



Title: National Prayers

Theme: Praying for Our President and America

Series: National Day of Prayer

1 Timothy 2:1-4 says, “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone -- 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 men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” Pray!

Terrible times in the last days

The apostle Paul wrote the young pastor Timothy regarding the last days saying, “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.” (2 Timothy 3:1) If you have a child who is fighting our war on terrorism right now, defending this nation from those who hate America, the truth of this verse grips your heart.

The Apostle Paul is being led of the Holy Spirit to take the Body of Christ to the high level of intercession for those they love and for those in authority. The truths found in this portion of Scripture guide the children of God to a very effective form of public worship, an act of worship that comes from a heart that has learned the joy of both singing the praises of God and grasping the truths of worship in spirit and truth.

The Holy Spirit moved Paul to write “I urge” (*parakaleo*) to indicate the urgency of the need of prayer. This Greek word means to admonish or call someone to do something.

It is like a mother looking out and seeing her two year old out in the middle of a four lane highway. Because her hands are full, holding a baby and packages from the store, she calls out for someone to intervene.

Dr. Ralph Earle points out that Paul is giving Timothy instructions on public worship in today’s text. The Holy Spirit wants you to grasp this truth: our president and our country have great needs. Pastors are to call out for someone who has ears to hear and a heart to obey, to urgently pray.

I would propose to you that the children of God can most certainly desire and call out to the Lord for godly leaders who walk in the fear of the Lord. The last words of King David in 2 Samuel give us this truth, “The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: `When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.” (2 Samuel 23:3-4)

Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, gave some great advice that we as Christians need

to heed to, "...select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain--and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens... If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." (Exodus. 18:21,23)

Our founding fathers knew the truths in these Scriptures. Noah Webster wrote, "When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public offices let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose rulers men who rule in the fear of God. The preservation of a republican government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty; if the citizens neglect this duty and place unprincipled men in office the government will soon be corrupted." (Taken from "Pray the Vote, What to Pray For")

Just what clear instructions does God's Word have for us as we live in these last days?

Four keys words

The first step to becoming a pleasing prayer warrior is to grasp the truths of four keys words regarding to prayer in today's key text.

The first word is "request" (*deesis*) giving us the application of presenting a special need or the intense needs of others by making the supplications with the sense of urgency. In keeping with our theme for today, it was the intense prayers offered up to the Lord for protection of our president when he was being flown around the USA in Air Force One, while our nation was being attacked on 9/11/2001.

The second word is "prayers" (*proseuche*) meaning to become a house of prayer. This is literally a house of prayer with set times to pray and involved in seasons of prayer. Compare this to a house that has everything set in place, everything being done in proper dependable order.

The third word is "intercessions" (*enteuxis*) and as it is used in 1 Timothy 2:1 it means praying according to God's will (*Zodhiates*) and standing in the gap before God on behalf of others seeking His mercy and grace for them. In keeping with our theme today, it's praying that God would bring America to repentance, God would put His protective hand around our president as He did King David, and that the Lord would give him wisdom.

The fourth word is "thanksgiving" (*eucharista*) meaning prayers that express thankfulness to God for hearing our prayers of faith in anticipation that He is going to work out all things for His glory and purposes.

Christianity Today had a quote from Karl Barth that should cause all Christians to grasp the power that is possible in offering prayers girded in these truths, "To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."

Pray particularly for those in authority

Praying with these four truths upon our hearts enables us to pray with Biblical faith. Our key text today instructs us to pray particularly for those in authority.

Those in authority are there because God put them there. In Daniel 2:21 we read that God "...changes times and seasons; He sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning." Romans 13:1 says; "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

The Holy Spirit had given Daniel understanding, it is the God of providence, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice. It is the inspiration of the Almighty God that gives men understanding, He enables them to acquire knowledge and use that knowledge in a right and humble manner. Without Him knowledge leads to pride and to a nation's downfall.

This truth is so powerfully displayed as we take time to consider the purpose of the writings of First and Second Kings. These two portions of Scripture record the history of kingdom rulers, some were of noble God fearing character, most misruled and expressed a willful unrepentant heart in their failure to follow God's commandments.

Obedience is met with blessings, and disobedience with punishment and chastening. Throughout the times of the kings and judges when God wanted to bless His people He raised up righteous leaders. On the other hand, when God wanted to bring chastisements, He raised up a wicked leader, sometimes among His people or from another nation to take them into oppression.

The Bible shows clearly that God will deal with His people on the basis of His promise in 1 Samuel 12:18-24. In his farewell speech, Samuel, reminds the people of God that he had set a king over them upon their request. (1 Samuel 12:1-2) As God's spokesman he gives this exhortation from the Lord, "For the sake of His great name the Lord will not reject His people... But be sure to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart, consider the great things He has done for you." (1 Samuel 12:22,24) God is the same today as He was in the past and He will be the same for the future when it comes to raising up and deposing leaders. (Hebrews 13:8, Malachi 3:6)

What the Holy Spirit wants you grasp is that the Lord is the one in charge of setting up leaders for a nation. Intercessors for this nation can be humble and pray for a president with the spiritual character of Hezekiah to govern this nation. The Word of God holds this testimony of the great leader, "Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the LORD and did not cease to follow Him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses. And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook...." (2 Kings 18:5-7)

Lord to lead the president

A foundational truth based on the whole of Scripture is seek the Lord in heartfelt petition for a president that is hungry for the commands of the Lord. Christians can ask the Lord to lead their president as well.

Proverbs 21:1 says; "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases." The president's heart is in the hand of the Lord and God is going to turn him just as He turns the course of a little babbling brook that runs down a mountainside and as He controls the rivers of the world.

In his early days of leading God's people, Solomon expressed the heart of the leader that we should want for this nation. The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask for whatever you want Me to give you." Solomon answered the Lord, "Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (1 Kings 3:7-9)

In these days of major conflict we need a national leader who understands his need for God's grace and wisdom just like President George Washington who said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." In later years, President Abraham Lincoln said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go to. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day." (Taken from a sermon preached by Pastor Gerald Flurry)

There is a powerful psalm written by King David that expresses what should be in the heart of someone who desires to walk under God's directing course. (Matthew Henry Commentary; Spurgeon; Thru the Bible Commentary) David's song of praise honors God's omnipresence. He writes, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24)

Proverbs 21 is a powerful truth that must be grasped so Christians may pray in faith that God is fully able to put in affect His perfect will, regardless of who has leadership in America. The hearts of men are in God's hand. The Lord can change men's minds and direct their affairs even in the freedom of their free will for His own purpose.

This truth is powerfully displayed in several passages of Scriptures such as Exodus 10:1-2, "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD.'" "

In Isaiah we read of God using Assyria as an instrument of wrath to bring judgment on His people for disobedience. The Bible says, "[Assyria], the rod of My anger, in whose hand is the club of My wrath! I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger Me, to seize loot and snatch plunder and to trample them down like mud in the streets." (Isaiah 10:5-6)

In the last verse of Isaiah 44 (verse 28) into Isaiah 45 we read of God proving His Headship and His incontestable sovereignty in working through a king to get His will done. The Lord uses a King who has not even acknowledged Him to deliver His people from captivity and to restore them back into their own Land. God's Word speaks of this king very clearly, "Cyrus, he is My shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, 'Let it be rebuilt,' and of the temple, 'Let its foundations be laid.'" (Isaiah 44:28)

Cyrus was a king who had not known or acknowledged the Lord, yet God used him in a powerful way. Listen carefully to what God says to Cyrus. "This is what the LORD says to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged Me." (Isaiah 45:1-5) Most translations say, "...have not known Me." (King James, New American Standard and NEV)

Christians have every right to pray in confidence for God to intercede for the president of the United States of America, whether he or she is a Christian or not. God is able and will accomplish what He needs to in order for sinners to see the hand of the Lord, to repent, and to come to Christ.

There is much in the Bible about how God moved upon kings to get the work of

the Lord done. In Ezra chapter 4 we read about the opposition to the rebuilding of the temple of the Lord. The Bible says the enemies of Judah and Benjamin hired counselors to work against those working on the temple. The people around the Israelites frustrated their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius. (Ezra 4:1-4) The Lord worked through King Darius to get the building of the temple going (Ezra 6) and God used King Artaxerxes to keep the building of the temple going. (Ezra 7) It was king Artaxerxes who gave the priest Ezra everything he asked for because the hand of the Lord was upon him. God granted him favor with the king. (Ezra 7:6)

God granted favor for Nehemiah as well as King Artaxerxes. He was so discouraged over the condition of Jerusalem that it affected his appearance before the king. The king told Nehemiah that he knew he was not ill and he could see his “sadness of heart.” (Nehemiah 2:2)

Nehemiah said, “I was very much afraid.” Nehemiah told the king what lay so heavily upon his heart. The king asked, “What do you want?” I love what Nehemiah said, “Then I prayed unto the God of heaven.” Then Nehemiah answered the king. At the end of the story Nehemiah was sent to Jerusalem for 12 years to rebuild the work of God. (Nehemiah 2:1; 5:14)

This country was founded by men who for the most part had a fear for the Lord and looked to the Word of God for the foundation of making many of this nation’s laws. However, much opposition is arising to make it hard to rebuild the foundation for which God raised up this nation. Christians can look to the Lord to grant them favor with national leaders so they can accomplish the work of the Lord. It does not matter how good or bad they are, whether they are a Democrat or Republican, how conservative or liberal they may be, the Lord can do a work among them for His glory and the glory of His son.

Protection of the United States

Christians can call upon a God who literally is in full control of those in leadership position. They may look to Him for the protection of the United States of America as well. Psalm 33:16-18 says “No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love.”

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon wrote, “The strongest battalions melt like snowflakes when God is against them.” America has been blessed with great and powerful military forces, yet Americans must understand that the Lord is not on the side of those who have the biggest war heads and largest armies. His eyes watches out for those who look to Him as Lord and who fully understand that victory only comes from Him.

In the Book of Exodus we read of Israel's first battle after the Lord God had brought them out of Egypt. Exodus records the event of this great warrior who was going out to battle, commissioned by Moses and anointed by God to fight against the Amalekites who threatened the people of God. This warrior's name is "Joshua" meaning "Yahweh is salvation." Listen to this account of God's faithful servants doing battle for their nation. "So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up--one on one side, one on the other--so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword." (Exodus 17:10-13)

Here we see how the Lord lays out the format for battling enemies of a nation with the motto, "The People of God" or "In God we Trust." There are those who are trained to go out and fight and there are those who are commissioned to pray.

In verse 9 we read that Moses told Joshua that he would be holding the staff of God in His hands. This rod of God was a way of appeal to the Lord, our way of appeal today is to enter the throne of Grace in the Name of Jesus Christ. Christians are not only to be a light upon a hill, but intercessors.

Please note how Moses hands became tired and then God raised up assistance. Aaron and Hur were quick to give aide, thus showing us that we should not be embarrassed to ask for assistance nor should Christians be shy in giving assistance in offering up intercession to the Lord in prayer.

The Bible says that after the victory of the Lord, "Moses built an altar and called it 'The Lord is my Banner.'" (Exodus 17:15) Banner reflects the staff as the standard in approaching God and is a testimony of the power of God. (The Expositor Bible Commentary) We are to approach the Lord through the altar of the heart in prayer as the testimony of seeking His power to intercede for His people.

Our nation is fighting an enemy right now and Christians should be as quick and steadfast in prayer as Moses, Aaron and Hur. We do not know what the outcome of this war will be, however, we do serve a God who is ready and able to intercede. There are Christians who intercede in prayer on a regular basis for our president, government and armed forces. National Day of Prayer is our opportunity to gird up those who may become tired in prayer and feel like giving up.

God whose plans will prevail

Christians can pray for their nation when they are at war knowing He can bring victory. They can be steadfast at prayer because they serve a God whose plans will prevail. Psalm 33:10-11 says “The LORD foils the plans of the nations; He thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations.”

While interceding for our President and all in authority there is no need to give God His marching orders, Christians need only to pray as Christ did, Father, “...may your will be done.” (Matthew 26:42)

Holy Spirit illuminated Christians give praise to God as this psalmist did because they rest in the sovereignty of His providence in the government of the world. The Lord overrules all the counsels of men, and contrary to their intentions makes them serviceable to His counsel in due time.

The Apostle Paul's call is “Urgently pray.” Christians need only to grasp the four truths to praying. They must be willing to pray for those in authority, have faith that God has full control over the president and be diligent in joining with others to pray for our armed forces as they fight the enemy who attacked us, just as the Amalekites did the Israelites.

The National Day of Prayer team is asking you to assist them in prayer as Aaron and Hur assisted Moses while He fulfilled his duty in prayer as Joshua and the armies of Israel fought the battles of the Lord.

Let us pray!!!!