



SPRING 2018 DEVOTIONAL

“Praying for Repentance/Confession”

WEEK 4: June 4th – June 8th



PUTTING PRAYER
IN PRACTICE

THE SERIES

Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Dr. D.Z. Cofield, Senior Pastor
Mark Slone, Devotional Editor

Monday, June 4, 2018

Make America Great Again?

If my people who are called by my name 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 (ESV)

According to the Gallop poll¹, would you believe that in 2017, in this post-modern, post-Christian culture, about 75% of Americans identify with a Christian faith? Would you believe that 37% are highly religious; 33% are not religious at all; and 48% of those who are highly religious approve of Trump? And according to our POTUS, he believes that he has fulfilled his campaign slogan of “Make America Great Again” and is now eyeing a second term, with the slogan, “Keep America Great.” But how can this be, when you look at some of the ills that are plaguing our country: poverty, greed, racism, injustice, division, intolerance, school shootings, drug and alcohol abuse, abortions, indifference, gentrification, inequality, and the failure of our educational systems. I’m sure you can add more to this incomplete list.

I could go on and on about where our country is headed, but I’d much prefer to talk about what God says in His eternal Word that can truly make, not only America, but any nation great, in His eyes. That is a REVIVAL!

¹ GALLUP, news.gallup.com, December 22, 2017, online issue

As we consider today’s text, we see the instructions God had given to Israel, that we can apply in our lives today and see God move to turn our individual lives, families, communities, churches, cities, states, and countries around and get us on the right track, for His glory. God is addressing His people and directs them to do certain things. “If” you will do your part, “then” God will do His part. Today, He would be addressing Christians. God knows that unsaved sinners will not obey His commandments or even pay attention to Him. But He expects Christians to listen to Him, to look into His Word for direction, and to live accordingly.

God says that we Christians are to “humble” ourselves, to submit to His authority, to be in subjection to Him. This is a very hard concept in our culture. We’re taught, whether directly or indirectly to be just the opposite. After we humble ourselves, God then instructs us to “pray.” Prayer is communing with God, a dialogue with Him. God desires that we Christians come before Him and spend time with Him in His Word, praying His Word back to Him.

God’s third instruction is for Christians to “seek” His face. This means to enjoy God’s presence and therefore cultivating our intimate, personal relationship with Him, enjoying His company. The fourth instruction is for we Christians to repent of our “wicked ways.” You know, those little habits you know are wrong, or unconfessed sins, or an unforgiving spirit; these things build up over time. Repentance is necessary to enjoy His presence.

If we follow God’s instructions to the “T”, the next phrases, “then”, tells us the things that only He can do, He will hear from heaven, will forgive our sin, and heal our land. God

says that revival is the solution to all of the ills and issues that we face in every aspect of our country.

Only God can make America (or any nation) great. But the revival starts with us Christians.

Are you doing your part?

– Min. Mark Slone

Tuesday, June 5, 2018

Do the Right Thing

*⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*

1 John 1:5-10 (NASB)

As a young scoutmaster with 10 to 12 high-energy boys on weekend camping trips, I had my hands full. One weekend, the boy's energy level, right before retiring for the night, created a problem. They broke my tent pole and the tent

came tumbling down as I prepared for a night of rest. They committed the '*cardinal sin*', when they encroached on my space at the wrong time, after multiple commands to settle down before someone got hurt. The night became a long night because no one would confess to breaking my tent pole. The senior patrol leader could not get a confession. Standing up in troop formation in silence for a long duration could not provoke a confession. They had a long night because no one would do the right thing and confess and say, "It was me."

How many long nights have you had when you have sinned or you have mistreated someone out of anger, jealousy or spite, and did not confess your wrong? The Holy Spirit would not let you rest and you were groaning, complaining, just totally out of sync. David expressed his anguish about unconfessed sin in Psalm 32:3. David writes that his body wasted away and he groaned all day because of his sins. Unconfessed sin will wreck your life and leave you unsettled, weak, angry with the world and others.

The fourth conditional statement in verse 9 of today's pericope tells us if we confess our sins, the character of God will take care of us. The writer says the faithful and trustworthy God we serve will forgive us. The righteous God we serve will forgive us. He will not stop at forgiveness, but He will also purge us from all unrighteousness. He will actively work in us to remove the ugliness and filth of sin. The God we serve has all power and is a loving God who keeps His promises. If you are struggling with sin from long ago, yesterday or even today, the apostle John tells you God will forgive you when you confess. Confession means you agree with God about your transgression.

The apostle John also gave two warnings about how we handle sin. First, if you don't acknowledge you have sinned, you are fooling yourself and living a lie. Second, if you don't acknowledge sin you make God a liar and God's word is not in you. Those are terrible condemnations for a believer that should provoke us to walk in the light of God's holiness and confess every sin at all times.

I hear my momma saying, "If you tell the truth, you will save yourself a lot of pain in life."

"Confess sins instantly." – F.B. Meyer

– Min. Ronald Bell, Sr.

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

"Mature or Infantile," Which One Are You?

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Hebrews 6:1 (NASB)

Can you image a twenty-four-year-old man in first grade? By now he should be in College or providing for His own family. But he is content with where he is in life. He is twenty-four years and still in elementary school and it makes no sense. But someone may ask,

Why? How is it possible for a man who should, by now, be a functional self-supporting adult, still be living as a grade school child? It is simply because he has rejected the instructions of his superiors and walking in ignorance. In others words, he is failing to grow because he refuses to repent and change his ways.

The truth is, some Christian are in the same situation when it comes to spiritual maturity. They regularly attend Church; God's training classes. By now, they should have graduated to be teachers of the Word, but yet they chose to remain stuck in the elementary curriculum of spiritual maturity. Why, because they reject the instructions of God, the Supreme Authority, and decide to walk in ignorance. In others words, they fail to grow because they refuse to confess their sins, repent and change their ways. They are content with their lack of spiritual maturity.

In Hebrew 6:1, the writer discusses the apostasy of the faith; those who fall away from faith and fellowship with God. The writer stated previously in Hebrews 5:11 that he wants to teach them more about God and His word but they have become dull of hearing. It is not that they had a hearing problem or in need a hearing aid. They were hearing but were failing to put what they already knew of God's word into practice. By now many of them should be teachers, but instead, they still needed to be fed. But how could he feed them the meat of the word when they were able to digest it? As such, they were still immature due to spiritual malnourishment. Either they were unrepentant, disobedient believers, who lacked faith, or they were merely unbelieving pew warmers of the church.

Have you graduated from the elementary principles of the gospel? Are you teaching and serving others within the body of Christ? Are you content with knowing the gospel or are you committed to living the gospel? Pray for the repentance of all of the people of God; that we grow in the maturity of our faith in who God is. What does maturity look like? Observe how the apostle Paul describes a mature Christian, in Colossians 3:12-14 (NASB),

¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴ Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

The evidence of true repentance is your open expression of love for God, demonstrated by the degree to which you express love for others.

The evidence of true repentance is your open expression of love for God, demonstrated by the degree to which you express love for others.

There is an indirect relationship between maturity and repentance. The more you mature, the less you have to repent.

– Min. Darrell Rose

Thursday, June 7, 2018

"The Blessing of Confessing"

I have swept away your sins like a cloud. I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free.

Isaiah 44:22 (NLT)

The year was 1986 and Marcus (not his real name) had just moved in the neighborhood. He was a tall skinny kid that could play some serious basketball. A couple of things I remember about Marcus was that he didn't wear shorts but wore warm-ups when he played ball. I later discovered that he wore sweat pants because his legs were so skinny. Secondly I remember that Marcus could dunk the basketball pretty much higher than anybody in the gym. I remember very vividly the first time I played against him. He was about three to four inches taller than me and liked to talk a little trash. This one particular game Marcus and I were guarding one another and the battle between us was pretty intense. But I honestly felt that he was purposely being too physical with me. He was elbowing me in my chest repeatedly. Now I didn't mind the trash talking or even the physical contact, but it was if Marcus was testing my "manhood" and daring me to respond. It was if he was trying to make a name for himself (being the new guy in "the hood") and he chose Terry Borens to try and do just that. Well after about the third time he elbowed me in my chest I told him not to do that anymore. The very next play he hit me again and I balled up my fist and reached up and hit him as hard as I could in his forehead, which coincidentally left a large swollen knot on his head. Listen I would be lying if I told you that it didn't feel good to hit him. After all,

Friday, June 8, 2018

I did warn him first but my proud response for taking up for myself quickly was obliterated when the Holy Spirit convicted me of my "sinful" actions. I felt pretty badly for responding in such a non-Christ like way. I could have easily walked away or simply ignored his testing but I didn't and responded inappropriately. I left the gym fairly quickly and I began to feel very sorrowful for my actions. I then confessed my sin to God and later also apologized to Marcus.

And I couldn't be more thankful for Isaiah 44:22 because it reminds me that after my confession way back in 1986 came a tremendous blessing. Isaiah says that not only does God forgive our sins but he restores our fellowship but invites us to return home.

Are you struggling to get past some awful mistake you have made in the past? Is it difficult for you to forgive yourself and move on? Well my friends please allow this verse in Isaiah be an encouragement to you because if God "scatters our sins like the morning mist" then we should not only be willing to forgive ourselves but to forgive others. it doesn't matter what offense we have done or how long ago it was, God doesn't hold our sins against us as if he were holding us hostage but he forgives us completely. And that my friends is one of the greatest blessings He could give to each and every one of us on a daily basis.

After every confession, there is a blessing. So confess your sins continuously and be blessed.

Confession is good for the soul. - Unknown

- Min. Terry Borens

The Death of Self

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

Colossians 3:5-8 (NIV)

Bad habits are hard to break. When I was younger, I had a bad habit of not making up my bed after I got up. Our family had a housekeeper and so my brother and I never had to make up our beds. One summer while visiting my grandmother, I woke up one morning and started my day. When I got back to my grandmother's house, she called me upstairs and asked me why I never made up my bed. I said to her that I never made up my bed and that it wasn't a big deal. She said "Chris, you should always make-up your bed because you never know how you're coming back home." I paused and thought about what she said, and it made sense. That was over twenty years ago and I've always made up my bed, ever since. Bad habits can be hard to break. In most cases people only change bad habits when those habits are dangerous or too painful for them.

In Colossians 3:5-8, Paul reminds us of the bad habits that are detrimental to a Christian's spiritual growth and life. Because of their position in Jesus Christ, Paul tells his readers to abandon the way they use to live. Simply put, he's telling them to not practice the things they use to do

before they became a Christian. His reason for encouraging them is so that they can be able to experience all that Christ can and will do in them and through them. So many times in our walk with Jesus, we are hindered not by Satan, but unfortunately, by our own fleshly and worldly desires.

How do we begin to place God's interest and will for us above our own? There are two steps that Paul gave to his readers that we too can apply in our daily lives. The first step is that your worldly desires and thoughts must die. Paul listed five personality traits that will hinder any Christian from growing. The first trait sexual immorality" (Gr. *porneia*), which refers to illicit sexual intercourse, fornication or whoredom. The second trait, impurity (Gr. *akatharsia*), refers to un-cleanness, lewdness, or impurity of motive. The third trait, lust (Gr. *pathos*), refers to affection, passion, especially sexual. The fourth trait, evil desires (Gr. *epithymian kaken*), means any evil desire in a more general sense, reaching out for some forbidden thing to satisfy itself. The fifth trait, greed (*pleonexian*, lit. desire to have more), is any materialistic desire, including lust that disregards the rights of others. It is "the arrogant and ruthless assumption that all other persons and things exist for one's own benefit. Every sin is basically selfishness; it is the worship of self in place of the Christ, in our priorities. All of this Paul stated will bring God's wrath in our lives.

The second step is that you must put aside all personal desires and ambitions. The Christian must kill any and all self-centeredness. All personal desires, all ambitions must be crucified and laid at the feet of Jesus. Sins of speech, such as anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language, are all traits that were a part of the believer's life before Jesus. However, these traits should not be common in the life of a Christian. If these habits are present in your life, then you

know what you need to do. That's right, confess and repent and move on towards being the person that God has called you to be.

So, as you go about your day, make a concentrated effort to pray and ask God to surgically remove any and all worldly and personal desires? The Bible boldly declares that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us (1 John 1:9). Will you take Him up on that offer?

Remember, as a Christian, *"My life is not my own to You (God) I belong; I give myself, I give myself to You."*

Consider yourself dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. – Paul (Romans 6:11)

– Min. Chris Johnson