

AMERICA'S ONLY HOPE

Proverbs 14:34

Preached by...Pastor Donnie Martin...Parkview Baptist Church Leland, MS Sept. 2001

I. REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD

A. We Need A Change Of Attitude.

1. Many Americans seem to have no shame when it comes to sin.

Jer.8: 12 "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord."

2. We should never view our sin casually or flippantly.

*Rom.7: 12 "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.
13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."*

NOTE: Our nation has become extremely flippant about sin, as Rev. Joe Wright stated in his opening prayer before the Kansas Senate. He prayed:

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.

We confess that:

We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it Pluralism,
We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery,
We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare,
We have killed our unborn and called it choice,
We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable,
We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem,
We have abused power and called it politics,
We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition,
We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression,
We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent: to direct us to the center of Your will and to openly ask these things in the name of Your son, the living Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen!

B. We Need A Change of Actions.

Prov.14: 34 *“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”*

I Cor.10: 31 *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”*

NOTE:

- [1] America needs to quit being concerned with political correctness and return to righteousness. Our nation has strayed so far away from God that it's a miracle the disasters of last week haven't happened sooner than they did.
- [2] Folks, as long as our nation honors God, God will honor our nation. That's because “righteousness exalteth a nation” (Prov.14: 34). But by the same token, when our nation stops honoring God, God will stop honoring our nation.
- [3] Ann Graham Lotz, Billy Graham's daughter, was on Brian Gumball's show after 9/11. He asked her a question that is perhaps on a lot of people's mind, “Why did God let this happen?” She answered the following:

Over the last several years the Schools, the Government and the People have asked God to step out of the picture and let man run it. God being a gentleman has done exactly what they have asked and has taken His hand off of these. And until the people invite God back into the Schools, the Government, and in our everyday lives, things like this will continue to happen.

C. We Need A Change Of Allegiance.

I Cor.6: 19b *“...ye are not your own?
20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”*

Matt.4: 10 *“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”*

NOTE:

- (1) Folks, Americans once again need to pledge their allegiance to the God that brought this nation into being.
- (2) America needs to focus its national consciousness on God and His righteousness, rather than its rights.

II. REVIVAL FROM GOD

A. We Need A Revival Of Thirst For God.

Ps.85: 6 *“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?”*

Ps.42: 1 *“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.
2a My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God...”*

NOTE: We need the kind of thirst for God as described in this true account:

Driving up from Beersheba, a combined force of British, Australians and New Zealanders were pressing on the rear of the Turkish retreat over arid desert. The attack outdistanced its water carrying camel train. Water bottles were empty. The sun blazed pitilessly out of a sky where the vultures wheeled expectantly. "Our heads ached," writes Gilbert, "and our eyes became bloodshot and dim in the blinding glare...Our tongues began to swell...Our lips turned a purplish black and burst." Those who dropped out of the column were never seen again, but the desperate force battled on to Sheria. There were wells at Sheria, and had they been unable to take the place by nightfall, thousands were doomed to die of thirst. "We fought that day," writes Gilbert, "as men fight for their lives... We entered Sheria station on the heels of the retreating Turks. The first objects which met our view were the great stone cisterns full of cold, clear, drinking water. In the still night air the sound of water running into the tanks could be distinctly heard, maddening in its nearness; yet not a man murmured when orders were given for the battalions to fall in, two deep, facing the cisterns." He then describes the stern priorities: the wounded, those on guard duty, then company by company. It took four hours before the last man had his drink of water, and in all that time they had been standing twenty feet from a low stone wall on the other side of which were thousands of gallons of water.

From an account of the British liberation of Palestine by Major V. Gilbert in *The Last Crusade*, quoted in *Christ's Call To Discipleship*, J.M. Boice, Moody, 1986, p. 143.

B. We Need A Revival Of Trust In God.

Prov.3: 5 *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."*

NOTE:

- [1] The words, "In God We Trust," have been on our coins since 1863. Later, the words became our national motto. It was that sentiment upon which this nation was founded. Our founding fathers realize that our nation's trust in Almighty God would see her through the tough times.
- [2] The sad truth is that over the last fifty years or so, America has ceased trusting God, and has placed her trust in gold, goods, technology, and personal resourcefulness. There is nothing wrong with those things. But our nation cannot rely on them, for they are shaky foundations upon which to build.

C. We Need A Revival Of Talking With God.

Ps.18: 6a *"In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God..."*

Ps.120: 1 *"In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me."*

NOTE:

- [1] If ever our nation needed to cry out to God, it is now. Thank God that we have a president with moral character, who has time and again called upon this nation to pray.
- [2] Doesn't it seem a little contradictory to you that our government, which has ruled against prayer in our public schools, football games, and other government funded forums, doesn't practice its own rules?
- a. State legislatures, as well as the United States Congress, employ paid chaplains to pray at the opening of all sessions.
 - b. Did you know that there is a "Prayer Room" in Congress?
 - c. The Supreme Court, the body which ruled against prayer at school football games, opens the court with the words, "God save the United States and this honorable court" (From an e-mail from DeNita Shorrosh dated July 19, 2001).
 - d. The same government that has ruled against prayer in schools has mandated a "National Day of Prayer" (36 USC, Section 169 (h)).

III. RELIANCE UPON GOD

A. We Must Rely Upon His Presence.

Ps.91: 1 *"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*
2 *I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*
3 *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.*
4 *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."*

B. We Must Rely Upon His Provision.

Ps.24: 1 *"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."*

James 1: 17 *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

C. We Must Rely Upon His Power.

Ps.46: 1 *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

Ps.118: 6 *"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"*
8 *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man."*

NOTE:

- [1] Folks, only as this nation turns to God, and relies on Him, can it ever hope to be successful and victorious against its enemies.
- [2] God has greatly used and blessed this nation. America would do well not to forget that fact.

One of America's greatest poets is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The year 1860 found Longfellow happy in his life, enjoying a widening recognition, and elated over the election of Abraham Lincoln which he believed signaled the triumph of freedom and redemption for the nation.

The following year the Civil War began. On July 9, 1861 Longfellow's wife, Fanny, was near an open window sealing locks of her daughter's hair, using hot sealing wax. Suddenly her dress caught fire and engulfed her with flames. Her husband, sleeping in the next room, was awaked by her screams. As he desperately tried to put out the fire and save his wife, he was severely burned on his face and hands.

Fanny died the next day. Longfellow's severe burns would not even allow him to attend Fanny's funeral. His white beard, which so identified with him, was one of the results of the tragedy – the burn scars on his face made shaving almost impossible. In his diary for Christmas day 1861 he wrote, "How inexpressibly sad are the holidays."

In 1862 the toll of war dead began to mount and in his diary for that year Longfellow wrote of Christmas, "A merry Christmas say the children, but that is no more for me."

In 1863 his son who had run away to join the Union army was severely wounded and returned home in December. There is no entry in Longfellow's diary for that Christmas.

But on Christmas Day 1864 – at age 57 – Longfellow sat down to try to capture, if possible, the joy of the season. He began:

I heard the bells on Christmas day.

Their old familiar carols play,

And wild and sweet the words repeat

Of peace on earth, good will to men.

As he came to the third stanza, he was stopped by the thought of the condition of his beloved country. The Battle of Gettysburg was not long past. Days looked dark, and he probably asked himself the question, "How can I write about peace on earth, good will to men in this war-torn country, where brother fights against brother and father against son?" But he kept writing – and what did he write?

And in despair I bowed my head:

"There is no peace on earth", I said,

For hate is strong, and mocks the song

Of peace on earth, good will to men.

It seems as if he could have been writing for our kind of day. Then, as all of us should do, he turned his thoughts to the One who gives true and perfect peace, and continued writing:

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep;

"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!

The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,

With peace on earth, good will to men."

And so there came into being that marvelous Christmas carol, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day."