God, and prayer confuses the enemies of God. When... You know, the devil is allergic to praise. If there's any kind of a problem, and you know it is satanically caused—by the way, if the problem is because of your sin, don't go around praising the Lord. Just repent, okay? Just repent—but if you know this is obviously an attack from the enemy, then you just begin to praise God. And, do you know what will happen when you praise God? I've seen it happen so many times in the Bible and in my own life: God sends confusion into the camp of the enemies. The enemy is distracted—the devil is confused—by praise, and we just need to praise the Lord. Just go out there, and in the face... I don't care what the difficulty is, if it is satanically caused, not your own personal sin—if it's your own personal sin, you need just to repent—but if it is attack of the devil, just begin to praise God. And, I'll promise you God will send confusion into the camp of the enemy.

IX. Jehoshaphat Enjoyed His Provisions

But, not only did he express his praise; he enjoyed his provisions. Look in verses 25 and 26—they come up there, and these people have decimated one another: "*And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering...the spoil, it was so much. And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah...[where] they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the...place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day*" (2 Chronicles 20:25–26). Now, what they did, folks, is just go in there and pick up the loot. The battle was God's. Confusion came into the camp of the enemy. And, they loaded themselves

down with silver, and gold, and jewels.

Now, if the devil attacks you, you praise God, and you're going to find out that the devil is just going to be God's messenger-boy to bring you riches. God will make Satan your servant when you begin to praise the Lord in the midst of great difficulty.

I'll tell you a little story that happened to me, and then I'll be finished with the message. When I was down in Florida, and Brother Whitmire and I were ministering together at The First Baptist Church of Merritt Island, there was a newspaper reporter, a feature writer, who hated God, hated Christians even more, hated Baptists even more, hated Baptist preachers even more, and hated me the most. And, he did not like what I was doing, what I preached, what I stood against, what I said. And, he told me one day—he said, "I've gotten permission from the newspaper to write a feature article about you." And, he said, "You can cooperate with me if you want to, or else I'll just do investigative reporting." I guess he thought I was some sort of a shyster, or crook, or whatever. I said, "Well, I don't have any secrets. If you want to do a report on me, you can follow me around. You can come sit in my office when I talk, if you want to. My life is an open book." He followed me around. He was a scruffy, shabbily dressed man, who went out of his way to be rude. And, I tried to show the love of Jesus to him. I had friends in the newspaper office over there that said, "Pastor, that man is writing a terrible, horrible article about you." They said, "Nothing he's saying is true, but the way it's slanted—it's terrible."

Well, what I did—I told Jesus on him, and then I got a promise from the Word of God. Now, God will take a word out of the Word, and He'll give you a promise. Here's the promise God gave to me—Isaiah 54, verse 17: *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is [from] me, saith the LORD"* (Isaiah 54:17). I reminded God of that promise day after day. My people said, "Pastor, it's going to be a terrible article. Get ready. Brace yourself." I got a phone call from that man. He said, "Well, I'm going to give you the news: they fired me." And, he said, "They took the article from me, and somebody is rewriting that article." And, he said, "I know that you're going to like it." And, they gave us the most glorious article in the newspaper. I was on the front page of the Sunday supplement. The title of the article was "Reverend Rogers and His Island in the Sun." And, we could not have bought that kind of publicity for our church, and I was just reminded one more time, when we praise the Lord, when we take a promise of God and stand upon it, God moves in.

Let me just quickly remind you of ten things, if you have a problem. And, here they are—I'm just going to rattle them off. Number one: You learn to see all satanic opposition as an opportunity to be blessed. Number two: You seek the face of God

before you take any action whatsoever. Number three: You remind yourselves of those times when God has already been faithful to you. Number four: Go to the Word of God; look for a promise to stand on it. Number five: Let the Holy Spirit of God make that promise a burning reality in your heart. Number six: Refuse any confidence in the flesh—none whatsoever. Number seven: Give yourself to praise, to worship. Number eight: Begin to praise the Lord in the face of that opposition. Number nine: Expect God to send confusion to the enemy. And, number ten: Get ready for a blessing.

We serve a mighty God. Amen and amen.

Conclusion

Now, I've been talking to the children of God. Now, if you're not a child of God, the devil may not oppose you at all. As a matter of fact, you're buddies. I tell people, if you've never met the devil, it's because you and the devil are traveling in the same direction. You turn around—you'll have a head-on collision with him. Now, I'm wondering today, had you rather be in collusion with the devil or in collision with the devil? Do you want Christ as your Lord and Savior? Do you want to say, "I know that I know that I'm saved. I know that I'm Heaven-born; I'm Heaven-bound"? You can know it by receiving Jesus Christ. God loves you. Jesus died for you. Your sin has been paid for. You can receive Him tonight by faith and be a part of the family of God.

I'd like every head bowed and every eye closed. And, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, how many of you tonight can say, "Pastor Rogers, I know that I know that my sin has been forgiven. I know that I know that Jesus Christ is in my heart. I know if I died tonight, by God's grace, I would go straight to Heaven—not because of anything I've done, except put my faith in the crucified, risen Son of God. And, God has forgiven me. God's Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I'm a child of God, and I have a Bible reason for believing that I'm going to Heaven when I die. And, I have a hope every day that I live that is real, steadfast, and sure"? If you can give me a testimony like that, would you lift your hand? Hold it up. Thank you very much. Take it down.

Now, if you couldn't lift your hand, may I lead you in a prayer right now? You pray this prayer: "Dear God"—just pray it in your heart—"Dear God, I'm a sinner, and I'm lost. And, I want to know, like these other people, that I'm saved. Thank You, Jesus, for dying for me. Lord Jesus, I turn from my sin. I turn to You. I take myself off the throne of my life; I enthrone You into my heart. Come, Lord Jesus. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Save me. Take control of my life tonight. And, begin now tonight to make me the person You want me to be. Save me, Jesus."

Did you ask Him? Then, pray this way: "Thank You, Lord Jesus, for doing it. Thank You, Jesus. I believe You've done it, and I'll make it public. I'll not be ashamed of You. I'll make it public. In Your name I pray. Amen."

Cleansing the Temple for Revival

By Adrian Rogers

Date Preached: July 10, 1994

Main Scripture Text: 2 Chronicles 28:23–27; 29:1–5, 16, 20–36

“And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron.”

2 CHRONICLES 29:16

Outline

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Introduction

Personal revival. The Lord Jesus cleansed the temple in the New Testament, but there's an Old Testament cleansing of the temple. It is a picture, in the Old Testament, of revival. I just want to call this message “Cleansing the Temple for Revival.”

You know, the temple of God that the Jews had in the Old Testament was a place, a house, of worship, but it was also a colossal object lesson, because that temple—that physical, material building—prophesied and portended our bodies. You know, in the New Testament, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 19, the Bible says, *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy [Spirit]...which [you] have of God”* (1 Corinthians 6:19). So, in the Old Testament, God had a temple for His people; in the New Testament, He has a people for His temple. And, all of those Old Testament things that happened—they were illustrations and object lessons. The Bible says they were examples to us (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Now, this is the story of a mighty, mighty revival that happened under the leadership of good King Hezekiah, and there are some wonderful lessons for our hearts as we prepare to take the Lord's Supper.

I. The Situation That Preceded Revival

Now, actually, I want us to back up in 2 Chronicles chapter 28 and begin to read in verse 23. And, what I want to do here is, as I talk about this revival, I want to talk, first of all, about the situation that preceded it. Look, if you will, in verse 23. It speaks of King Ahaz, and he was a wicked king. And, it says, *"For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers. Now the rest of his acts and all of his ways, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem: but they brought him not [unto] the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead"* (2 Chronicles 28:23–27).

Now, what caused them to need a revival was there was a wrong king in charge of the temple—a wicked king was in charge of that temple. And, he had turned himself to idolatry, and idolatry was his ruin. You say, "What does that have to do with me today, Pastor Rogers?" Well, all of us are king of the temple, and we're in charge of the temple. And, we may be guilty of doing what wicked King Ahaz did, concerning the temple. Number one: He turned to idolatry; he turned to the gods of the kings of Syria, thinking perhaps they could help him.

You say, "Well, I've not turned to idolatry." Well, I don't know whether you have or not, but let me just check up with you. Is there anything that you love more than Jesus? Is there any one you fear more than God? Is there anything that you value more than the Lord? Is there any one that you serve more than Him? If so, you are an idolater. An idol is anything you love, fear, serve, or value more than God.

And so, here was the wrong king in charge of the temple. He was a man who allowed idolatry to come into his heart and into his life. And, the Bible says here he had closed the door of the house of God; he had nailed it shut (2 Chronicles 28:24). And, many of us have done the same thing, spiritually. Now, that's the situation that preceded it.

II. The Start That Precipitated Revival

Now, here's the second thing I want you to see: I want you to see, concerning this revival, the start that precipitated it. Here's something very wonderful. Begin now in verse 1: *"Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD"*—now, when the Bible tells you something like this, pay attention. God says, "This is good; this is right"—*"according to all that David his father had done. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them"* (2 Chronicles 29:1–3).

Now, what was the thing that he did that began this mighty revival? A little boy called it a "re-Bible"; we do need a "re-Bible." And, the Bible tells us right here how it started: he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Ahaz had nailed the doors of the temple shut.

Now, what does that say to me tonight? What does that say to you? "These things happened to them for illustrations to us" (1 Corinthians 10:11). What we need to do tonight is open the door of the temple—just open up to God. It's so hard today to preach to people. Do you know why? We won't open up. We have been lied to, and conned, and gypped, and used, and abused, and manipulated so many times that we're just all closed up, and we're so afraid to look God in the face. We're so afraid to let the winds of the Holy Spirit blow through our lives. And, we sit in church, and a sermon just sort of rolls off of us like water off a duck's back. Would you just open the door of the temple? Would you just open it up and say, "Lord, here I am. I lay down my defenses. I just want to open myself up to You, dear God. Begin to speak to me"? God will not force Himself on you. The Lord Jesus described Himself, standing before that church at Laodicea, saying, *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man [will] hear my voice, and [will] open the door..."* (Revelation 3:20). Just open the door. God's not going to force His way in. So, you see the situation that preceded it. You see, dear friend, the start that precipitated it. He just opened the door.

III. The Sanctification That Prepared Revival

Now, I want you to see the sanctification that prepared it. Begin reading in verse 4. Here's what good King Hezekiah did: *"he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them...into the east street, And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place"* (2 Chronicles 29:4–5). This is the sanctification that prepared it. "Priests and Levites, sanctify yourselves, and then go in and sanctify the temple. Go into the holy place, and carry all of the filth out of that holy place." Skip

on down to verse 16: *“And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron”* (2 Chronicles 29:16). That is, “carry it there, and dump it where it can be washed away and done with.” In the very Holy of Holies, in the innermost part, there needed to be cleansing.

Do you know what your Holy of Holies is? It’s your spirit. There is the outer court; that’s your body. There’s the inner court; there’s your soul. But, the Holy of Holies—that’s where God dwells. And, what we need to say is, “O God, do a work”—not in the outward man. I mean, hey, folks, look around. You all look so holy tonight. We’re in church. We have Bibles. A preacher preaches, and we nod our heads; and we say, “Amen,” and, “Isn’t Jesus wonderful?” and all of that. But tonight, I speak to you, and I speak to me; and I say, “Open the door, and clean the house. Sanctify it.”

Is there anything un-Christlike in your life? Do you know what sin is? The Bible says, *“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). Sin is just coming short of the glory of God. What is the glory of God? The standard that God lifts up. It’s His Son, the Lord Jesus, who is His glory. Don’t measure yourself by me, or by some other Christian, or especially by some hypocrite. Don’t lie down in the gutter, and stretch yourself out alongside some hypocrite, and say, “I’m longer than he is. I must be pretty good.” Measure yourself by Jesus. Anything that comes short of the glory of God, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, is sin. It’s that gap between us and Him.

You say, “Pastor Rogers, that’s a high standard.” Yes—yes. Get the filth out. We can’t have revival until the false gods have been removed and the filthiness that has been brought into our temple is taken out—all the vain things that charm me most. Now, with most of us, it’s not going to be adultery, or lying, or stealing, or cursing, but it could be the pride of life. It could be materialism. It could be the love of ease and pleasure. It could be unbelief. It could be laziness, coldness, prayerlessness. These are vile sins. Get the filth out. It’s the sanctification that prepared it.

IV. The Sacrifice That Provided Revival

And then, look at the sacrifice that provided it. Go down, if you will, to verses 20 through 24, and find out what happened when they carried all this filth out—look: *“Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the LORD. So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled it on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the*

blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood [on] the altar. And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them: And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel” (2 Chronicles 29:20–24). That’s the sacrifice that provided it.

Seven—why this repetition of seven? Because seven is the perfect number. What do all of these Old Testament sacrifices speak about? The blood of Jesus that washes away our sin. Now, when they went into the temple, into the holy place, and carried all of the filth out, and sanctified the temple, that was one thing. But still, now it needed to be cleansed. There was sin that needed to be forgiven. And, the Bible tells those of us, concerning our temple, in the New Testament, *“the blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son [cleanses] us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). “If we confess our [sin], he is faithful and just to forgive us our [sin], and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).*

Now, there’s no need to plead the blood of Jesus, unless you repent, unless you confess. The word *confess* means, actually, “to agree with God about your sin.” But, when we agree with God, when we say, “Lord, come in and take all of that filth out that’s in the holy place,” then the blood can be offered and the sacrifice of Jesus can cleanse.

V. The Singing That Pronounced Revival

Then, I want you to notice not only the sacrifice that provided it, but I want you to see the singing that pronounced it. Brother Jamie, look in verse 25: *“And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, [and] psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer...Nathan the prophet...so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets” (2 Chronicles 29:25).* By the way, there are some people who just don’t believe you ought to praise God on musical instruments. They say, “That’s not biblical.” Well, God, somehow, must have changed His taste for music. The Bible says, *“He set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, [and] psalteries, and...harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and [with] the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished”—verse 29—“And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the*

Levites”—“commanded the Levites”—“to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and...Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped” (2 Chronicles 29:25–30).

Friend, sin will steal our song, and revival will bring it back. And, you can tell when people are revived: they want to sing. Churches want to sing. I cannot understand for any body who claims to know and love the Lord Jesus who can sit in a service and not sing. To me, it's a sign that there's something spiritually wrong. Oh, friend, how can we help but sing? You say, “I don't have the talent to sing.” It doesn't matter about talent. As Brother Whitmire has told us so many times, the Bible says, *“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD”* (Psalm 98:4).

Now, sometimes we don't sing because we've just lost our song. I was reading Max Lucado. He was telling about a woman who was vacuuming her house with her vacuum cleaner, and she had one of these—like an Electrolux. It has a tube and a little appliance. And, she looked over there in the birdcage where the little parakeet was, and she saw the bottom there looked like it needed vacuuming out. And, she stuck that hose in there, and that was a mistake, because Chippy went “Chuuuuuup!” And, she said, “What have I done?” She literally sucked that bird into that vacuum cleaner. Frantically, she opened the vacuum cleaner, ripped open the bag, and there was Chippy. He was alive, but he was covered with dust. She said, “Poor thing.” She took him into the bathroom, turned on the faucet, and took that little bird and washed him—scrubbed him good. And then, she looked at him. He looked pitiful. The little bird was all wet and shivering. So, she had an idea. She saw the hairdryer there, and she got the hairdryer and turned it on that bird, and dried him off, and fluffed him up. He seemed to be doing all right. And, she put Chippy back in the cage. And, somebody asked her—said, “How's he doing?” She said, “Well, he seems to be all right, but he doesn't sing anymore. He just sits there.” I don't think you'd sing either if you'd been sucked up, washed off, and blown out. I mean, he just sits there. And, I wonder what's wrong with some folks in the Church—they don't sing. Let those refuse to sing who never knew our Lord.

Here's revival. And when, dear friend, the doors of the temple were opened; when the house of God, the innermost person, was cleansed of the filthiness; when the blood of Jesus, typified by those animals, applied to that temple for forgiveness, then, dear friend, the people could not help but sing—then, dear friend, the people could not help but sing.

VI. The Stewardship that Proved Revival

And, I want you to notice not only the singing that pronounced it; I want you to see the stewardship that proved it. Look, if you will, in verse 31: *“Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring*

sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings...as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings. And the number of the burnt offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, and two hundred lambs: [and] all these...for a burnt offering [unto] the LORD. And the consecrated things were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep” (2 Chronicles 29:31–33). And, what did they do with it? Look up here, and let me tell you what they did with it: they burned it—they burned it. You say, “What a waste!” That just shows your spiritual ignorance.

We take offerings in this church because we have needs. We have needs to pay for these buildings. These buildings are not paid for, and they need to be paid for. We have needs in programs. We have missionary needs. The very light bill has to be paid. We have needs. I’m going to tell you something, dear brother: if we didn’t have a need in the world, if we just had an incinerator down here, and you were to say, “Here’s how much I love Jesus,” and just come and put your money in that incinerator, and it just went up in smoke—not to meet any need at all, but just simply to say, “Oh, how I love Jesus”... We need to learn that about giving. Yes, we give to meet a need. And, I’ll guarantee you, if you bring it, we’re not going to put it in an incinerator, because the needs are too great. But, when a person opens the doors of the temple, the winds of revival begin to blow. When you haul out that filth that’s been in, and the house is sanctified, and when the seven-fold perfect blood of Jesus cleanses, and when the song of the Lord begins, and the joy comes back, then you’ll want to give.

Most churches that are having a stewardship campaign need a revival—need a revival. You don’t have to beg people who love Jesus to sing, and you don’t have to beg people who love Jesus to give. And, some of these tightwads just need a revival. It’s all they need. We don’t give to meet a need; we give to the Lord Jesus because He has met our need. There’s the stewardship that proved it.

VII. The Service That Proceeded from Revival

There’s the service that proceeded from it. Look, if you will, in verse 33: *“And the consecrated things were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep. But the priests were too few”—*they needed workers. Things haven’t changed in thousands of years—*“the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the other priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests. And also the burnt offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings for every burnt offering”—*now, watch this—*“So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order”* (2 Chronicles 29:33–35). When you have revival, you don’t have to beg people to work.

Our nursery workers come to us from time to time and say, “Pastor Rogers, say something to the people. We need more nursery workers—we need workers. Where are we going to get them?” I want to say, it’s a crime, it’s a sin, if we don’t provide for these little ones. Jesus taught us to do it. And, we don’t just toss them in a room. We put them in a clean room, a sanitary room. And, we put them in there with people that we want to be acquainted with, people that we know, people with high standards, and people with morals, and people who care and love little children. But, very frankly, there are some of you who ought to be working in the nursery, and you don’t do it, and I’ll tell you why: you need a revival—you need a revival.

I mean, the workers were too few. The blessings of God had overrun them. Friend, no church ought to ever have to beg people to sing. No church ought to ever have to beg people to give. No church ought to ever have to beg people to serve, because they love Jesus! Do you love Jesus? Do you think this is some place where you just come to sit, soak, and sour? You’re like a sponge: you don’t give out anything unless you’re squeezed. You need a revival. You need to open the door of the temple. Just say, “Lord, he’s talking to me tonight,” and the doors open. You need to carry the filth out of the inner place. You need to let the blood cleanse. You need to let the song begin. You need to loosen up in the giving. You need to report for duty in the serving.

VIII. The Suddenness That Presented Revival

Not only the service that proceeded from it, but here’s the part that I really love: I want you to see the suddenness that presented it—the suddenness that presented it. Look, if you will, in verse 36—the last verse: “*And Hezekiah rejoiced*”—and, you see, all revival brings rejoicing—“*And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people*”—now, watch it—“*for the thing was done suddenly*”—“*suddenly*” (2 Chronicles 29:36). There’s the suddenness that presented it.

You know, revival can come just like that. Revival doesn’t have to be torturous, arduous. Just open yourself up to God. You don’t have to persuade God to bless you. It’s not God that we’re waiting on; God is waiting on us. God is one great, big, pent-up revival waiting to pour Himself out on the people of God. And, Jesus said, “*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled*” (Matthew 5:6).

Conclusion

How much of God do you have? Well, you have all you want. It’s foolish and wicked to think that it’s God that’s holding back revival. When we just open the doors of the temple; when we carry out that filth and throw it in the brook Kidron; when we let the precious blood of Jesus cleanse; when we begin to praise, and to give, and to serve, we

will be gratified, amazed, and surprised at how radically, dramatically, and quickly God will change us personally and God will bless us corporately. And, God's people said, "Amen."

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Now Father, I pray, dear God, that even in the course of this message and this meditation, that we have flung wide the doors of the temple; Lord, that we're dealing with anything that is filthiness in the house of God; and Lord, that tonight the blood of Jesus will wonderfully and wondrously cleanse; and Lord, that there will be, in our hearts, true, true revival. In Jesus's name. Amen.