

# 'The Prayer 20/20 Impact' - Knowing Jesus More! October 25th, 2020

*Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team, and whole Church Family,*

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

**2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)**

I can't help but praise God for the beautiful autumn foliage! As I was driving this week, an old song from my childhood Bible Club days just resurfaced to my heart. It goes like this:



***"My God is bigger than I am;  
Strongest of all, He is able to make the summer turn into fall;  
He controls all that happens, His power is plain to see;  
And I know I can trust Him, for with His love He cares for me!"***

This song summarizes a great theology for living in these pre-election days. Remember that God is sovereign, and He is still hearing our prayers, and we can expect Him to do so. Missionary Jim Elliott always said: **"God is still on His throne, and we are at His footstool. And there is only a knees' distance between."** Amen?!

Are you still wrestling in prayer for our nation? Many are calling for prayer for our nation. To that message I would like to add a call to repentance as well. Indeed, 2 Chronicles 7:14 not only calls us to pray but to follow through by humbling ourselves and aggressively turning away from evil. In that spirit, we then seek God's face. There is far too much compromise among us. We need a breakthrough into brokenness. A move of God is coming, but it will only be as deep as our repentance prepares us. Last week I introduced the first five Scriptures to help us as we pray for the upcoming election. I've entitled this series for our prayer partners: **"Ten Biblical Truths to Remember During an Election."** I will share the last five now, so if you need the first five, you need to access last week's Partners. The purpose of this letter is to take us beyond simply feeling sorry that we sinned. God wants to bring us into an attitude of repentance that goes deep, that persistently turns to God's grace until the fruit of righteousness comes forth in our lives.

Also remember as we pray to use the acrostic: P.C.B.C.- praise, confession, big picture, and current events. Today we are wrestling with current events in our

Partners to challenge us to keep praying more. Here are the last five Biblical truths to remember during an election:

### **1. God calls us to pray for our leaders and for repentance.**

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1–4). True repentance is to turn over the soil of the heart; it is to prepare the heart for a new planting of righteousness or directives from God. It is a vital stage where the kindness of the Lord works with us enlarging our capacity to walk in greater spiritual maturity. To repent is to "change one's mind." Such change can come quickly or it may take time and effort. Either way, the goal is to "bear fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matt. 3:8).

Indeed, the idea of "keeping with" our repentance means we do not cease turning from pride until we delight in lowliness. It means we continue to repent of selfishness until love flows naturally from us. And we do not stop mourning our impurities until we are pure.

The apostle John tells us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Do not hide from your sins; confess them. God's grace and the sacrifice of His Son are enough to cover and forgive any and every sin, but we must ask for forgiveness, humbling ourselves from the heart. Be honest about your sin and He will cleanse you of it. An exhortation: persist in your repentance, never doubting the generosity of God's mercy. God does not require of us more than He demands of Himself. If you sin 490 times in one day, after each time cry to Him for forgiveness. He will both forgive you and cleanse you of sin's effect. During one period in my life I repeatedly stumbled over the same problem. Grieved and doubting in my heart, I cried, "Lord! How long will you put up with me?" In a flash of grace and truth He answered, "Until I have perfected you."

If, however, you recoil at the word repentance, it is because you do not want to change. You need this message. When the thought of repentance is not shrouded in gloomy images of sackcloth and tears, when correction inspires rejoicing and shouts of praise to God's grace, know that your spirit has truly become pure. It is at this point you are walking the way God calls holy.

### **2. God calls us to peaceful repentance before revival happens.**

"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone" (Titus 3:1–2). A true revival does not just happen. There are conditions that must reside in the human heart before the Lord visits His people.

Too often, ministries today seek to deliver people who are unwilling to repent of sins, who have not cried in their hearts to God for help. The effect is that those prayed for may receive limited relief, but they soon fall back into sin and oppression. The key to successful deliverance is to discern if an individual is ready and willing to be released before we minister deliverance. Is he repentant? Has he put away his idols? Is his heart truly turning toward God?

God's pattern for us as individuals is also His pattern for the church. Even as the Lord did not deliver us until we cried for help, so the war for our churches and cities will not be won until a significant number of us are crying to God in prayer. Christ's purpose in bringing our church to prayer is to provide the proper heart attitudes to which the Almighty can respond.

Without the substructure of prayer and crying before God, deliverance, "binding and loosing" and other forms of spiritual warfare are significantly limited. Deliverance, according to Scripture, is the last stage of a process that began when a person's abhorrence for his present condition led him to cry to God for help. When God delivers us or answers our prayers, we need to be willing and ready to obey. Are we?

### **3. God calls us to be subject to authorities – knowing He establishes them.**

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God” (Romans 13:1). I honestly can't believe how often people have said, “I am so glad you preached on this passage before the Covid-19 pandemic.” Now as we are heading for our elections, we see the struggle more and more of being subject to our government and governor, but also seeing that there are also issues of obeying God which we want to do first. In Acts 5:28 the High Priest said to the Apostles, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name.” “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood.” Of course the man's blood was Jesus! How many during this election claim Jesus? Then Peter and the other apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than human beings!” How we are living out these principles more than ever before? Let's remember what God calls us to do.

It should be noted that the route to revival was not set according to a timetable; it was not precisely scheduled. No one can forecast how long judgment might last or when repentance has so excavated the heart of sinful man that God is satisfied. This one fact will be true: “The time it takes will always be longer than we expect.” The determining factor is the acknowledgment of sin and the return to God. Once the core of a nation was securely turned toward God, healing for their land followed. Nehemiah spoke of this pattern of repentance preceding national deliverance. He prayed: “Therefore Thou didst deliver them into the hand of their oppressors who

oppressed them, but when they cried to Thee in the time of their distress, Thou didst hear from heaven, and according to Thy great compassion Thou didst give them deliverers who delivered them from the hand of their oppressors" (Nehemiah 9:27). This is why we must pray for our leaders.

We must not hurry this process nor be frustrated if our prayers do not immediately activate divine intervention. The Lord is waiting for the nation to break beneath the weight of its rebellion. Yet, in this we should be encouraged: Our intercession is the first fruits of what is destined to become a national response to the Almighty!

#### **4. God calls us to make disciples of all nations.**

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20). This is the purpose of our ministry here along 611. Our church purpose must never be forgotten as we ask for revival. We must be laboring in the harvest fields evangelistically, at the same time as we pray for revival because it is our Great Commission. How can we expect God to send revival if we are not working the fields white to harvest? If we are making disciples, then God will hear our cry.

Once in Exodus, we see the pattern of Moses calling out for God to stop the affliction of His people. The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of My people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:7-8). Notice the Lord saw the affliction of His people; He heard their cries; He knew their sufferings. God is never far from the plight of mankind. In truth, He bears the misery of our society: our distresses distress Him; our suffering becomes His sorrow.

Returning to our text in Exodus, observe also that it was not merely their prayers which God heard; He heard their cries. It is one thing to pray about a need, quite another to weep over it. It is those who mourn whom God comforts. The Lord knew their afflictions and their sufferings. The prayer to which God responds is a constant cry, often born out of "afflictions" and "sufferings," as is occurring today in parts of Africa and Asia.

We must pray for this election not as just a religious discipline, but as the heartthrob of our existence. It will be our tears and weeping of unceasing intercession which will prevail before God, and then He will answer with revival. Perhaps what delays revival in our times is that we are troubled, but we are not afflicted by the conditions of our society; though saddened, we are not yet weeping.

## **5. God will be worshipped by all nations, and He only delays His coming, in order to provide last minute rescue!**

“All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name” (Psalm 86:9). The reason that Jesus doesn’t come right now, even when we can feel Him at the door, is because He is so patient and He is actively rescuing the souls of men. The world will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ He promised?” 2 Peter 3:9 has our answer, “The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Jesus is the great Rescuer. He is on a great rescue mission. If He chooses to wait for His coming, remember it is only because we should be busy praying for revival and the rescue of lost souls who hold out. Oh, how wonderful a patient Savior we have, who continues to wait. But while He is waiting, is He hearing our prayers calling out to Him?

The praying church should not limit the length of its dedication to intercession or prayer and let it be over on Tuesday November 3rd. God is looking for a life of prayer, not just a season. If the duration of time required to bring change can stop us, it is obvious that the preparatory work in our hearts is not deep enough to draw divine intervention.

How does all this relate to revival? Spiritual renewal is the only antidote for our cities and our nation. It is God's answer to all who cry unceasingly to Him for help. Every passage of God’s Word has an immediate and broader context that helps us to properly interpret and to faithfully and wisely apply His truth to our lives. The same is true of each of these texts. When we look at these passages together, their individual and collective meaning teaches the following eternal and imminently-needed truths: “No matter the outcome of this election or any election ... God is still in control. Jesus is on the throne, reigning over all. The Lord calls us to be obedient to Him, to be peaceful, gentle, and prayerful – and to put our hope in Him and continue His mission of making disciples of all nations. We must remember that God is always with us and that in the end, the nations will bow to the one who rules over them – Jesus Christ, Lord of all.”

When I was a kid, conflicts on the playground would often come down to whose dad was bigger. We'd go back and forth and say things like, "Well, my dad could beat up your dad." We are not fighting about Democrats and Republicans during this election; we are forgetting that God is working to a final end. In the Psalms, David essentially used this exact argument to talk about other gods in Psalm 115: "Why do the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands" (vs. 2-4, NIV). He went on to disparage their unspeaking mouths, unseeing eyes, and unhearing ears, concluding, "Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them" (v. 8, NIV). How many of us praying for revival are secretly worshipping the idols around us?

Your idea of who God is and how big He is really does matter. So just how big and powerful is He? To begin with, He's powerful enough to create everything in the universe, keep it running, and still care about all the details of your life—and He won't ever run out of power, either.

It's crucial you get a handle on God's greatness. Because a teeny-weeny little God can't do anything for you. When you see the impact of sin—pain and suffering and despair—a little God can't offer hope, and He certainly can't save you. But the God of the Bible operates on full power, and David wanted us to see that. Our God is unlimited in His Sovereignty. We have the greatest reminder of this all through our days leading up to this election. And it will not change the day after.

Just read David's reflection on the wonder of birth and human life: "You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works" (Psalm 139:13-14). God's work in you and in your life is not only marvelous but meticulous. As a human being, you are at the pinnacle of God's creation.

That truth goes against what a lot of us think about our bodies. We get daily messages about how we don't measure up—too tall, too short, too skinny, too fat, too pale, too dark—but David reminded us, "You are marvelous in God's eyes." This is true from the moment of conception to the moment you die. We live in a world that values life less and less, but every life counts to God, because He "skillfully wrought" each of us in the womb (v. 15).

Even more importantly, God cares for you. He thinks about you all the time. This week in my personal devotions I decided to read through Psalm 139 in a different translation each day. I keep reading this wonderful truth as David said, "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" (v. 17). You matter to the Creator of the universe. Nothing about this time of elections or what all us are experiencing will ever change that fact. I hope this brings encouragement to you not just before the election, but following.

**What does that mean for your everyday life? First of all, it should produce in you a sense of importance.** You're not an accident. You can wake up each morning and say, "I'm God's crowning creation; there's a reason I exist."

**Next, it should fill you with faith.** If God is that big, that powerful, and that careful with you, you can trust Him with every bit of your life—your problems, your future, your dreams. Remember we are "walking by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7)! We may not understand everything that happens during this election, but God does because He is Sovereign, remember our first five points.

**Finally, it should give you a sense of responsibility.** Since God has a purpose for us and since we can trust Him with everything, then we should make sure we understand His will and purpose for us. Paul prayed for this very thing—that "you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9).

So how big and powerful is our God during this election? Big enough for all we will ever need. "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before Him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and He rules over the nations." (Psalm 22:27–28)

Oh, as I close, I need to make an announcement. Lori and I will be away through this week for a pastor's "Refresh" conference and getaway. We haven't taken any time or vacation away this whole year, so it is important to us. Dave Stiansen's father, Dick, said to me: "Corvin, you must depart before you fall apart." If you remember when we attended our only conference before Covid-19 this year, Lori went into the hospital with food poisoning. So please keep us in prayer for health and safety this coming week. Also, I will not be preaching next Sunday November 1<sup>st</sup>. Tim VanSumeren will have the sermon for us. So there will be no outline or Bible study sent out next week. I also will not have a Partners in Prayer that Sunday either. We will restart those November 8<sup>th</sup>. Keep praying and inviting all our church attenders and friends back to our services. Our goal is to have everyone in service and back by Thanksgiving.

**Pray with me,**

***"Lord, forgive us for wanting relief instead of deliverance, for looking for shortcuts instead of Your perfect will. Master, we know that Your heart cannot refuse the genuine cry of the afflicted, that You cannot long bear the misery of Your people without acting on our behalf. So, we cry to You today! Send the rain of Your presence back to us! Cleanse us from our lusts for comfort and apathy. Bring us to the place where You can honor Your integrity and bring revival to our land! For Your glory we pray. Amen."***

**Serving and praying in His Name,  
Pastor Corvin <><**

*Chorus from Bill and Gloria Gaither:*

*"More of You, more of You*

*I've had all but what I need just more of You*

*Of things I've had my fill and yet I hunger still*

*Empty and bare, Lord hear my prayer for more of*

*You.*

