



HOPE

**GOD'S
GREAT**

PRAY FOR 30 DAYS |
PRAYER GUIDE

THESE DEVOTIONS

These devotions with prayer points are intended to assist believers and churches as they seek Christ personally and corporately for revival and spiritual awakening. The devotional title and theme, "God's Great Hope," is taken from biblical passages, such as Romans 15:13 and 1 Peter 1:3.

This year's devotional has three sections. Each section focuses on various principles related to God's invitation to experience Him through revival and spiritual awakening. Acts 4:23-33 provides the biblical backdrop for Section 1, which is about prayerful dependence for revival. Isaiah 6:1-8 provides the biblical base for Section 2, which focuses on a time when God's servant Isaiah became desperate for God. Section 3 is based on selected texts from Nehemiah 1, 4, 6, 8, 10 and examines a time when God's people prayed toward revival during devastation and judgment. As we unite in the following Scripture passages, devotional thoughts and prayer points, may our prayer be the following: "Oh Lord, will You begin a work of revival and spiritual awakening in my heart, family, church, state and nation, multiplying Your great hope in our world?"

INTRODUCTION

If ever there was a time that believers and churches needed to focus on God's great hope in Jesus, it is now. The COVID-19 pandemic — along with all the racial, social, political, economical and spiritual unrest that has gripped our nation — has, in many ways, cast a cloud of hopelessness and uncertainty about the future in America.

However, throughout history, God has always used seasons of crises and unrest as a way of getting people's attention and reorienting them unto Himself and His activity in their world. The apostle Paul knew that difficult and uncertain times can produce fertile soil for God to pour out His great hope in Jesus upon believers and unbelievers alike. Notice his prayer in Romans 15:13, "Now may the God of hope fill you with peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (NKJV).

Peter also writes regarding this hope in 1 Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The Psalter cried out for this same hope when he said, "Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You" (Psalm 33:22).

Because of all the unrest and struggles present in America today, it is evident that God is not pleased with His people or our nation as a whole. God is squeezing and judging His people and America because we have departed from Him in our sin. Throughout history, God has always done some of His greatest work reviving His church and awakening the lost during times of great spiritual darkness and crises.

SEEK THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND

In scripture there are three kinds of time — eternity, chronological historical time and God's kairos time. Eternity actually transcends, encapsulates or houses historical and kairos time (Acts 17:26-28; Hebrews 1:8; 1 Timothy 6:16). In the midst of eternity, God began chronological historical time as He created the heavens and the earth and all that is within them (Genesis 1-2).

God's kairos or opportune time transcends and is woven into chronological historical time. Kairos time is always the result of God's sovereign purposes being accomplished as He steps into chronological historical time and manifests His redemptive presence among people (Luke 2:1-20; John 1:1-18; Acts 1:1-11; 2: 37-47; Galatians 4:4). God's kairos time takes place among His people as He draws near to them in seasons of personal and corporate revelation, judgment, deliverance, revival and restoration (Genesis 3; Exodus 3-14; Luke 19:41-48; Acts 3:19).

God's kairos time also takes place when He reveals Himself by His Spirit to individual lost people through salvation in Jesus. In special seasons of God's kairos time called spiritual awakenings, God manifests Himself to large numbers of lost people through the conviction of sin and salvation in Jesus (Acts 5:14; 11:21; 2 Thessalonians 3:1).

Isaiah the prophet declared in Isaiah 55:6 "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near." Thus, according to Isaiah, it is always essential for God's people to recognize His kairos

times so that they may earnestly cry out to Him and seek Him through fervent prayer during those times.

Three Seasons

Biblically and historically, God has primarily sent revival among His people and spiritual awakening among the lost during three seasons of His kairos time:

1. When believers were prayerfully dependent upon Him through humble, one-accord prayer that is focused on His kingdom coming and His will being done on earth as it is in heaven (e.g., Acts 4:23-33).
2. When believers desperately prayed and longed for God's renewed presence and favor as they sought His face, repented of their sin, and returned to Him during seasons of immense spiritual famine and unrest (Isaiah 6:1-13).
3. When believers earnestly prayed for God's mercy and restoration following a season of great devastation, which occurred because His people refused to repent and return to Him despite His continued warnings of imminent judgment (Nehemiah 1, 4, 6, 8, 10).

In each of those seasons, God's people humbled themselves before Him and sought His face through believing prayer. Today, I believe that God is giving His people a window of opportunity and kairos time to seek and find Him through revival and spiritual awakening. Will we recognize His kairos time and seek Him while He can be found? Only time will tell.

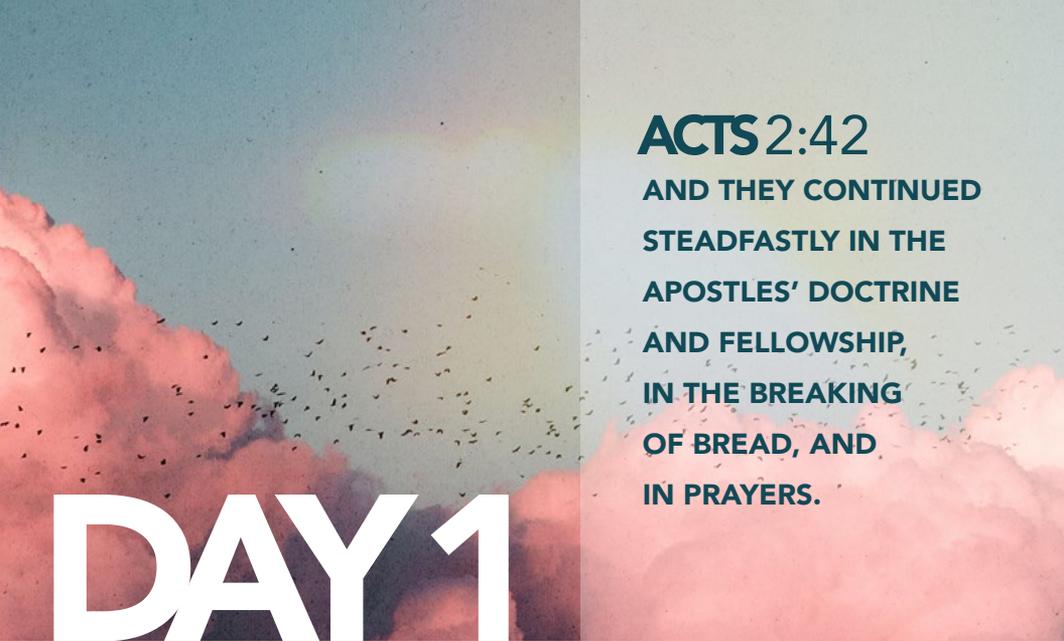
SECTION 1

Revival Through Prayerful Dependence

It is no secret that the first-century church lived and practiced a life of prayerful dependence upon the Lord (Acts 2:42). This dependence upon the Lord through prayer was evidently something they learned from being with Jesus (Acts 4:13). Because of this, they consistently modeled a revived life through continual prayer and obedience. This unwavering devotion to a prayerful and obedient life also resulted in a rapid running of the gospel among the lost (Acts 2:47).

As we examine Acts 4:23-33 and other selected texts in Acts in Section 1, we will see a clear picture of a prayerfully dependent community of believers who experienced God's manifest presence through revival and spiritual awakening. Hopefully, this will challenge each of us toward a life of greater dependence upon God through prayer. Oh Lord, may we be like the church in Acts and return to You and prayerfully depend on You for the next great revival and spiritual awakening.

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ACTS 2:42
AND THEY CONTINUED
STEADFASTLY IN THE
APOSTLES' DOCTRINE
AND FELLOWSHIP,
IN THE BREAKING
OF BREAD, AND
IN PRAYERS.

DAY 1

PRAYERFULLY CULTIVATING A VITAL SPIRITUAL LIFE

Through the years, I have become convinced that the major reason the American church is gripped by such rampant apathy and complacency is due to a lack of prayer and cultivation of a vital spiritual life in Christ.

Today's verse helps explain why that is the case. Acts 2:42 is a part of the first major summary statement found in the book of Acts and gives a brief picture of the everyday lives of believers in the first-century church. This verse demonstrates that the early church gave attention to prayer and the development of a vital spiritual life. How was that accomplished?

First, by "continuing steadfastly" in the cultivation of their own vital spiritual lives. "Continuing steadfastly" actually means to keep working at something with intense effort and primacy. In other words, they clung to or devoted themselves wholeheartedly to make sure they were spiritually strong. Second, they focused on doing the right things that would ensure a strong and vital spiritual

life, such as being steadfast in the "apostles' doctrine," "fellowship," "breaking of bread" and "prayers."

"Apostles' doctrine" represents the teachings of Christ along with certain Old Testament Scriptures that were communicated by the apostles in the power of God's Spirit. They were literally abiding in Christ's words, and therefore, proving to be His disciples (John 8:31). "Fellowship" refers to their constant devotion to spiritual oneness and unity, which can only take place through the work of God's Spirit in and through their lives.

“Breaking of bread” refers to the Lord’s Supper and to community or family meals. The term “prayers” references regular and habitual prayer practices. Their intentional and spontaneous prayer patterns took place individually, as families, corporately as a community and often when they participated in Jewish prayer times in the temple. The bottom line was they practiced dependence upon the Lord through a life of prayer.

What was the result of this focus on prayer and the vital spiritual life within the first-century church? Acts 2:43-47 shows that people feared God as He worked signs and wonders, and added daily to the churches those who were being saved. This is desperately needed in the American church today, but will never take place if we do not begin to prayerfully depend upon, cultivate and long after Jesus through a vital spiritual life.

Are you cultivating your own spiritual life and prayerful dependence in Christ? Is this happening in your church? What will you do?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, FORGIVE ME FOR NOT DEVOTING MYSELF TO PRAYER AND A VITAL SPIRITUAL LIFE IN CHRIST.**
- **FATHER, GRANT ME A DEEP RESOLVE TO CULTIVATE THE VITAL SPIRITUAL LIFE OF CHRIST IN MY LIFE AND CHURCH.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ACTS 4:13

... THEY MARVELED.
AND REALIZED THAT
THEY HAD BEEN
WITH JESUS.

DAY 2

HAVE YOU BEEN WITH JESUS?

As 5-year-old Fred Lunsford peered through the mountain laurel thicket, he saw a man lying on his face, moaning and crying out to God in prayer. The man prayed, "Oh God, I would rather die right here in this thicket than be a powerless preacher." Lunsford had never seen or experienced anything like that before and it scared him. After a few minutes, Fred Lunsford ran home and sat on his front porch thinking about what he had just experienced.

Soon, the man in the thicket came hobbling up the road, praising God. It was Uncle Doc, a local pastor. After he passed by, Lunsford went inside to tell his grandmother what he had witnessed. She said, "Son, you don't have to worry about that man. He walks with Jesus and is the most anointed preacher I know."

Following that day, three things concerning that experience with Uncle Doc were forever etched on

Lunsford's heart and mind: the feeling of God's presence and Uncle Doc's prayer for spiritual power to preach; the way Uncle Doc joyfully praised the Lord as he walked; and the bright glow that covered Uncle Doc's face as he passed by and spoke to Lunsford. Uncle Doc had been with Jesus!

In today's text, Peter and John were on trial before the Sanhedrin for healing a lame man and preaching the resurrected Christ (Acts 3-4:13). As the trial progressed, the text notes three things the Sanhedrin noticed about Peter and John (4:13).

First, they had “boldness” as they spoke. “Boldness” refers to Spirit-anointed speech that produces great confidence and power. This boldness in preaching is what Uncle Doc was praying for in the laurel thicket. Second, the Jewish leaders marveled at their ability to preach because they recognized Peter and John as “uneducated” and “untrained” men. They were speaking in such a way as to impress well-educated and highly trained leaders. But more importantly, their preaching had great power from God and great effect with the people.

Third, Peter and John reminded the leaders of Jesus because they were called out as men who had “been with Jesus.” This meant they were not only recognized as Jesus’ companions, but their actions and teaching also reminded the Jewish leaders of Jesus. Their preaching and actions were powerful and produced results. Not only was the lame man healed, but about 5,000 men believed in Jesus as they preached.

What was the common denominator in these two stories? It was Jesus — they had all been with Jesus. Prayerful dependence always flows out of a life that has been with Jesus. Do people know you have been with Jesus?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **PRAY THAT YOU WILL DEPEND UPON JESUS THROUGH A PRAYERFUL LIFE SO OTHERS WILL BELIEVE IN HIM THROUGH YOUR LIFE AND WITNESS.**
- **ASK THE FATHER TO HELP YOUR CHURCH TO BE KNOWN AS A CHURCH THAT HAS BEEN WITH JESUS.**

PRAYER

NOTES

DAY 3

ACTS 4:23-24
AND BEING LET GO,
THEY WENT TO THEIR
OWN COMPANIONS
AND REPORTED ALL
THAT THE CHIEF
PRIESTS AND ELDERS
HAD SAID. ... SO WHEN
THEY HEARD THAT,
THEY RAISED THEIR
VOICE TO GOD.

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

In the Battle of the Bulge during World War II, American positions were overrun by a surprise attack near Bastogne, Belgium, in mid-December 1944. Under the cover of frigid temperatures, thick fog, freezing rain and snow, German infantry and panzer divisions attacked, creating a huge bulge in the American lines. American General George Patton, who was responding to the attack, soon realized that time was running out, the situation was grave, and unless the weather cleared, Bastogne and the troops defending it would all be lost.

As the situation grew more desperate, Patton called upon his chief chaplain to pen a prayer that could be sent to the 250,000 troops under his command. The prayer was simple yet concise, and asked God's help and mercy for three things: clear weather for battle, power to crush their wicked enemies, and victory in the war to establish justice among men and nations.

A few days after the cards were distributed and the soldiers prayed, the weather cleared; the German counteroffensive was routed as Patton's troops and tanks moved forward; and within five months, the war in Europe was won. Patton later told the head chaplain that God had answered their prayers, which he said was something he believed God would do.

In today's text, Peter and John returned to their companions after being arrested, released and told not to preach the gospel. At that point they "raised their voice to God" in prayer (Acts

4:24). The term used describes a loud and earnest cry in prayer and is indicative of a pressing situation.

Even so, the disciples knew the present season of persecution was really not about them or even their safety. They saw this moment of persecution from an even greater kingdom perspective. The disciples realized they were in an eternal battle for the souls of men and women, boys and girls. They also knew that this fight was the Lord's — and overcoming spiritual barriers required spiritual power from God. They saw with spiritual eyes and responded in a spiritual manner, crying out to the Lord in prayer. It was their first response.

Both Patton and the early church leaders could see beyond the present crisis and from a bigger perspective. With Patton, it was victory over the forces of evil and oppression that were at work through Hitler and Nazi Germany. With the disciples, it was the work of seeing the kingdom of God move forward in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the world. Thus, they depended on God through prayer. What will we do in these troubling days?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, GIVE ME EYES TO SEE THE SPIRITUAL FAMINE FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE AND DEPEND UPON YOU THROUGH PRAYER.**
- **LORD, HELP US AS A CONGREGATION UNITE AND PRAY, TRUSTING YOU FOR VICTORY OVER THE SPIRITUAL DARKNESS IN OUR LAND.**

PRAYER

NOTES



ACTS 4:24

THEY RAISED THEIR
VOICE TO GOD WITH
ONE ACCORD.

DAY 4

DEPENDENT THROUGH 'ONE-ACCORD' PRAYER

In today's text, the disciples demonstrated their dependence upon the Lord by uniting together in "one-accord" prayer. Prayer was their first response, was a lifestyle for them, and therefore served more than a cursory role in their lives personally and corporately. Like Jesus, the disciples understood prayer was foundational to the very life and ministry of the community as a whole (Mark 1:35; Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 6:12; John 17).

The use of the word "one accord" in Acts 4:24 is significant. The term, which is used ten times in Acts, is only used one other time in the rest of the New Testament (Romans 15:6). Five of the ten times it is used in Acts, "one accord" refers to the united prayer patterns of the first-century church. This was a unique character trait of the early church. They believed praying together was not only necessary, but at the center of their very lives and existence as a community.

"One-accord" prayer is very descriptive as it points to how they prayed together. First, they prayed with Spirit-led passion. They were of the same heart and earnest desire which was produced by God's Spirit, Who lived in them. Second, they went before God with the same mind. The early church was moving in a united direction because the Holy Spirit was directing them to pray toward the same purpose or end goal (i.e., boldness, signs and wonders). Third, they prayed together at the same time or in the same effort of prayer. They were compelled by the Spirit

to stop everything and begin praying at that moment. This oneness in passion, purpose and timing was only made possible as the community surrendered to the indwelling and prompting of the Spirit of God.

During the 1857-59 Layman's Prayer Revival in America, people united in one-accord prayer during united prayer meetings focused on the salvation of the lost and sanctification of the saints. In Columbus, Ohio, a group prayed specifically for lost students in local schools. Soon, one high school reported all but two of their students had been converted.

God sends revival when His people are dependent upon Him through Spirit-led, one-accord prayer. What could God do across America if the church did this?

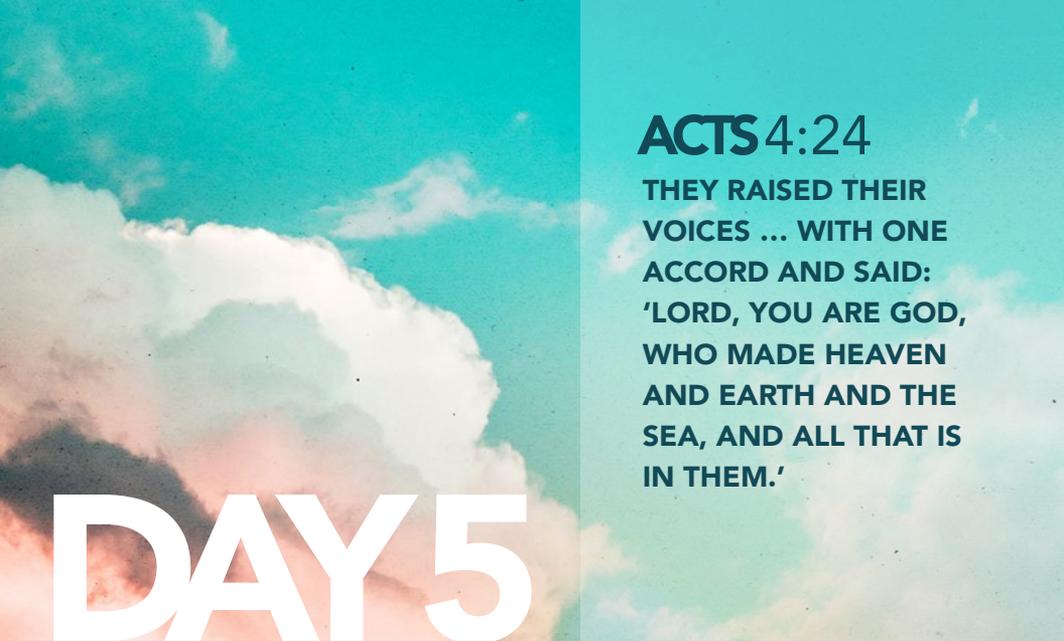
PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, FORGIVE ME FOR NOT MAKING UNITED ONE-ACCORD PRAYER A PRIORITY IN MY LIFE.**
- **FATHER, POUR OUT A SPIRIT OF ONE-ACCORD PRAYER UPON YOUR CHURCH IN AMERICA.**

PRAYER

NOTES



ACTS 4:24

THEY RAISED THEIR VOICES ... WITH ONE ACCORD AND SAID: 'LORD, YOU ARE GOD, WHO MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM.'

DAY 5

PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE IN A SOVEREIGN GOD

The disciples were between a rock and a hard place. They had been given a gag order by the Jewish leaders. They were told to cease preaching immediately or face the onslaught of the Jewish authorities. This was the first major opposition or persecution experienced by the early church.

Because of this order, it was likely the ruling authorities would have been watching the disciples closely. The disciples' response to this moment was paramount and would determine the success or failure of the preaching mission in Jerusalem. What did they do? They had a prayer meeting.

Prayerful dependence upon God always begins with God. A believer must believe God is Who He says He is to seek Him and depend upon Him in prayer. This is especially true during pressing or uncertain times. The early church leaders knew they had to set their eyes and hearts upon God through prayer. He was the answer to this season of opposition.

The term "Lord" (*despotes*) in Acts 4:24 is not the usual term used for "Lord" (*kurios*) in the New Testament. "Lord" (*despotes*) refers to a sovereign God who exercises absolute ownership and uncontrolled power in the heavens and on earth. God, therefore, does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and all the peoples on earth.

Luke is the sole Gospel writer to use this term. He only uses it one other time in Luke 2:29 when Simeon calls upon God during the dedication of Jesus in the temple. Luke uses the term "Lord"

(despotes) in both instances to portray an unhindered trust in the sovereign work and will of God through prayer. In Acts 4:24, the disciples are dependent through prayer because of Who God is — the eternal and sovereign God Who is Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of all things. This allowed great confidence and trust that God would accomplish His redemptive purposes despite man’s attempts to interfere, simply because He was and is sovereign God.

As we will see later in this passage, simple trust and confidence in God as the sovereign Creator God of the heavens and earth makes for powerful prayer meetings that have powerful results. This is needed today as the church seeks to penetrate the spiritual famine in America.

Are you and your church prayerfully dependent upon God because of Who He is? Are you trusting Him with the spiritual famine and advancement of the gospel in your community?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **PRAY FOR THE LORD TO GIVE YOU A SIMPLE TRUST AND PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE IN GOD AS LORD OVER THE SPIRITUAL DARKNESS IN AMERICA.**
- **LORD, TEACH MY CHURCH TO UNITE AND TRUST YOU AS SOVEREIGN LORD OVER THE SPIRITUAL FAMINE IN OUR COUNTRY.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ACTS 4:25-28

'WHY DID THE NATIONS RAGE, AND THE PEOPLE PLOT VAIN THINGS? THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND ... AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.' ... '[THEY] WERE GATHERED TOGETHER TO DO WHATEVER YOUR HAND AND YOUR PURPOSE DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE.'

DAY 6

PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE IN GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSES

The disciples were not only prayerfully dependent upon God because of Who He is, but also because of the providential work of His hands through Christ. They believed the resistance and interference of the Jewish and Gentile leaders to stop the advancement of the gospel were actually "vain things" (Acts 4:25). "Vain things" refers to futile attempts or worthless efforts with no hope of succeeding, especially as they come in opposition to the power of God.

In this context, the term is used to describe the emptiness of the plans of people to disrupt the purposes of God that were being fulfilled through the Holy Spirit. Quoting from Psalm 2 as they prayed, the disciples were keenly aware of God's promises regarding the Messiah and His mission. Thus, they understood that even these difficult and dangerous moments were part of God's purposes that were "determined" and planned out before creation — and were being worked out just as God said they would (Acts 4:26-28).

Their prayerful dependence in God's providential hand also showed that even though Jesus died on the cross, they knew He was the messianic victor who fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 2. In the end, they prayed with great confidence because they understood that despite all human barriers, nothing could stop the purposes of God from being accomplished in and through the preaching of Christ to the nations.

This kind of dependence in God's providential hand was also practiced on Lewis Island off the coast of Scotland during the

Hebrides Revival in 1949. The Smith sisters, one of whom was blind and the other bent double with arthritis, trusted in God's promise from Isaiah 44:3 as they prayed for revival in their church and on the islands. One day as they prayed, God manifested Himself in such a way that they immediately sent word to their pastor that God was sending revival. They asked him to get with the elders and pray, prepare and wait.

A couple of months later, their pastor, Rev. MacKay, invited Duncan Campbell to preach a series of meetings at the church. Soon, revival fires burned and spread throughout the islands. The morning after revival broke out, Rev. MacKay went to share with the Smith sisters what God was doing. When he arrived, they explained that God burdened them to pray most of the previous evening until they had assurance He had answered. They obviously believed God is providential and will always keep the promises He reveals to His people as they pray. God's great hope through revival flows upon hopeful and dependent hearts in prayer.

Will you trust in God's providential hand and purposes as you pray for revival?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, GIVE ME A PREVAILING, DEPENDENT HEART TO TRUST IN YOUR PROVIDENCE AS I PRAY.**
- **ASK GOD TO GIVE YOUR CHURCH A BURDEN TO PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE TOWARD GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL WORK OF ADVANCING THE GOSPEL.**

PRAYER

NOTES



ACTS 4:29

NOW, LORD, LOOK
ON THEIR THREATS...

DAY 7

DEPENDENCE THROUGH 'TIMELY' PRAYER

During the 1857-59 Layman's Prayer Revival, believers began praying urgent and timely prayers for the salvation of others. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, a father sensed that urgent prayer was needed for the salvation of his three sons who were living in different areas across the nation. The group interceded and within weeks, the father received letters from all three sons stating they had been saved. Another father in a prayer meeting requested urgent prayer for his son who was at that time on a boat in the Pacific Ocean. The son was converted at sea at the same time of the prayer meeting.

The early church was dependent upon God through timely prayer. In other words, they knew they needed to pray at that very moment. They also recognized spiritual work required spiritual power, and that God's intervention was only a prayer away. In this case, they prayed for immediate help. The right time for God's help was "now."

The term "now" in Acts 4:29 shows the urgency in which they needed God's intervention. Coupled with the imperative "look on," which can also be translated "take note" or "consider," a clear picture is given of how intense and desperate they felt the situation was. What were they asking God to look on?

The word "threats" in verse 29 not only refers to the Sanhedrin's gag order, but also to the plotting and harassment that was obviously being levied toward the disciples. The disciples felt threatened and knew the Jewish leaders were scheming against them.

This evidently made them feel as if it were only a matter of time before they would be arrested, jailed and possibly put to death like Jesus. Whatever the reason, they wasted no time in crying out for God’s help with a now-or-never prayer.

A sensitivity to God’s activity in circumstances and utter dependence on His prompting are essential for God’s people to discern the right time to pray. There are times in life when God’s people need His immediate help because of pressing circumstances. This was one of those times. Although they were not presently in jail, the disciples sensed that the storms of persecution were raging in the hearts of the Jewish leaders and they needed God’s help to accomplish the mission.

Likewise, today the church is in a battle for the soul of America. God’s kairos time is pressing and the church is in desperate need of God’s help to accomplish the mission. The question remains — will the church step up and practice “timely” prayer for revival and spiritual awakening? Are you and your church praying timely and dependent prayers on behalf of the spiritual famine in America?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, TEACH ME TO DEPEND UPON YOU IN TIMELY PRAYER FOR THE LOST.**
- **FATHER, RAISE UP UNITED TIMELY PRAYER IN MY CHURCH FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN AMERICA.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ACTS 4:29-30

GRANT TO YOUR
SERVANTS THAT WITH
ALL BOLDNESS THEY
MAY SPEAK YOUR
WORD, BY STRETCHING
OUT YOUR HAND TO
HEAL, AND THAT SIGNS
AND WONDERS MAY BE
DONE THROUGH THE
NAME OF YOUR HOLY
SERVANT JESUS.

DAY 8

DEPENDENCE THROUGH SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PRAYER

God often restores His hope through revival as believers pray strategic prayers. Strategic prayers are specific prayers that fit God's redemptive plans and purposes in any given circumstance. In Acts 4:29-30, the disciples prayed two specific and strategic prayers for God to provide for the mission to move forward despite the opposition from the Jewish leaders.

First, they prayed for God to "grant" them "all boldness" in their preaching. "Grant" refers to God's gift or provision of grace, opportunity and ability to fulfill the preaching mission they were called to in Jerusalem and beyond (Acts 1:8). "Boldness" means liberal, open and God-anointed speech. Their prayer for "all boldness" meant they were asking for the full measure of God's anointing and power as they spoke. Thus, they were asking for the ability to preach like Jesus fearlessly preached when He faced opposition from the Jewish and Gentile leaders — that is, with God's authority, power (through the Spirit), and in an unhindered and effective way.

Second, they prayed for God to stretch out His hand to "heal" and perform "signs" and "wonders." This was an urgent prayer for God to manifest His power in authenticating works or miracles that would accompany or complement the bold preaching of the gospel. They also prayed the miracles would be accomplished by the "hand" of God and in the "name" or character of "Jesus." These requests constituted an urgent desire to minister like Jesus did as He preached and worked miracles while on earth. Thus, the requested miracles were intended to bring further

evidence and validity to the disciples' witness concerning Christ's resurrection.

Two truths about dependence through strategic prayer can be gleaned from this passage. First, strategic prayers need to be timely. Strategic requests need to be prayed in light of present circumstances with a view toward God's timing and redemptive purposes. God's purposes worked out in His time and way are always the most effective. Second, strategic prayers need to be focused on the advancement of God's kingdom through the mission of Jesus. As they prayed, the disciples were not interested in their own safety, self-preservation or self-propagation. Rather, their interests were in the eternal and redemptive purposes of God.

In a day when the American church is bogged down in complacency and the culture is being overrun with paganism, timely strategic prayer for revival and spiritual awakening is key. What will you do?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, FORGIVE ME FOR OFTEN NEGLECTING TO PRAY STRATEGIC PRAYERS BECAUSE MY PRAYERS ARE FOCUSED ON JUST ME AND NOT YOUR KINGDOM.**
- **ASK GOD TO TEACH YOUR CHURCH TO BECOME DEPENDENT THROUGH TIMELY STRATEGIC PRAYER.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ACTS 4:31

AND WHEN THEY HAD PRAYED, THE PLACE WHERE THEY WERE ASSEMBLED TOGETHER WAS SHAKEN; AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THEY SPOKE THE WORD OF GOD WITH BOLDNESS.

DAY 9

WHEN GOD ANSWERS IMMEDIATELY

During the 1901-1910 Worldwide Awakening that swept the United States, God moved in Louisville, Kentucky, in response to believers' strategic prayers for revival and spiritual awakening. Some 58 leading business firms closed their doors at noon for prayer meetings. During one evangelistic meeting in the city, 1,500 lost people attended, and 1,000 were converted and joined the church immediately. In a short while, over 4,000 people received Christ and became part of churches in the area. Local newspapers described the time as the most remarkable revival ever known in the city. That's what can happen when God's people pray and God answers immediately.

Today's Scripture text points out four truths related to answered prayer. First, there are many occasions when God answers prayer immediately (e.g., 2 Chronicles 7:1-3, 14:11; Matthew 14:30-31). This is one of those instances when the need was pressing and God chose to answer without

delay. Second, God answers prayer when believers finish their praying. The phrase "when they had prayed" describes an instant when the disciples had prayed their request through. They did not just stop praying but persevered until God was ready to act on their behalf.

Third, one-accord prayer that focuses on God's kingdom purposes unleashes His manifest presence and power for missional advance. This can be seen three times in the text: when the place they were assembled together in prayer was "shaken" by God's holy presence; when

the Holy Spirit filled everyone, meaning the believers were endowed with a special presence or saturation of the Holy Spirit; and when they were anointed with bold and powerful speech.

Fourth, specific prayer results in specific answers to prayer. The disciples directly asked God to give them boldness to preach the gospel and that is exactly what He did. They also had asked specifically for God to manifest His presence through signs and wonders, which He also did through the shaking of the building.

With the monumental breakdown of the moral and spiritual life of America rapidly increasing, the American church and culture as a whole stands in urgent need of God's mercy and intervention through revival and spiritual awakening. Do you believe God can answer prayer without delay? If so, are you praying now for His mercy?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **ASK THE LORD TO USE YOU TO CALL OTHERS TO PRAY FOR REVIVAL AND SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.**
- **PRAY FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING TO SWEEP YOUR CHURCH, CITY AND STATE.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ACTS 4:32-33

NOW THE MULTITUDE OF THOSE WHO BELIEVED WERE OF ONE HEART AND ONE SOUL ... THEY HAD ALL THINGS IN COMMON. AND WITH GREAT POWER THE APOSTLES GAVE WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS. AND GREAT GRACE WAS UPON THEM ALL.

DAY 10

PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE AND MISSIONAL ONENESS

Today's Scripture is part of a summary passage found in Acts that describes the daily life and function of the church. It bears witness to the way the Lord used a season of persecution and prayer to bring about a deeper and more powerful oneness toward the early church's mission. Evidence for this is seen in the use of the words and phrases "multitude," "one heart and one soul" and "all things in common."

"Multitude" points to a growth in the number of believers following Jesus. The term is used throughout Scripture to represent a large crowd when exact numbers are not provided. What we do know is that the number increased from hundreds to thousands and continued to grow daily (Acts 1:15; 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14).

"One heart and one soul" shows the tremendous impact the encounter with God and the filling of the Spirit had on all the believers. God's presence and filling through the Holy Spirit made them

spiritually one, even despite the exponential growth in numbers. This oneness was a common trait associated with the early church's life and "fellowship" (Acts 2:42) and was also something Jesus prayed for His disciples in John 17:11, 21-23. Their spiritual oneness brought about a desire to have "all things in common," which meant that they were openly sharing their possessions, activities, and everyday physical and spiritual lives with one another.

This spiritual oneness also served as a launching pad for their powerful witness concerning the resurrected

Jesus. The phrase “with great power” referred to the dynamic or inherent power made possible by the special filling and anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31). The use of the term “witness” in verse 33 shows that the disciples were also testifying about the resurrected Christ as actual eyewitnesses of His life, ministry, death and resurrection. The result of their spiritual oneness and powerful witness was they all experienced “great grace.” Thus, the community was daily becoming more like Jesus as they experienced favor and blessings from both God and man (Luke 2:52).

The prayerful dependence that was practiced by the early church demonstrates what God can accomplish when His people unite in Spirit-anointed and one-accord prayer toward the mission.

Will God’s great hope and mercy through revival and spiritual awakening ever come to America again? I do not believe it will until the church returns to the Lord in holiness and begins to prayerfully depend upon Him through one-accord prayer for revival, spiritual awakening and the mission. That is why I am praying that believers and churches across America will embrace this window of God’s *kairos* time and seek the Lord before it is too late. What will you do?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **PRAY YOU WILL NOT MISS GOD’S OPPORTUNITY TO PRAY FOR HIS MERCY THROUGH REVIVAL.**
- **ASK GOD TO REKINDLE ONE-ACCORD PRAYER AND ONENESS TOWARD THE MISSION IN YOUR CHURCH.**

PRAYER

NOTES

SECTION 2

Revival Through Desperate Prayer

God often sends revival and spiritual awakening among His people when they become desperate for Him. This desperation in prayer is for His renewed presence and is usually the result of God's discipline, which He levies upon His people because of their rebellion and sin. God, therefore, squeezes His people through a series of events or calamities that cause unrest and uncertainty among them. God does this so His people will recognize the folly of their ways and return to Him in a vital relationship.

In Isaiah 6:1-13, which serves as the biblical backdrop for this section, the prophet Isaiah seeks the Lord during a desperate time in Judah. As Isaiah becomes desperate before God in prayer, he experiences personal revival and a missional awakening, which eventually thrusts him out on a more extensive and difficult mission as God's prophet. "Oh God, when we see Your hand of discipline raised up against us, may we like Isaiah, become desperate in prayer for You!"

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ISAIAH 6:1

IN THE YEAR THAT
KING UZZIAH DIED, I
SAW...

DAY 11

TROUBLED TIMES DEMAND DESPERATE PRAYER

King Uzziah's death brought about a great deal of political, social, economical and spiritual unrest in Judah. Uzziah ruled Judah for 52 years and enjoyed great favor with God and man in his early years as king. Because of many years of relative peace, Uzziah was able to invest in building up the nation, as well as his own army and city defenses. He refortified Jerusalem and other cities, built a strategic seaport named Elath, raised up a massive army of over 300,000 well-armed and trained men, and invested in agricultural development around the nation by planting crops and digging wells in many arid regions (2 Chronicles 26).

This time of prosperity and favor eventually waned as Uzziah became less interested in doing what was right in the eyes of God. This is evidenced by the way Uzziah refused to remove the pagan idols and high places throughout the nation (2 Kings 15:4), stand against social oppression and injustice, and address hypocritical and ritualistic practices of Yahweh

worship (Isaiah 1). Uzziah also became prideful as he ignored the commands of God and defiled the temple by burning incense to God (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). Consequently, God struck him with leprosy, which resulted in Uzziah ruling from isolation through his son, Jotham, until his death some 10 years later.

Sometime in the last 10 years of Uzziah's reign, Isaiah came on the scene and began denouncing the spiritual famine in Judah (Isaiah 1-5). In Isaiah 6:1, Isaiah bears witness to Uzziah's death and the end of his reign. Uzziah's death and God's judgment on his

disobedience not only caused unrest among the people and nation, but also with the prophet. So much so that Isaiah evidently pulled aside to seek the Lord in prayer on behalf of himself and the people.

This seeking of God is evidenced by the use of the term "I saw" in Isaiah 6:1. "Saw" is often used in the prophets to describe a time when genuine prophets of God turned aside to pray, seek the Lord, and gain a fresh vision and revelation during difficult times. Since Uzziah had become apathetic toward the spiritual famine in the land and defiled the temple, God's hand was now against the people and the nation. Because of this, there was cause for great concern and need for God's messenger to draw near to the Lord in desperate prayer.

Seasons of unrest and turmoil should produce a renewed desire among God's people, especially leaders, to seek God in desperate prayer. Isaiah knew that if ever there was a time when he and the nation needed to seek God in desperate prayer, it was in the year that King Uzziah died. Are believers and Christian leaders in America realizing the need to seek the Lord in desperate prayer today? What about you and your church?

With unrest on every side in America, do you think we need to seek the Lord while He may be found (Isaiah 55:6)?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, MAY I LONG FOR YOUR PRESENCE AND PERSPECTIVE DURING THESE TROUBLING DAYS.**
- **ASK THE LORD TO GIVE YOUR CHURCH A DESIRE TO UNITE IN DESPERATE PRAYER.**

PRAYER

NOTES



ISAIAH 6:1

IN THE YEAR THAT
KING UZZIAH DIED, I
SAW THE LORD...

DAY 12

WHO ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

During the late 1960s in America, civil, political, moral, spiritual and international unrest swept the country. Young people were protesting America's involvement in Vietnam. The civil rights movement was in full swing. Politically motivated assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. thrust the nation in even deeper unrest. Anti-establishment feelings were gaining traction as more and more young people questioned authority and rebelled against most norms.

During this time, the hippie culture was rapidly expanding as people searched for meaning in life through rock music, drugs, sex and rebellion against the morals of mainstream culture. In 1969, the Age of Aquarius was just gaining ground with love, peace, sexual freedom and New Age thinking being heralded as an avenue to personal enlightenment and spiritual self-realization. College campuses were at the forefront of this cultural revolution as many experienced demonstrations, riots, sit-ins and general unrest.

Christian colleges were also plagued by this unrest as students and faculty grappled with how to effectively share Christ with a growing pagan culture. But even in the midst of such unrest, God was at work drawing His people, especially college students and young people, to desperately seek Him in prayer. As students and young people began to look to God for answers, they studied the Bible and prayed earnestly for God's mercy through revival and spiritual awakening. Soon, God began to move in what is called the Jesus Movement (1970-73), in

which thousands of young people were converted to Christ all across America.

Isaiah 6:1 says that Isaiah “saw the Lord,” which literally means to see or observe the Lord and a manifestation of His revelation and message. Because Scripture is clear no man can see God’s face and live (Exodus 33:20), Isaiah evidently saw a limited manifestation of God, not the full essence of His glory.

This revelation came as Isaiah was looking for a fresh vision of God during the days after Uzziah’s death. His desire was not to see a clearer picture of what was happening politically, socially, economically or internationally. Isaiah was looking for God’s presence, perspective and revelation so he could effectively fulfill his calling to make the Lord known among the people of Judah.

That’s what is needed in the American church today. As never before, believers need to desire and look for God’s perspective in these troubling days. He is the answer to all the political, civil, international, moral and spiritual unrest that is present.

Are you and your church looking to God and His wisdom to know how to respond in a manner worthy of these uncertain times?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, HELP ME TO LOOK TO YOU FOR WISDOM IN THESE TROUBLING TIMES.**
- **ASK THE LORD TO DO WHAT IT TAKES FOR YOUR CHURCH TO START LOOKING TO HIM FOR HELP AND MERCY IN THESE DESPERATE DAYS.**

PRAYER

NOTES



ISAIAH 6:1-2, 5

I SAW THE LORD
SITTING ON A THRONE,
HIGH AND LIFTED UP,
AND THE TRAIN OF
HIS ROBE FILLED THE
TEMPLE. ABOVE IT
STOOD SERAPHIM. ...
FOR MY EYES HAVE
SEEN THE KING.

DAY 13

MY EYES HAVE SEEN THE KING

Missionary John “Praying” Hyde would often spend hours beside his bed praying. On one such occasion, his roommate, Pengwern Jones, noticed that Hyde had been on his knees all morning. When Pengwern left for the afternoon and returned around 6 p.m., Hyde was still praying. Soon, Hyde arose and exclaimed he had truly encountered the living Christ through a fresh vision of Jesus and the Incarnation. Jones began to weep as God’s manifest presence filled the room. He would later testify that because of Hyde’s encounter he, too, had seen a fresh vision of Jesus. Hyde and Jones had seen King Jesus and because of that, they would never be the same.

In today’s Scripture, Isaiah uses numerous terms to describe his encounter with God. First, he saw “the Lord,” which is in the plural form and is only used in that form in the Hebrew Scriptures to refer to God. This term means sovereign Lord, absolute Lord, Master and Creator of all things. Second, he saw

God “sitting on a throne,” which is descriptive of the place where a king usually sits as he rules. God’s throne is exalted or highly “lifted up,” which shows His great authority as supreme and sovereign ruler and leader. He is above all in majesty and glory and therefore knows all, sees all and is more powerful than all things.

Third, God’s robe had a train that “filled the temple.” This points to God’s greatness, superiority and power, which surpasses any human understanding or description. Fourth, God had attending servants or heavenly beings called seraphim. The

seraphim, which actually means “ones on fire,” were hovering above God’s train as supreme servants of the Most High God. They were in awe of God’s purity, power and majesty. Fifth, the posts were “shaken” and the “house was filled with smoke,” which combined represents God’s infinite power, might and glory.

Finally, Isaiah announces “my eyes have seen the King,” which serves as a summary of his vision (Isaiah 6:5). Although he was not allowed to see God’s face, Isaiah knew this encounter went far beyond his ability to fully comprehend or describe. Isaiah had encountered the sovereign God, Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of the universe, who is unlike any earthly king or authority for He controls all things. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and is to be worshipped and feared above all.

The church in America will never become desperate for God until we see and fear Him for Who He really is. He is the One we must bow before and look to for wisdom and help during these troubled times. Yes, He is God, the King of Glory (Psalm 24:10). Aren’t you glad?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, HELP ME TO FEAR YOU ALONE AND HUMBLE MYSELF IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES.**
- **MAY MY CHURCH SEE A FRESH VISION OF YOU AS THE KING OF KINGS, WHO ALONE IS OUR HOPE.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ISAIAH 6:2-3

ABOVE IT STOOD
SERAPHIM. ... AND
ONE CRIED TO
ANOTHER AND SAID:
'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS
THE LORD OF HOSTS,
THE WHOLE EARTH IS
FULL OF HIS GLORY!'

DAY 14

DESPERATE BEFORE A HOLY GOD

On June 16, 1775, during the Revolutionary War, Samuel Langdon, president of Harvard College, led 1,200 Patriot troops in desperate prayer for God's mercy before the Battle of Bunker Hill. Although they were facing an overwhelming British force, Langdon prayed that the troops and people — no matter the outcome — would be a holy people, and their towns and cities places of righteousness. After the prayer, the Patriot soldiers moved into position as the British troops drew near. As the battle raged, it was not long before the Patriots gained the upper hand and defeated the British army. Langdon's desperate prayer was based on his understanding that God is holy and able to answer, despite the overwhelming odds.

Isaiah's heavenly vision continued with the heavenly seraphim's declaration of God's holiness. The phrase "and one cried to another" describes an uninterrupted or continuous song of worship. Also, their voices were not weak or fainthearted,

but rather they shouted with a loud voice, which shook the doorposts of the heavenly throne (Isaiah 6:4). This continuous and vigorous worship represents an excitement and eagerness to glorify God with honor and praise by the seraphim.

The seraphim announced, "holy, holy, holy," which is a thrice-holy declaration used for special emphasis. Its use is significant as it declares God to be absolutely pure, set apart and holy. It also points to the seraphim's understanding, and probably Isaiah's too, of the Trinitarian God they were worshipping. The term "holy" refers to

the innermost description of God’s nature and character, Who He is — Creator, Sustainer, Savior of the world (Isaiah 45:5).

God’s holiness means that He is different from ordinary man, supernatural yet imminent. He is accessible to man only as He reveals Himself to him. His thoughts are not man’s thoughts and His ways are not man’s ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). God is set apart because He has the unique ability to be everywhere at all times (Psalm 139:7-12). He is all-knowing and knows everything about everything (Psalm 139:1-6). And He’s all-powerful, having authority over every aspect of His creation.

Because Isaiah saw God as the Holy One of Israel, he was able to come humbly, confidently and desperately to God for help and wisdom in troubled times (e.g., Isaiah 5:19, 49:7). The same is true today for believers because God never changes and His holiness never wanes.

The question remains — will we be like Isaiah and become desperate before the Holy One of Israel in these pivotal times?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, FORGIVE ME FOR THE MANY TIMES I FAIL TO RECOGNIZE YOUR HOLINESS**
- **PRAY FOR YOUR CHURCH TO BE A PLACE WHERE THE THRICE-HOLY GOD IS WORSHIPPED AND OBEYED.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ISAIAH 6:5

WOE IS ME, FOR I AM
UNDONE! BECAUSE
I AM A MAN OF
UNCLEAN LIPS.

DAY 15

DESPERATE BECAUSE I HAVE SINNED

During the 1860 Welsh Revival in the iron districts of Wales, brokenness over sin and humility before God prevailed in most prayer meetings. After a year of praying, God's holy manifest presence invaded communities as people began to experience a strong conviction of sin. In one district of North Wales, three young men went to work at the local slate quarry and wept on and off all day because of their sins. The next day, every workman in the quarry gathered on top of a hill for a prayer meeting. The prayer meeting continued day after day as workers and their families would pray, weep and sob until the late hours of the night.

This scene was repeated throughout many of the quarries and towns in North Wales. God's presence was so strong and His conviction so powerful that men, women, boys and girls — including some of the most hardened sinners — were forever changed as they encountered God and were gloriously saved. Every denomination was impacted, and it was said

that most of the population in that area of Wales was converted to Christ.

In Isaiah 6:5, Isaiah saw a clear picture of his sinfulness as he encountered the Lord and His holiness. Isaiah's personal response before God was threefold. First, he responded with the words "woe is me," which is a passionate expression or self-denunciation centered in personal grief and despair over one's sin. Isaiah was overcome by his sinfulness as waves of despair flooded his heart, arrested his soul and stopped him in his tracks.

Second, because of this realization, Isaiah cried out that he was “undone.” This means he was in great despair and fear because he saw his desperate and wretched condition before God. Third, Isaiah confessed his sin and declared, “I am a man of unclean lips.” Isaiah’s use of the phrase “I am” shows he recognized his personal sin was an affront to God (Psalm 51:3-4).

Notice also that Isaiah confessed his specific sin of unclean lips. “Unclean lips” was often used as a metaphor to describe moral or spiritual uncleanness. Isaiah realized that because of his lack of a pure heart, his lips could not praise God as holy and he could not deliver God’s message to His people. Thus, Isaiah was deeply troubled. He realized unless God intervened with His mercy, he would be cut off from God and His mission, encounter His wrath, and ultimately be consumed by God’s holiness.

God has shown me from this text that He is often more serious about His holiness and my sin than I am. I have also realized that I am too frequently satisfied with only a trickling of the manifest presence of God and His conviction in my own personal life. This is usually the result of my failure to take the time to meet with God and encounter Him in His Word. Isaiah took the time to turn aside and desperately seek the Lord and deal with his personal sin. Will we?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, FORGIVE ME FOR MY LACK OF BROKENNESS OVER SIN.**
- **LORD, GIVE MY CHURCH A BURNING DESIRE FOR YOUR RENEWED PRESENCE THROUGH REVIVAL.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ISAIAH 6:5

AND I DWELL IN THE
MIDST OF A PEOPLE
OF UNCLEAN LIPS.

DAY 16

DESPERATE BECAUSE OF THE SPIRITUAL FAMINE IN THE LAND

Isaiah was not only broken before God over his own sin, but he was also broken over the spiritual famine among God's people and in the land. Two truths surface from Isaiah's confession. First, Isaiah was a prophet who was with the people. This is seen in his use of the phrase "I dwell in the midst." "Dwell" means to live and take up residence in a place or with someone. "In the midst" means to be in the middle of something or some group of people. This shows Isaiah's heart for the people of Judah and the ministry which God called him. Although King Uzziah and the people were rebellious, sinful and refused to remove the high places from the land, Isaiah did not isolate himself from them. He was a true prophet with a pastor's heart, concerned about God's people and their spiritual condition.

Second, Isaiah's major concern was with the spiritual lives of the "people" throughout Judah, especially God's people. They, like Isaiah, had

"unclean lips," which refers to the moral and spiritual bankruptcy that was rampant across the land. The people lacked purity in their hearts because they had committed spiritual adultery by blending Yahweh worship with the worship of pagan deities. They pretended to be followers of Yahweh, but had divided hearts, practiced pagan rituals and worshipped pagan idols.

Thus, the people were guilty of hypocrisy and practiced a mere outward form of religion. They trampled the courts of the temple with their half-hearted

expressions of fake devotion and worship during festivals, seasons of prayer and solemn assemblies (Isaiah 1:10-15). They were also guilty of practicing injustice, evil deeds, and refused to defend and take care of the fatherless and widows (Isaiah 1:16-17). Despite all the serious concerns surrounding Uzziah's death, Isaiah clearly understood the most pressing issue was the sinfulness and lack of purity among God's people in the land.

Today, right before the eyes of the world, the spiritual and moral fiber of America is literally coming apart at the seams. Because of this, the American church finds itself in a battle for the soul of America. However, the American church is struggling and losing ground in this battle because it has failed to address the root issue at hand. What is the root issue behind the moral and spiritual collapse in the church and in America? The answer is found in one three letter word — SIN.

The church and the American culture as a whole have a major sin and heart problem. We have sinned against God and because of His holiness, we now stand before Him facing discipline and judgment. Therefore, it is imperative that we unite in desperate prayer for God's mercy and forgiveness. We need to repent of our sin, seek God's face, and turn from our wicked ways individually and corporately — we simply must! What will you and your church do?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, HELP ME SEE THE SPIRITUAL FAMINE AND SIN IN MY LIFE AND IN THE NATION.**
- **PRAY FOR YOUR CHURCH TO UNITE AND SEEK GOD'S MERCY CONCERNING THE SIN IN THE LAND.**

PRAYER

NOTES



ISAIAH 6:5

FOR MY EYES HAVE
SEEN THE KING, THE
LORD OF HOSTS.

DAY 17

DESPERATE BEFORE THE LORD OF HOSTS

During the Worldwide Awakening (1901-1910), God's manifest presence, deep conviction and a sense of fear for His judgment came upon a Presbyterian church's prayer meeting in Manchuria. The first sign of this beginning was when their posture in prayer changed. Presbyterian believers usually always stood to pray, but suddenly the whole congregation was kneeling in prayer. Next, people were broken and confessed their sin. One pastor confessed his sin of adultery. A church leader was at home and fell under such pain over his sin that he thought he was going to die. He had stolen goods from the church as it was being built. The next day, he went to the church and confessed his sin before everyone. Soon, non-believers joined the service and immediately fell to their knees and wept concerning their sin and need to repent. God's presence and conviction had come to that little church.

In today's verse, Isaiah declared the reason he was filled with such fear, awe and wonder in His

encounter with the Lord. It was because he had seen "the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). Isaiah evidently grasped two truths from his encounter with God. First, this King is the triune God of the Bible and exercises absolute dominion over all realms throughout the universe (Psalm 24). This realization was significant and even essential, considering the season of uncertainty and unrest in Judah.

Second, Isaiah saw God as the "Lord of hosts," meaning he recognized God as the powerful commander in chief of the heavenly

armies of God. Thus, God exercises swift and decisive victory, and stands ready to defeat any foe that comes against His people.

But the opposite of that is also true. The “Lord of hosts” commands the heavenly armies to bring judgment and discipline upon His people when they refuse to repent and return to Him. That reality struck fear and desperation in Isaiah’s heart for his own life and for Judah. Because of Uzziah’s pride and the rebellious attitudes of the people, the powerful Lord of the heavenly armies stood ready to discipline and destroy His own people. God’s posture as Lord of the heavenly armies who stands opposite His rebellious and sinful people is shown repeatedly throughout Scripture (e.g., 2 Chronicles 7:13, 18:18-27; Joel 2:1, 11; Zechariah 1:3; Malachi 3:1-18; Acts 5:1-11; James 4:1-4; Hebrews 10:26-39).

Today, it is evident that God’s manifest presence and favor is waning in the church and America. God is obviously turning us over to ourselves (Romans 1:18-32). Unless we repent, we will be destroyed by the Lord of hosts. Truly, the outcome is not good if we do not humble ourselves, pray and return to the Lord of hosts — Shall we pray?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, TEACH ME TO FEAR YOU AS THE LORD OF HOSTS.**
- **FATHER, GIVE MY CHURCH A FRESH GLIMPSE OF YOU AS THE LORD OF HOSTS IN THESE PIVOTAL DAYS.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ISAIAH 6:6-7

THEN ONE OF THE
SERAPHIM FLEW TO ME,
HAVING IN HIS HAND
A LIVE COAL ... TAKEN
... FROM THE ALTAR.
AND HE TOUCHED MY
MOUTH WITH IT, AND
SAID: 'BEHOLD, THIS HAS
TOUCHED YOUR LIPS; YOUR
INIQUITY IS TAKEN AWAY,
AND YOUR SIN PURGED.'

DAY 18

DESPERATE FOR GOD'S FORGIVENESS

During the Great Korean Revival in the early 1900s, two church leaders harbored bitter feelings toward one another. One night as both men were attending worship services, one of the men confessed his animosity to the other but received no response. The next evening, God's conviction came mightily upon the two men, and the man who had not responded ran to the other and confessed his wrong. Then, the heavens opened as the Holy Spirit came upon the service. People were devastated by their sin and wept as they stood with their arms outstretched toward heaven, pleading with the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness. One missionary testified it was a fearful sight to witness. They were desperate for God's forgiveness.

Isaiah's encounter with the Lord of hosts produced a desperate longing in his heart for God's mercy and forgiveness. Because of this, Isaiah experienced God's mercy, forgiveness and atonement via the heavenly seraphim and a hot

coal. The term "flew to me" shows God's initiative and response to Isaiah's sin. Isaiah understood God was the only One who could forgive sin (Psalm 32:5). The live coal represented the application of God's great mercy and grace through forgiveness and cleansing. Thus, the seraphim touched Isaiah's lips with the live coal, pointing to God's forgiveness of Isaiah's specific sin of unclean lips.

The phrase "your iniquity" is a comprehensive term that includes Isaiah's sin, guilt and the punishment for his sin. "Taken away" shows that God removed Isaiah's

sin, the guilt of his sin and turned aside from applying His (God's) punishment on Isaiah's sin. Next the seraphim declares, "and your sin purged." "Sin" literally means to fall short of God's standard for spiritual wholeness or to miss God's mark for holy living. "Purged" refers to atonement, or the offering of a substitute for sin. It's symbolic of the offering of an innocent life for a guilty life. Thus, this announcement demonstrates God had atoned for Isaiah's sin and taken away His wrath and judgment on that sin. This action made reconciliation with God possible.

Isaiah's sins were forgiven, his guilt atoned for and his relationship with God restored. Isaiah was now in a position to receive and embrace God's next assignment with confidence, resolve and passion. That is what can happen when God's people become desperate for His forgiveness and are restored through His mercy, grace and forgiveness. That's also what happens when God restores His great hope through revival and spiritual awakening among His people.

How we need to desperately seek God's forgiveness today. Will it start with you?

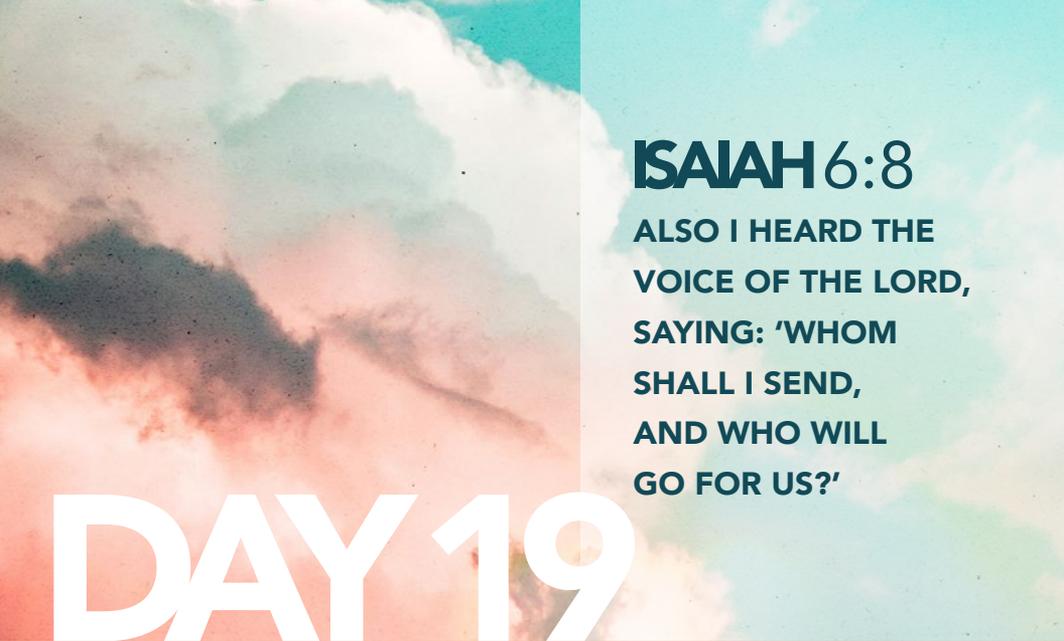
PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, MAKE ME DESPERATE FOR YOU AND YOUR FORGIVENESS.**
- **PRAY THAT YOUR CHURCH WILL BECOME DESPERATE FOR GOD AND HIS FORGIVENESS.**

PRAYER

NOTES



ISAIAH 6:8

ALSO I HEARD THE
VOICE OF THE LORD,
SAYING: 'WHOM
SHALL I SEND,
AND WHO WILL
GO FOR US?'

DAY 19

DESPERATE TO HEAR FROM GOD

Have you ever been desperate to hear a word from God? Fred Lunsford was, a couple years ago, while praying in his prayer garden. His wife had died three years earlier, and Lunsford himself almost died during a recent hospital visit. Lunsford, who was 94 at the time, is a retired pastor, associational missionary and World War II hero, who stormed the beaches of Normandy and fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

In the garden, Lunsford was asking God to release him from his earthly life and take him home to heaven. He reasoned with God that he was tired, having some physical difficulties, and just ready to go to heaven. After he prayed for a while, God clearly spoke in a still, small voice and said, "Not yet." This puzzled Lunsford, so he asked, "Why not?"

But God did not answer. For three weeks, Lunsford went daily to the garden and asked God, "Why not yet, Lord?" But God was silent.

Then, one day, God spoke clearly and said He had one last assignment for Fred Lunsford. God told Lunsford to pray daily for spiritual awakening, and to get as many people as he could to join him in praying for America. He soon began that journey and now — almost two years later — over 314,000 people have committed to pray for spiritual awakening in America and beyond. The goal is to have 1 million people by November 1, 2020. That's what can happen when God's people become desperate to hear Him speak.

In Isaiah 6:8, we see Isaiah was now in a position to hear a fresh word from God. This was possible because his relationship was restored through God's forgiveness and atonement. Also, Isaiah heard God's voice because he was attentive and listening. The word "heard" means to hear clearly or effectively (Isaiah 6:9). It is one thing to see and encounter God, but it is another to hear God speak a definite word of invitation to join His purposes and future plans.

The result was that Isaiah heard the "voice of the Lord." The use of the word "voice" means that God was actually speaking with a clear and loud voice. This was not an angel or the heavenly host delivering God's message. This was God's voice, a voice that Isaiah was eagerly listening for and clearly recognized (John 10:27). God is a speaking God, and when His people do not hear from Him they will perish (Proverbs 29:18).

In a day with unrest on every side, it is imperative for God's people to desperately long for and hear a word from God. Are you desperate to hear from God? When was the last time God spoke to you?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, SPEAK, FOR I AM LISTENING AND LONGING TO HEAR FROM YOU.**
- **LORD, I PRAY MY CHURCH WILL BE A PLACE WHERE YOUR PEOPLE CAN REGULARLY HEAR YOU SPEAK.**

PRAYER

NOTES

ISAIAH 6:8-9

'WHOM SHALL I SEND,
AND WHO WILL GO
FOR US?' THEN I SAID,
'HERE AM I! SEND
ME.' AND HE SAID,
'GO AND TELL
THIS PEOPLE:'

DAY 20

AWAKENED TO HIS NEW MISSION

In August 1949, Billy Graham spoke at a conference organized by Christian educator Henrietta Mears. One night, Graham, while struggling somewhat with his own calling, encountered the Lord in the woods and knelt beside a tree stump in prayer. Soon, Graham's heart was transformed as God drew near in a powerful way. At that moment, Graham solidified his commitment to God's calling and the truthfulness of the Bible. The following evening, people noticed he preached with greater authority and power as some 400 students gave their lives to Jesus. Later that fall, Graham held his crusade in Los Angeles, which was the beginning of a new phase of his evangelistic ministry that eventually spread worldwide. Because of his encounter with God, Billy Graham was awakened to a new vision of God's mission and ministry through his life.

Isaiah's incredible encounter with the "King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5) radically rocked and changed his life not only personally, but also

regarding his calling to join the Lord in His mission. Isaiah's heart needed realigning with God's perspective in two ways.

First, God was adjusting Isaiah's call as a prophet. Consequently, he needed to answer God's new call to be an instrument in His hand. The use of the phrase "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" showed Isaiah that he could not assume his earlier call to service was sufficient for this new assignment. To do so would mean that Isaiah could miss or not fully grasp the new focus and message he was being called to

deliver to the people of Judah. God therefore had a certain new assignment for his messenger at a specific time in Judah's history. Fortunately, Isaiah was listening and immediately said, "Here am I! Send me."

Second, Isaiah was awakened to the sober reality of God's new assignment: "Go, and tell this people" (Isaiah 6:9). This calling would be different and difficult to say the least. Different in the fact that the Lord was broadening the scope and burden of his ministry to include prophetic words, not only to Judah but also to Israel, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and other surrounding nations (e.g., Isaiah 13-39). Difficult because the vast majority of Isaiah's audience would not respond to his plea to return to God.

Instead, they would continue to harden their hearts to God's message, resulting in the land being destroyed and the people exiled (Isaiah 6:9-12). Isaiah was called to deliver God's message of repentance and hope to people who had crossed God's deadline, and therefore, would experience His judgment. Only a remnant would experience His deliverance and great hope, especially through the holy seed or stem of Jesse (Isaiah 6:13; 11:1; 40-66).

God needed someone to go and deliver His message of repentance and hope to a people who, for the most part, would not listen. That someone was a spiritually awakened Isaiah. He said yes — will you?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, HELP ME TO DESPERATELY SEEK YOU AND YOUR MISSIONAL ASSIGNMENT IN MY LIFE.**
- **PRAY FOR YOUR CHURCH TO HEAR GOD'S CALL TO RETURN TO HIM IN REVIVAL AND THE MISSION.**

PRAYER

NOTES

SECTION 3

Revival Through Devastation

God's judgment is not something that we as His people should ever want to experience. But sadly, there are times when God — because of His loyal, just and perfect love — has to destroy His people and bring devastation upon them in order to get their attention. Why? Because His people repeatedly refuse to heed His warnings and return to Him in genuine repentance and relationship. However, when God does unleash His wrath and judgment upon His people, His desire is they will eventually come to their senses, repent of their sin, and return to Him with their entire heart.

In this section, we will explore selected passages in Nehemiah 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, which illustrate how God can revive and restore His people when they earnestly seek Him for His mercy and grace — even in the midst of great devastation. “Oh God, even when You have to bring devastation because of our stubborn rebellion, may we earnestly and prayerfully seek You for revival and restoration.”

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NEH. 1:3

THE SURVIVORS WHO ARE LEFT ... ARE THERE IN GREAT DISTRESS AND REPROACH. THE WALL OF JERUSALEM IS ALSO BROKEN DOWN, AND ITS GATES ARE BURNED WITH FIRE.

DAY 21

THE REALITY OF GOD'S DEVASTATION

During the North China Revival in 1908, missionary Jonathan Goforth went to two churches in areas that had been ravaged at the beginning of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. In one church, 54 of its members were martyred. In another area, over 100 missionaries and many Chinese families were killed for their faith.

While Goforth was preaching in one of those churches, a number of young boys responded and confessed their unforgiveness, hatred and plans for revenge for the people who had murdered their fathers. The Christians had actually compiled a list of those responsible for the atrocities and murders eight years earlier, and secretly planned revenge. But the Holy Spirit began to work mightily in their hearts. One boy after another stood and confessed his sin of bitterness and wept in brokenness. The next day, the list of those responsible for the murders was brought into the service, torn apart publically and each one forgiven. Revival and restoration came

despite horrendous pain and suffering. Only God could bring healing and hope during such great devastation.

In today's text, God had previously judged the rebellion of Judah by allowing King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians to conquer the nation and destroy Jerusalem. This resulted in many of the survivors being carried into exile in 587 B.C. Later, when the Persians conquered Babylon under King Cyrus, the Jews in exile were allowed to assimilate into the population, practice their religion, and if they desired, return to their homeland. Some, like

Nehemiah, obtained favor, remaining in Mesopotamia and occupying important governmental positions under later kings.

While serving as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah received disturbing news that the inhabitants in Jerusalem were in great "distress and reproach." "Distress" refers to calamity, evil, misery and adversity resulting from a lack of inner or moral purity in people. "Reproach" means to cast scorn, shame or blame on someone. Combined, these terms paint a dismal picture of life for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They were plagued with rampant immorality, spiritual famine, evil and scorn from within and without. In addition, the wall of Jerusalem was "broken down" and the gates destroyed by "fire." This meant the city was vulnerable to the daily threat of enemies coming in to pillage and kill its inhabitants.

Because of the physical, moral and spiritual realities related to his beloved Judah, Nehemiah found himself in a pivotal moment. How would he respond to the devastation in the land? What would he do? What could he do?

Today, there is much physical, moral, and spiritual famine and devastation in America due to decades of rebellion against God and His laws. In this pivotal moment, how will we respond?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, HELP ME TO SEE THE REALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND PHYSICAL FAMINE IN AMERICA.**
- **LORD, HELP MY CHURCH SEE THE REALITY OF THE MORAL, SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL FAMINE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.**

PRAYER

NOTES

NEH. 1:4
WHEN I HEARD THESE
WORDS ... I SAT
DOWN AND WEPT,
AND MOURNED FOR
MANY DAYS.

DAY 22

BROKEN OVER GREAT DEVASTATION

While serving at the North American Mission Board in the Office of Prayer, I had a moving conversation with Dr. Lewis Drummond, former Billy Graham chair of evangelism at Southern Seminary and president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. At the time, he was teaching at Beeson Divinity School and had just returned from England after preaching the funeral of a friend. While in England, he drove around talking with pastors and leaders and visiting churches. He said it disturbed him greatly to see the deadness of many churches. He found few believers actually went to church and a large number of churches had become Muslim mosques.

Dr. Drummond then became emotional as he shared his extreme burden over the declining spiritual condition in America. He was gravely worried that if the American church and culture did not experience God's mercy through revival within the next 30 to 50 years, it would end up

looking just like England — in spiritual ruins. He said, "Please don't ever stop calling people to pray for revival and spiritual awakening. Our very existence and relevance as the church in America and as a country depends upon God's mercy in revival and spiritual awakening." That was my last conversation with Dr. Drummond before his death two months later in January of 2004. It was quite a moving conversation, one that left an indelible mark on my life.

Nehemiah's first response to the news concerning the spiritual and physical

distress among the inhabitants of Jerusalem was brokenness. He “sat down and wept” (Nehemiah 1:4). His love and concern for his Jewish brethren and homeland moved him to weep audibly in a display of strong emotion. Nehemiah also “mourned,” meaning he lamented or grieved inwardly and outwardly over the spiritual and physical suffering in Jerusalem. The news of the devastation was so disturbing that it altered his life and schedule as he responded with great compassion and mourned for “many days.”

God’s timing and redemptive activity can also be seen in and through Nehemiah during this season of grief. Like Jesus and Paul, Nehemiah empathized and owned the pain and suffering of his brethren (Luke 19:41-45; John 11; Romans 9:1-5). This level of compassion and empathy eventually led Nehemiah to not only pray, but actually engage in helping with the crisis.

Has all the pain and suffering from the pandemic and rampant lostness moved you to weep and mourn over America yet? If not, why not?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, BREAK MY HEART OVER THE PHYSICAL SUFFERING AND SPIRITUAL FAMINE IN AMERICA.**
- **FATHER, STIR MY CHURCH TO BE AN INSTRUMENT OF HOPE AND GOOD NEWS AMID THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL BROKENNESS IN MY COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.**

PRAYER

NOTES



NEH. 1:4

**I WAS FASTING AND
PRAYING BEFORE THE
GOD OF HEAVEN.**

DAY 23

DEVASTATION PRODUCED FASTING AND PRAYER

Two truths can be gleaned from today's verse concerning Nehemiah's response to the devastation in Jerusalem. First, it not only broke Nehemiah's heart, but moved him to act on his brokenness through "fasting and praying." "Fasting" is depriving the body of nourishment in order to humble the soul before God. "Praying" is the most common term used for prayer in the Old Testament and refers to humble, intense and worshipful prayer.

Notice that "fasting and praying" was Nehemiah's first response during a period of mourning. This showed his deep humility and desire to continuously pray with a sharp focus on the Lord and His purposes. The combination of the disciplines of prayer and fasting were often used by Old and New Testament saints to focus and strengthen their prayers during seasons of personal and/or national crisis, sorrow or need. Nehemiah, therefore, became desperate, dependent on the Lord as he fasted and prayed concerning the devastation in his homeland.

Second, Nehemiah prayed and fasted "before the Lord." This means Nehemiah actually turned aside to seek the Lord. He was not praying or fasting as he was going about his duties — he gave God his undivided attention. The force of the terms "fasting and praying" indicates that this was a continuous and repeated action. It also shows that Nehemiah was serious about addressing and securing God's help concerning the devastation in his homeland. His focus was totally on his God because he knew God was the answer to the devastation.

The revival fires and zeal that started during the 1857-59 Layman's Prayer Revival continued to bear fruit in both the Confederate and Union armies during the American Civil War. Approximately 300,000 soldiers were converted during the war. During the height of the armies' revival movements in 1863, both presidents — Abraham Lincoln of the United States and Jefferson Davis of the Confederate States — called for a special day of fasting and prayer before God. Lincoln issued his call on April 30, 1863 and Davis his call on Aug. 23, 1863. Like Nehemiah, both Lincoln and Davis realized their great need for God's intervention and help during the days of devastation and suffering they were facing.

When was the last time you or your church were so disturbed by the declining spiritual condition of America that you actually turned aside to fast, pray and seek God for His perspective and help? I believe we are in pivotal days in America related to God's judgment. Could it be that the Lord of hosts is waving His hand for the heavenly armies to unleash God's judgment and devastation (Isaiah 19:16) upon America in ways like we have never seen before? If so, what will we do?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, GRANT ME THE DISCIPLINE TO FAST AND PRAY BEFORE YOU IN THESE CRUCIAL DAYS.**
- **LORD, GIVE OUR CHURCH A HUNGER FOR YOUR PERSPECTIVE THROUGH FASTING AND PRAYER.**

PRAYER

NOTES

NEH. 1:5-6

I PRAY, LORD GOD
OF HEAVEN, O GREAT
AND AWESOME GOD ...
PLEASE LET YOUR EAR
BE ATTENTIVE AND YOUR
EYES OPEN, THAT YOU
MAY HEAR THE PRAYER ...
I PRAY ... DAY AND NIGHT,
FOR THE CHILDREN
OF ISRAEL.

DAY 24

GOD-FOCUSED AND COMPASSIONATE PRAYER

Four truths stand out from Nehemiah's prayer in today's verses. First, Nehemiah's prayer was God-centered. It began with God, it was to God, and it started with a focus on God and His attributes. The phrases "Lord God" plus "heaven" show Nehemiah's understanding that God is not just some deity in the heavens, but sovereign Lord and Creator of the heavens and the earth.

"Great and awesome God" refers to God's all-powerful and almighty character. To Nehemiah, God was not distant, but rather near. He is a God of relationship and "covenant," Who is merciful toward those who love Him and obey His commandments. Because of his personal faith and covenant relationship with God, Nehemiah praised Him for His character and appealed to His faithfulness, loyal love and mercy.

Second, Nehemiah asked God to "be attentive" with His eyes and ears, and "hear" the "prayer" of His "servant." "Be attentive" means to pay

very close attention to a request. Nehemiah's combined use of ears and eyes shows that he was seeking God's face. This is necessary because God's back was to His people in judgment. Since God is sovereign and can see all things, Nehemiah asked Him to literally turn around and look upon the devastation in Jerusalem through His eyes of mercy.

If God turns around and faces His people that means He is able to "hear" and answer His servant's request for mercy and help. This understanding of God's willingness to answer the

prayers of His people is often seen in the Old Testament (e.g., 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 59:1-2). Consequently, this petition is more about God’s mercy and restoration of relationship and presence with His people than about God’s help.

Third, Nehemiah was praying “day and night.” This means he was committed to securing God’s mercy and help no matter how much time it took. It also shows that Nehemiah was persistent in his asking and determined to pray until God answered. Fourth, Nehemiah’s prayer was full of compassion and aimed at securing help for the “children of Israel.” This was not a self-centered prayer. Nehemiah’s love for his brethren translated into an unwavering devotion to intercede on their behalf.

Has the spiritual devastation in America moved your heart with compassion to seek God’s face and pray on behalf of the church and lostness across America yet? If not, why not?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, GIVE ME A FRESH GLIMPSE OF WHO YOU ARE THAT I MIGHT BE MORE CONCERNED FOR OTHERS.**
- **GIVE MY CHURCH PERSISTENCE AS WE PRAY FOR THE SPIRITUAL FAMINE IN THE LAND.**

PRAYER

NOTES

NEH. 1:6-7

'I PRAY ... AND CONFESS THE SINS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WHICH WE HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU. BOTH MY FATHER'S HOUSE AND I HAVE SINNED. WE HAVE ACTED VERY CORRUPTLY AGAINST YOU, AND HAVE NOT KEPT THE COMMANDMENTS ... STATUTES ... ORDINANCES.'

DAY 25

DEVASTATION EXPOSES THE REALITY OF SIN

England was bankrupt spiritually prior to the great evangelical awakening that swept the country during the 1730s under the leadership of George Whitfield, Charles Wesley and John Wesley. Deism and a lack of belief in the authority of Scripture led to spiritual indifference and skepticism in the pulpit and pew. The subsequent waning of any spiritual vitality among clergy and congregants alike left churches empty and the culture largely untouched or influenced by the church.

Because of the lack of salt and light, sin abounded throughout the entire country. Most statesmen and leaders were immoral and given to infidelity, drunkenness and profanity. Many areas became lawless as mobs formed, rioted, pillaged, and burned homes and businesses, while many police forces became ineffective and dwindled in number. People began to limit travel after dark for fear of being robbed, mugged or worse. Hopelessness abounded as sin's downward spiral destroyed

individual lives and families. This devastation continued until God poured out His mercy in revival as His people prayed. God often does His greatest work of revival during seasons of great darkness.

In today's text, Nehemiah's prayer exposes the reality of sin and rebellion present among the people of God. Nehemiah took responsibility and confessed before the Lord the sins of Israel, his father's house and those in his own personal life. "Sins" refers to missing God's mark or falling short of His standard, purity and wholeness. This makes

someone less than acceptable to God. The whole nation, including Nehemiah, his family and all the families in the homeland and scattered abroad (i.e., all the children of Israel), were guilty of sinning against God.

Notice also Nehemiah’s confession of specific sins. “Acted very corruptly” means to act so badly or wickedly toward God that one literally destroys His covenant and laws. This represents Israel’s outright rebellion and disobedience toward God’s “commandments,” which are His instructions that He expects them to follow; God’s “statutes,” which are His written laws received by Moses; and God’s “ordinances,” which refers to the just claims of God on His people to be holy as He is holy. Combined, these terms represent all the demands of God upon His covenant people given through Moses.

Why was Judah reeling from the devastation of God’s judgment? Nehemiah’s confession clearly shows it was because they had sinned against God. Why is America seeing such great political, civil, physical, moral and spiritual devastation? Could it be because of our sin? Something to ponder — don’t you think?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, CONVICT MY HEART OVER THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF MY SIN AND THE SIN IN THE LAND.**
- **LORD, HELP MY CHURCH SEE THE DEVASTATION FROM SIN.**

PRAYER

NOTES

NEH.1:8-10

REMEMBER, I PRAY,
THE WORD THAT YOU
COMMANDED YOUR
SERVANT MOSES, ...'IF YOU
ARE UNFAITHFUL, I WILL
SCATTER ... BUT IF YOU
RETURN TO ME, AND KEEP
MY COMMANDMENTS AND
DO THEM ... I WILL GATHER
... [THE] REDEEMED.

DAY 26

DO YOU KNOW THE WAY BACK?

In today's Scripture, Nehemiah continues to pour out his heart in prayer as he moves from confession to an appeal rooted in Scripture. In his prayer, Nehemiah paints a picture of how God's people can return to Him and experience His forgiveness and restoration even in the midst of great devastation. His prayer is based upon God's Word and covenant promise to His people in Deuteronomy 30:1-5. "Remember" means to pay close attention and respond with appropriate action. This prayer is a plea for God to act on behalf of His people as He remembers His covenant promises with His people.

According to Nehemiah's prayer, God's promise in Deuteronomy is twofold. First, when His people are rebellious and disobey, God declares He will "scatter" them. "Scatter" refers to God's promise to judge their rebellion and disobedience with devastation and exile. God often uses enemies and foreign nations to accomplish this scattering (e.g., Joel 2; Jeremiah 25). The picture is likened

unto sheep being dispersed and devastated by ravaging wolves. No matter who or what instrument is used to scatter Israel, God is the One who orchestrates the scattering.

Second, when His people become obedient followers, God promises to "gather" His people. "Gather" points to God's promise to reward His people with forgiveness, mercy and restoration as He brings them back together from exile. This can only take place when God's people "return" to Him. "Return" means, in the context of a covenant relationship, to actively turn

from doing evil and actively turn to doing good. Thus, to return in this sense means that God's people genuinely repent of their sins and return through relationship to their God. Returning to God also means that His people must "keep" and "do" His commandments. Restoration through repentance requires not only a change of heart but also a change in action.

Nehemiah's final plea for restoration and deliverance in this prayer is taken from God's redemptive work in the Exodus. "Redeemed" in verse 10 means to ransom with a payment. God ransomed Israel through the sacrifice of the firstborn male of both man and beast in Egypt to secure Israel's release from slavery through the Exodus. Nehemiah prayed for God's mercy through deliverance from the devastation experienced during the recent Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. Nehemiah's appeal therefore rested upon God's redemptive activity.

Do you know the way back to the Lord? There is only one way back — God's way. Have you and your church returned to Him in repentance and revival? Don't you think it's time?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **PRAY FOR GOD'S MERCY THROUGH REPENTANCE AND REVIVAL IN YOUR LIFE.**
- **ASK THE LORD TO MAKE YOUR CHURCH AN INSTRUMENT OF HIS MERCY THROUGH REVIVAL.**

PRAYER

NOTES

NEH. 1:11

O LORD, I PRAY, PLEASE LET YOUR EAR BE ATTENTIVE TO THE PRAYER OF YOUR SERVANT, AND TO THE PRAYER OF YOUR SERVANTS WHO DESIRE TO FEAR YOUR NAME; AND LET YOUR SERVANT PROSPER THIS DAY ... AND GRANT HIM MERCY IN THE SIGHT OF THIS MAN.

DAY 27

DEVASTATING TIMES REQUIRE GOD-SIZED PRAYERS

In order for Nehemiah to act on God's burden and call to assist in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, he had to obtain favor and permission from King Artaxerxes to leave his post and return to his homeland. This was a God-sized task that required a God-sized prayer. Three truths stand out concerning Nehemiah's prayer.

First, Nehemiah's prayer was a humble, God-centered prayer. Nehemiah's prayer focused on the Lord and included the interjection "please," along with the petition "let Your ear be attentive." This represented a humble plea for the Lord to listen, hear and therefore come to his aid with help. Artaxerxes had actually halted work on the rebuilding of Jerusalem earlier (Ezra 4:21) so for Nehemiah to obtain permanent leave to restart that work, he knew God would have to change the king's heart.

Second, Nehemiah's prayer was courageous. Nehemiah realized that Artaxerxes could possibly

order him punished, removed from office or have him executed if he felt that Nehemiah was coming against or challenging his authority. This was especially true since Nehemiah was the "king's cupbearer." Nehemiah's position required his utmost loyalty because he worked closely with the king and was in charge of ensuring his meals were safe. Nevertheless, Nehemiah trusted in God's sovereign ability and sway over man as he prayed for "mercy in the sight of this man."

Third, Nehemiah's prayer was based on a genuine fear and trust in God. "Fear" refers to

reverent fear and is a reference to Nehemiah and the other “servants” who had a “desire” to fear God’s “name” as they prayed. Nehemiah and the “servants” with him therefore trusted and feared God more than they did man. “Prosper” points to Nehemiah’s desire to have God’s hand of favor and blessing with the king. This was a God-sized request that required God’s power to be answered.

During the North China Revival in 1908, missionary Jonathon Goforth encountered great unbelief among local leaders in one province. They did not believe that God could use Goforth and move mightily in revival in their area. But as Goforth and others began to pray and trust God to send His Spirit and overcome their unbelief, the tide began to turn. Revival soon came as most people who attended the services were gloriously converted. They had prayed and expected God to do great things and He did.

If revival can ever come during devastating times, God’s servants must have the courage to ask Him to do great things that only He can do. God can do His greatest work when darkness and despair is rampant and His people pray God-sized prayers. What will you do?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, HELP ME PRAY GOD-SIZED PRAYERS DURING THESE DAYS OF UNREST IN AMERICA.**
- **FATHER, TEACH MY CHURCH TO FEAR YOU MORE THAN MAN AS WE PRAY GOD-SIZED PRAYERS.**

PRAYER

NOTES

NEH. 4:6-9

SO WE BUILT THE WALL ...
TO HALF ITS HEIGHT ... THE
PEOPLE HAD A MIND TO
WORK. NOW ... SANBALLAT,
TOBIAH, THE ARABS ...
BECAME VERY ANGRY
... [AND] CONSPIRED
TO ... ATTACK ... AND
CREATE CONFUSION.
NEVERTHELESS WE MADE
OUR PRAYER TO OUR GOD
AND SET A WATCH AGAINST
THEM DAY AND NIGHT.

DAY 28

RESTORATION AND REVIVAL BRING OPPOSITION

During the evangelical awakening that began in England during the mid-to-late 1730s, George Whitefield was having large crowds attend his meetings. With this success came opposition from laity and clergy alike. On one occasion, the table he was supposed to stand and preach on was destroyed before he arrived. People would throw objects at Whitefield, such as rotten vegetables, fruit, stones and even dead animals. He was attacked at times with scissors, pistols, canes and other objects. Clergy often opposed his open-air preaching and his call to immediate salvation with pamphlets, sermons and declarations. Yet, Whitefield remained faithful, prayed and continued to preach with fire toward winning souls.

God answered Nehemiah's God-sized prayer for favor to return to rebuild Jerusalem. King Artaxerxes not only released him, but also blessed his travels with letters of free passage along the way (Nehemiah 2:1-8). When Nehemiah arrived in

Jerusalem, he went straight to work, getting a feel of the lay of the land, rallying the people around the mission, and moving forward with the arduous task of rebuilding the walls and gates (Nehemiah 2:9-3:32). As the people worked together with great resolve and "had a mind to work," the wall was soon "joined together up to half its height" (Nehemiah 4:6).

At that time, opposition to the work from outside enemies began to heat up as "Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs" and others became "very angry." As their anger raged they all "conspired"

together and made plans to “attack” and try to “create confusion” in Jerusalem. Nehemiah responded to this threat with a threefold plan.

First, Nehemiah led the people to “pray” to their “God.” The use and form of this word pictures a humble servant falling prostrate on the ground before God in desperate, intense and confident prayer. Nehemiah knew that God had led him to rebuild the walls. He also knew that it would be God who would bring the project to completion. Second, he devised a plan that allowed the people to be prepared for battle and also continue to work on the wall at the same time (Nehemiah 4:19-23). Third, he set “a watch against them day and night” (Nehemiah 4:9). Instead of cowering down and waiting for an attack, Nehemiah set watchmen on the walls and kept an eye on his enemies. Consequently, Nehemiah did not allow the opposition to get in the way of what God was doing in Jerusalem.

When God begins to pierce the darkness and pour out His blessings in and through His people in revival, opposition from the enemy will likely arise. When that happened in Nehemiah’s day, Nehemiah led God’s people to pray. Don’t you think we should do the same?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, KEEP ME FOCUSED ON YOU THROUGH PRAYER AS I FACE OPPOSITION TO REVIVAL.**
- **LORD, MAY MY CHURCH’S FIRST RESPONSE BE PRAYER WHEN WE FACE OPPOSITION.**

PRAYER

NOTES

NEH. 6:9, 15-16

O GOD, STRENGTHEN MY HANDS. ... SO THE WALL WAS FINISHED. ... AND IT HAPPENED, WHEN ALL OUR ENEMIES HEARD ... AND ALL THE NATIONS ... SAW... THEY WERE VERY DISHEARTENED ... FOR THEY PERCEIVED ... THIS WORK WAS DONE BY OUR GOD.

DAY 29

FINISH STRONG

While rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, Nehemiah encountered much opposition from outside enemies and also from disgruntled Jewish countrymen (Nehemiah 4:19-5:19). As the wall neared completion, one final attempt was made by Israel's enemies to bring the construction to a halt. This time, their plan was to set a trap using trickery, deception and disloyal Jews to murder Nehemiah (Nehemiah 6:1-14).

Once again, Nehemiah's faith and resolve to depend upon the Lord surfaced. He prayed, "O God, strengthen my hands" (Nehemiah 6:9). "Strengthen" means to give encouragement and power to someone for battle resulting in victory. Nehemiah's plea for God's help was answered, and his enemies' plans exposed and thwarted as God strengthened Nehemiah with wisdom and power to finish strong. Thus, Nehemiah soon declared that the "wall was finished" (Nehemiah 6:15).

Despite all the opposition, the rebuilding of the wall only took 52 days. This was nothing less than a God-sized feat. Because of this accomplishment, and to no surprise, all of Israel's enemies were disappointed when they "heard" and "saw" the wall and gates were finished. The phrase "And it happened" gives a clear picture of God's sovereign and causative work in the midst of a historical occurrence (Nehemiah 6:16). Consequently, the enemies were "very disheartened" and perceived that the work was accomplished by Israel's God (Nehemiah 6:16).

Three things are worth noting from this victorious moment. First, Nehemiah's unwavering dependence upon God through constant prayer is challenging to all generations of believers. Nehemiah possessed a strong faith and lived a life of prayerful dependence upon the Lord that parallels that of the New Testament church (Acts 2:42). Second, Nehemiah's courage and resolve in the face of opposition demonstrates when God's servants set their face toward Him and provide courageous leadership, God can use them as fruitful instruments to accomplish great things. Third, when God's enemies see and understand His work through His people, it brings them face-to-face with His powerful and redemptive purposes as they embrace the reality that if Israel's God is for His people, no one can be against them (Romans 8:31).

No doubt, revival and spiritual awakening is God's work. But, revival praying and preparation is our work (2 Chronicles 7:14). Thus, the church in America must answer this question. Will we finish strong the work of praying and preparing for God to send revival and spiritual awakening across America? What shall we do?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **FATHER, GIVE ME THE RESOLVE TO FINISH STRONG THE WORK OF PRAYING AND PREPARING FOR REVIVAL.**
- **LORD, HELP OUR CHURCH KEEP ITS EYES ON YOU AND BECOME A CATALYST OF REVIVAL IN OUR WORLD.**

PRAYER

NOTES



NEH.

8:1, 10; 10:29

NOW ALL THE PEOPLE GATHERED TOGETHER AS ONE MAN IN THE OPEN SQUARE ... AND THEY TOLD EZRA ... TO BRING THE BOOK OF THE LAW OF MOSES. ... THEN HE [NEHEMIAH] SAID ... THIS DAY IS HOLY TO OUR LORD. DO NOT SORROW, FOR THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH. ...THESE JOINED ... AND ENTERED INTO A CURSE AND AN OATH TO WALK IN GOD'S LAW.

DAY 30

REVIVAL THROUGH DEVASTATION

The devastation of Jerusalem and years of exile had taken a tremendous toll on the people and the nation both physically and spiritually. Now, with the wall rebuilt and gates in tack, Nehemiah could give attention to the most important part of his mission — the revival of the vital spiritual life of the people through the restoration of their covenantal worship of Yahweh.

This spiritual revival under Nehemiah had four main focuses. First, “the people gathered together as one man.” The emphasis here rests upon the people’s initiative to gather in oneness to pray, give thanks, worship and hear the Word. This was a sign that the people desired spiritual renewal as they united and considered their position before God. Second, the people requested that Ezra the scribe read from God’s Word, “the Book of the Law of Moses.” This renewed focus on the Torah marked the beginning of a new emphasis in Judaism upon

God’s Word. From this point forward, God’s Word became more important than the temple. This shift was timely and providential, especially for the coming generations who would have to endure 400 years of no prophetic or Scriptural inspiration during the intertestamental period.

Third, there was an emphasis on remembering and worshipping the Lord for His faithfulness, blessings and restoration. This took place as they remembered and observed the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of the Tabernacles

(Nehemiah 8-9). This was the beginning of a new post-exilic life of restoration and revival following a time of great judgment and devastation. Thus, they were not to be sorrowful but joyful because the “joy of the Lord” was their “strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). Fourth, the people “joined with their brethren” and entered into a “curse and an oath to walk in God’s law” (Nehemiah 10:29). This two-fold covenant, which followed the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience passages in Deuteronomy 27-30, represented a renewed commitment to uphold their covenant relationship with the Lord through a lifestyle of obedience to God’s law.

Through Nehemiah’s leadership, the post-exilic community experienced revival in their vital spiritual life personally and as a community of faith. God granted them spiritual renewal as they repented, prayed, worshipped and devoted themselves to a lifestyle of obedience to God’s Word.

Will revival ever take place in the American church? Will it take God’s judgment and devastation before we long for Him and His mercy as the God of great hope through revival and spiritual awakening? Time will tell. Shall we pray?

PRAYER

PROMPTS

- **LORD, HAVE MERCY UPON ME, A SINNER — BEGIN REVIVAL IN ME!**
- **FATHER, HAVE MERCY ON MY CHURCH, WE HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU. WE NEED YOU IN REVIVAL.**

PRAYER

NOTES

THESE DEVOTIONS

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