



7/3/26

First, happy 250th birthday to America. I remember when it was the bicentennial birthday. I was 7 years old. Its significance kind of went over my head at the time. But it's pretty cool. Also... I kinda feel old. Hahaha.

Second, it's Friday, so of course I have to tell you about this week's Chosen and Cherished episode, "What's to Come". We talked about how our hope is not in the here and now, but in what's to come. The wonderful thing is, God is still with us in the here and now as He gets us ready for the what's to come. If you'd like to listen to the podcast, here's the link ~ <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

Finally, I hope you have a great weekend celebrating... and that you hydrate!!! It's gonna be hot.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 Timothy 2:1-4, Daniel 9:16-19

I'm so excited for the new series we're starting this Sunday, Storming the Throne. Our God wants to talk with us and hear from us!!! He tells in Ephesians 3:12 that we can come to Him freely, with confidence. He tells in Hebrews 4:16 that we can confidently "draw near to His throne of grace to receive mercy and grace from Him." 1 Thessalonians 5:16 tells us to "pray without ceasing." I wonder what would happen if all the believers in God's church would take Him at His word on that. Amazing things happen when God's people pray. He says in James 5:16 that "the prayer of the righteous person has great effective power." Wow. O Lord, please teach me to pray WITHOUT CEASING!!!

This first week of our series is focused on praying for our country, which is very cool since we're celebrating our country's 250th birthday. What does scripture tell me about praying for my country?

1 Timothy 2:1-4 ~

Paul, who wrote this letter to Timothy, started this chapter with the words, "First of all, then..." The word "then" is the same word as "therefore." So THEN, what's the therefore there for? Paul had just spoken to Timothy about people whose faith had been derailed. He wanted Timothy to guard his own faith, and he was giving him direction on how to lead the church he was pastoring.

So he said, "First of all, then, I URGE... I exhort... I strongly encourage... that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people." The first thing God's people are called to do is PRAY. The power to change things does not come from me, but from the Lord. I need to take everything to Him in...

- *Supplications... telling God what I need*
- *Prayers... telling Him what I wish for*
- *Intercessions... Word Studies defines this as "Spirit directed intervention for help to fall in line with God's will." Wow. I thought it was just praying for other people. It's praying for God's will in my life and in others.*
- *Thanksgivings... gratitude for what God does and who He is*

Before everything else... pray these things for ALL people, including "kings who are in high positions." I need to pray for my government, whether the people in charge are following Jesus or not. God is able to work within the sinful, evil desires of man to accomplish His will. Proverbs 19:26 says, "Many seek the face of a ruler, but it is from the LORD that a man gets justice." Instead of being mad, judgmental, or just avoiding the whole thing altogether, I need to be praying for my country. Am I doing that??? O Lord, I don't think I do that enough. Please forgive me and help me to remember to pray for my country. I will put this in my prayer list so that I don't forget.

What do I pray for??? I need to pray "that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." I need to pray that believers will not be prevented from honoring God with peace and contentment, being devoted to Him in all that we do. This is a little different than "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This is not that I pray that I will have great gas prices and no inflation. This is praying that God will move my government in such a way that I will not be prevented from living for Him and being a light to others.

Why does God want me to pray like this? It's so that I can be about HIS purpose... to go into all the world making disciples wherever I am. "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God

our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God wants me to pray that I will not be hindered from being His ambassador, His light in the world so that more people might turn to Him for salvation. My faithfulness to God in this pleases Him. Wow. This is very different than what is defined as the American Dream. O Lord, please help me to live for Your purpose and please You.

Whoa! When Paul wrote this the emperor was Nero!!! He was an EVIL MAN. He literally used Christians as torches in his garden. He set them on fire while they were still alive and used them as lights for his garden parties. Ugh!!! Disgusting!!!

The truth is, fearing my government doesn't help. Being angry with my government doesn't help. Avoiding reality doesn't help. What helps? Taking it all to the Lord. O Lord, I can talk to You about ANYTHING. Please help me so that the FIRST thing I do is talk to You. You are sovereign over all.

Daniel 9:16-19 ~

Daniel wrote this book around 500 years before Jesus came, during the Babylonian captivity, when God allowed Babylon to take God's people into captivity because of their rebellion against Him. This passage is a prayer of supplication and prayer and intercession Daniel prayed on behalf of his people.

"O Lord Adonai... Master, according to all Your righteous acts, let Your anger and Your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us..." Daniel understood that God was bringing severe discipline because the people had completely disregarded Him and had lived for false gods. He was begging God for mercy... that He would not give them the full wrath they deserved.

The fact is, God warned His people in the book of Isaiah that this judgment would come if they didn't repent. He gave them ample time to repent. He even told them that once they faced His judgment He would still allow them to repent and He would restore them. They did not repent. In Isaiah 30, God said they were "a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the Lord", who wanted to hear "smooth things, illusions," things that showed how they despised God's word." Still God said, "In returning and rest you shall be saved, in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But you were unwilling." The beautiful thing is that God said, "Therefore, the Lord waits TO BE GRACIOUS to you." Even when we are in full

rebellion, God still wants us to return to Him. Daniel knew God would hear his prayers.

"Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for Your own sake, O Lord, make Your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate..." Daniel called himself God's servant and he called God his Master. He understood his place before God. He prayed, "For Your own sake, O Lord, please forgive us. Have mercy on us." In Psalm 25:6-7, David wrote, "Remember Your mercy, O Lord, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness remember me, for the sake (because of) Your goodness." That's all I can ask for... His mercy and love. He owes me nothing. But He is faithful to answer.

"O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy..." I have no righteousness of my own. I need God's mercy. No one can stand before Him and rightfully tell Him that He owes us anything. So I pray for my country as Daniel did for His... "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for Your own sake, O my God, because YOUR city and YOUR people are called by YOUR name." And God says, "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).

5 times in these few verses, Daniel calls the Lord "Adonai... Master." 3 times he calls Him "Elohim... all powerful God." Daniel understood what I need to take to heart all the time. God is my Master and He is all powerful. I need to pray to Him because He's in charge and in control. He knows the whole picture and I don't. He's the One who can do something about the situation. Take it to Him... confidently... not because of my righteousness, but because of His wonderful mercy.

O Lord, first I pray that You'll help me to humble myself before You. And then to seek Your face and pray. Help all Your children to trust You and pray. We live in a very divided country right now. I pray that You'll heal our land... But no matter what happens, I pray that You'll help us, Your people, to be wholly devoted to You, to be lights in this world for Your glory, and to be able to live peaceful and godly lives that please You. I am Your servant. You are my Master.