

Sermon Series: “Teach Us to Pray”—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—3/3/2002

Title: “Pray for your nation”

Texts: 2 Chronicles 7: 14 & 1 Timothy 2: 1-14

Introduction: Ills.: Political Prayer

Theme: Although prayer never needs to be done in a “*politically correct*” manner, there is an effective attitude and approach to prayer as we come to the throne of grace on behalf of those who lead and those who follow within our nation.

The type of attitude of prayer that God calls us to pray about on behalf of our nation

- **PRINT AND READ 1 CHRONICLES 7: 14 & 1 TIMOTHY 2: 1-4**
- Letting God be God
 1. God uses some terms to remind and redefine our prayer relationship with him
 - a. **Petition/prostrate** (not the cancer—posture undertaken in ancient times before all powerful king)
 - b. **seek my face/ focus** (we have to take our eyes off of other things and “*fix our eyes/hope on Jesus*”
 - “*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”
Hebrews 12:2
 - c. **Return/repent** (willing to be done with the things that put a wedge between me and God)
 - d. **Ills.: Turn around**
 2. When we are reminded that **GOD** is in control, then we begin to experience the peace that God is **IN CONTROL**
 - a. “*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.*” *Isaiah 26:3*
 - b. When God is control—not us— we **neither take credit nor responsibility** for current events
- Come to God as a sinner-----**IN JESUS**
 1. God’s people have some repenting to do before they can bring the ills of others
 - a. **Ills.: Secret Sins Block Prayers**
 - b. It is the “life-style sin” which we perpetuate, excuse, and by which we manipulate others that so offends God
 - c. “*As Scripture says, “God’s name is cursed among the nations because of you.”* *Romans 2:24*
 2. The Father only wants people to come in prayer who are not “full of themselves” but “full of Jesus”
- Take on the heart of God in your prayer life
 1. Pray for others’ salvation as if their eternity depended on it
 - a. God’s main concern is not the tax cut, the Supreme Court decision (whether the 10 Command gets on the State House lawn) whether welfare reform is passed or not—but what will lead to mankind’s salvation
 - b. When praying for God’s will for our country, look at it through the prism of God’ primary will (salvation of everyone) and pray for and seek God’s best answer for this need that will tie to the “*bigger picture.*”
 2. Pray for others’ forgiveness as if God already has forgiven them (2 Chron 7:14)
 - a. Learning that a position of reconciliation with my neighbor, with whom I might be at odds, is God’s plan
 - b. Learning to pray for leader, regardless of their political stripe, because it leads to godly and quiet life for all
- Be ready to be used by God in His answer
 1. “*Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.*” *Isaiah 58:12*
 2. God wants to restore the “*breach in the wall*” of our society
 - a. God wants to use us to be the instrument of the repair
 - b. **Ills.: Eddie Scherer’s church in Bradford, PA**

2 Chron. 7:14

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 will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

1 Tim. 2:1-4

¹I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-- ²for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Political Prayer

The *New York Times* ran most of the prayer by Donald L. Roberts, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries Manasota, Inc., offered at the spring 2000 opening of the Florida Senate.

Holy and Eternal God, it must be great to be God, to get what you want—when you want it—how you want it. We mere mortals are not that lucky. We are always having to compromise to get what we want. We call the process "politics." You see, O Lord, we find Senator Jennings' priority number one is Senator McKay's priority number five and Governor Bush's priority number ten; and Senator Carlton doesn't even know it's on the agenda while Secretary of State Kathryn Harris is busy closing down shop. In the midst of all this "politicking" during Session, we know we are supposed to "Be still and know" your will for our lives and all the people of the State of Florida—with every lobbyist in the world bugging us to death. So, God, while we acknowledge you never said discipleship would be easy, we do call upon you to come and be in these Senate Chambers today. Thank you, Lord, the Session is almost over, the budget deal is cut, education got some more money, we cut a few taxes, and in the end, most everyone in this chamber didn't get everything they wanted. And that's the good news. That's politics, Lord, and unless you want to move over and give us the job of being God, which some of us think is our birthright, we will have to muddle along being satisfied with being the best politicians you can create. It's the fun part of being human. In the name of the God of all things, even politics and politicians and in rare instances a lobbyist or two, Amen.

Turn Around

Repentance is not basically a religious word. It comes from a culture where people were essentially nomadic and lived in a world with no maps or street signs. It's easy to get lost walking through the desert. You become aware that the countryside is strange. You finally say to yourself, *I'm going in the wrong direction*. That's the first act of repentance. The second act of repentance is to go in an alternate direction. It implies that you not only do this but you admit it to your companions. We all do this whether or not we realize it.

Secret Sins Block Prayers

In his book *Why Prayers Are Unanswered*, John Lavender retells a story about Norman Vincent Peale. When Peale was a boy, he found a big, black cigar, slipped into an alley, and lit up. It didn't taste good, but it made him feel very grown up ... until he saw his father coming. Quickly he put the cigar behind his back and tried to be casual. Desperate to divert his father's attention, Norman pointed to a billboard advertising the circus. "Can I go, Dad? Please, let's go when it comes to town." His father's reply taught Norman a lesson he never forgot. "Son," he answered quietly but firmly, "never make a petition while at the same time trying to hide a smoldering disobedience."

Prizewinner refuses Million Dollar Gift

A recent promotion by H. R. Block Inc. offered walk-in customers a chance to win a drawing for a million dollars. Glen and Gloria Sims of Sewell, New Jersey, won the drawing, but they refused to believe it when an H. R. Block representative phoned them with the good news. After several additional contacts by both mail and phone, the Sims still thought it was all just a scam, and usually hung up the phone or trashed the special notices. Some weeks later, H. R. Block called one more time to let the Sims know the deadline for accepting the million-dollar prize was nearing and that the story of their refusal to accept the prize would appear on an upcoming NBC "Today Show." At that point, Mr. Sims decided to investigate further. A few days later he appeared on the "Today Show" to tell America that he and his wife had finally gone to H. R. Block to claim the million-dollar prize. Mr. Sims' final words were: "From the time this has been going on, H. R. Block explained to us they really wanted a happy ending to all this, and they were ecstatic that we finally accepted the prize." God wants a similar ending as he offers salvation to every unbeliever.