
HEAL OUR LAND, O LORD

“A Call for Revival”

2 Chronicle 7:14

Ezekiel, Oghenekaro

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. – 2 Chronicles 7:14

Sin from time immemorial has been man's greatest enemy yet we do not treat it as such. As a congregation we have made mistakes and still do make. As individuals we have fallen from grace, we have made terrible mistakes and still do feel comfortable with our state. It is not time to play the blame game but a time to own up and take responsibility. God tells us that the problem of backsliding and sluggishness of our spirit begins with us, His people and ends with us, God's people. If the sin of God's people brings them into terrible situation, then it is their turning from these same sins that will bring the needed help to deliver them from their situation. In other words, unless we can identify our sins, acknowledge them and take full responsibility for them, then we have no hope. We cannot change this world by political reformation and improved educational funding. A congregation will only be able to turn back from their spiritual decline by carefully following the principles outlined in **2 Chronicles 7:14**. This is not the only place these principles are mentioned, but they are clearly articulated here.

The Lord asks four things of His people to find renewal. We might think four things are too many

- (1) humble themselves
- (2) pray
- (3) seek My face
- (4) turn from their wicked ways

1) Humble themselves

Christians do not normally think of humbling themselves. It is our pride and stubbornness that brought us into these terrible circumstances in the first place. We wouldn't hear God. We had to insist on our own ways. The husband knows God's Word says that he shouldn't divorce, but he makes his feelings and perception of his situation to be more important than God's Word. The wife finds an excuse not to submit to her husband, but it requires her to exert her pride and judgment over God. The child insists on getting his own way, but he does so at great consequence to his relationship with God and his parents.

When we think more of our ways than God's, we are living in arrogant pride. The only solution is to humble ourselves

What does 'humble' oneself mean? We might think of a man who is standing tall. We ask him to fall to the ground and put his face on the dirt at his feet. This is a picture of a man who is bowed down. '*Humble oneself*,' however, speaks to the bringing down of the heart and spirit of man. We will often find a bowing low of the body, but what is most important is the lowering of one's view of himself. Jesus spoke of the humbling of one's heart as the first step into the kingdom of God. (***Matthew 5:3***).

Humility is when we rightly understand our place before God

Our generation is typified by talk of high self-esteem. We know little of true humility. We want to believe better things of ourselves than is true. People even help us along by not saying anything about our faults and in fact lying. They think this is good for us!

God says the first step in approaching Him is to evaluate oneself in light of His holy and majestic character. In other words, we are not to evaluate ourselves by what we feel about ourselves but by what God says in His Word. Did we get a divorce? Does the wife actually submit to her husband? Does the son and daughter obey and honor their parents? By examining ourselves in light of God's Word, we get a true perspective of ourselves. We can do this by taking an inventory on the things we have said and done. Are they pleasing to God? Have we really been listening to God? When we humble ourselves, it means that we clearly affirm that we are but made from dust. Only He is God, and He has the right to do anything He judges that is right.

How to Humble our Soul? By grieving over our sin

2) Pray

Without humbling ourselves, our prayers will be a stench in His nose. He wants nothing to do with our prideful prayers. (***Matthew 6:2***). Religion is built on the show of humility, but in most cases the heart is very prideful. One's prayers will differ on what one truly believes about God. God loves those who humbly pray before Him and cry out for help. If one is not humble, then prayers are secular. These prayers have no effect. They may as well not pray. God seeks genuine prayers from real heart needs. We pray in order to state God's true glorious nature. He is mighty, awesome and compassionate. We pray so that we can bring up our special needs before Him. ***2 Chronicles 7:13*** mentioned three special needs: drought, insect invasion and disease among God's people. Most people today do not understand there is a connection between the weather, animal behavior, health and God. God says He controls it and uses it to wake up His people.

For instance, let's examine the word **pestilence or plague**. The Hebrew word comes from the verb 'to speak'. When Moses went to Pharaoh, all Moses had to do was speak what God told him, and the plague began. Sure, we can go back and say there are physical situations that contributed to that disease, but surely the timing and increase was from God. By

withdrawing His grace, disease just steps in. Or we can say it another way. As sin increases, God's grace is withdrawn thus allowing all sorts of problems on our societies. The world is now facing AIDS, CORONAVIRUS (Covid-19) not to mention a host of other STDs stemming from immoral practices.

When a person first faces a health problem, he usually immediately makes plans to see the doctor. If there is a drought problem, he studies the weather patterns. If the problem has to do with some devilish insect consuming the crops, he goes and buys a stronger pesticide. Does he think of God? Rarely. Only when one has humbled himself before God, can he begin to see that there is a **direct connection**. This is simply what Paul did when he saw a pattern of sickness and death among God's people at Corinth. *For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. (1 Corinthians 11:29,30).*

Once a man is aware that he is under God's judgment, then he is not only humble but penitent. He is much more apt to plead to God for mercy. Prayer comes in real natural once a person fears God! He might not have prayed for a long time, but all of a sudden, he becomes an expert. His need leads him in the right direction of seeking God's mercy and help.

How do we get motivated to pray?

By stop trying to get out of the mess on your own. Ask God.

3) Seek My Face

If we were to tell a group of mature Christians that there were four conditions in order to initiate a real revival among God's people, they would probably miss guessing this one: to seek God's face. Many Christians have never been able to put their finger on the difference between a zealous Christian and a traditional Christian. This phrase '*seek God's face*' does a good job at doing this.

First of all, we see that **God breaks through the impersonal wall**. God is personal and must be dealt with as a person. A friend might call you that he needs to talk to you 'face to face' about a situation. God can be personal to you and I.

God wants to reveal Himself to us. He is not hiding Himself so that we can't find Him. We do need to seek Him. He will allow us to find Him if we have been sincere in the first two steps. We might be tested about our sincerity in wanting to know Him. He really wants us to fellowship with Him.

We should understand that the phrase '**my face**' **speaks of an intimate relationship with God**. If we say '*Seek Me,*' we might think that there still exists a distance between Him and us. We can't see Him too closely. We can't touch Him. But when He says '*Seek My face,*' we are forced to understand we should get close to Him until we see His face. When we meet Him, we are impacted by His face. How amazing that we, the great backsliders, are told to get right in the face of God.

We know what will happen if we do seek His face. We will see His holiness and love. We will all of a sudden be aghast at the wicked things we have done and the haughty attitudes that we have held. His deep and penetrating love will be contrasted with our cheap selfishness. The contrast will be so great, the gulf so deep, that we will weep seemingly without end. By looking at a distance, one might not see anything but His holiness. But by getting close to God, one also discovers His love and mercy that pardon us of all of our sins. This is where God wants to bring us. Our wills are involved in this process. Remember God's purpose for drawing us close is so that we see both His holiness as well as His mercy.

***How do we seek His face?
By putting aside our vain idols and desire Him more than all.***

4) Turn from our wicked ways

We must repent. There must be a clear change in the way we approached our lives from before we met God and afterwards. Anyone who draw close to God and yet continue on without changing. Think of Judas who in the end chose silver over loyalty to Christ. We must place the turning from our wicked ways as the highest priority on our list.

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. (James 1:22-24).

Clearly the people who say they have tried but couldn't change are the same who never truly sought God's face

There might be some who would wonder why God insist on changing a person's ways. They might think that if God was so kind, then He would accept ourselves the way we are. They wonder why His mercy doesn't require tolerance and so repentance is not important. There is so much to say here because there is so much nonsense being sold to Christians. The scriptures tell us to turn away from our wicked ways.

How do we show our true love for God? By turning from our wicked ways.

Summary

Four steps that bring us closer and closer to God's glorious presence. Take them now. We can turn to God no matter what our circumstances. That was the background of this promise. No matter how far into judgment we might have gone, we can turn around by God's gracious promise.

God says, ... *then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. – 2 Chronicles 7:14.*