

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon title: Presidents Who Believed in Prayer, 2 Chronicles 7:11-15

Date preached: July 3, 2016

For public use: See non-copyright comments at the end of the message

INTRODUCTION: This may be a scripture I use annually on the Sunday before Independence Day. It is rich, it has meaning, and I believe it is relevant for our day.

When the incredible temple had been built by Solomon, God spoke to him.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Chronicles 7:11-15 ¹¹ *When Solomon had finished the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the LORD and in his own palace, ¹² the LORD appeared to him at night and said: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices. ¹³ “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, 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 I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵ Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.*

OVERVIEW: If there is ever a day when we should humble ourselves, pray, seek God’s face and turn from sin, it is today. However, we are living in a day when our country is doing just the opposite. The United States is moving at a record pace to sanitize any mention of prayer in public places. Instead of humility, many are arrogant and prideful. Instead of seeking God’s face, many are doing whatever possible to avoid God altogether. Instead of turning from their wicked ways, many are promoting sin.

Everything rises and falls depending on leadership. In the United States, the question is whether the people have the leadership or the elected leaders have the leadership. We elect people to lead, so leadership starts with us, the voters, and then we expect the people we elect to lead.

I was intrigued when I read about how our first presidents were men of prayer. I assumed through the centuries, most of our presidents had been men of prayer, but today, I want to focus on the first two, because their prayers seem to epitomize the humility mentioned in II Chronicles 7:14.

EXPLANATION: President George Washington kept a prayer journal. Can you imagine the president of the United States keeping a prayer journal? Let me read to you two prayers from his journal

MONDAY MORNING...O eternal and everlasting God, I presume to present myself this morning before Thy Divine Majesty, beseeching Thee to accept my humble and hearty thanks...direct my thoughts, words and work, wash away my sins in the immaculate Blood of the Lamb, and purge my heart by Thy Holy Spirit...Daily frame me more and more into the likeness of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, that living in Thy fear, and dying in Thy favor, I may in Thy appointed time attain the resurrection of the just unto eternal life. Bless my family, friends and kindred, and unite us all in praising and glorifying Thee in all our works.

MONDAY EVENING...Most Gracious Lord God, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift, I offer to Thy Divine Majesty my unfeigned praise and thanksgiving for all Thy mercies towards me...I have sinned and done very wickedly, be merciful to me, O God, and pardon me for Jesus Christ's sake...Thou gavest Thy Son to die for me; and hast given me assurance of salvation, upon my repentance and sincerely endeavoring to conform my life to His holy precepts and example...

Bless O Lord the whole race of mankind, and let the world be filled with the knowledge of Thee and Thy Son, Jesus Christ...I beseech Thee to defend me this night from all evil, and do more for me than I can think or ask, for Jesus Christ's sake, in whose most Holy Name and Words, I continue to pray, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name...

Can you imagine a President actually praying that?

Incidentally President Washington adhered to several guiding principles:

1. It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God or the Bible.

2. It is impossible to account for the creation of the universe without the agency of a Supreme Being.
3. It is impossible to govern the universe without the aid of a Supreme Being.
4. It is impossible to reason without arriving at a Supreme Being.

Our second president, John Adams, called for a day of fasting for the nation. There was tension between the United States and France over a treaty called the Jay Treaty, which gave England priority in trade with the US. The French had been our allies in the Revolution and were insulted because we favored trade with England. President Adams wanted to avoid an all-out war with France. Feeling the tension, he declared May 9, 1798 as the National Day of Prayer.

In the proclamation he wrote, *“the calamities around us are a loud call to repentance and reformation.”*

He went on to write a list of things he was concerned about. Now, I want you to listen closely because obviously older English is structured quite differently than today: President Adams said, *“Under these considerations it has appeared to me that the duty of imploring the mercy and benediction of Heaven on our country, demands at this time a special attention from its inhabitants. I HAVE therefore thought it fit to recommend, that Wednesday, the 9th day of May next be observed throughout the United States, as a day of Solemn Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer;*

That the citizens of these states, abstaining on that day from their customary worldly occupations, offer their devout addresses to the Father of Mercies, agreeably to those forms or methods which they have severally adopted as the most suitable and becoming:

That all religious congregations do, with the deepest humility, acknowledge before GOD the manifold sins and transgressions with which we are justly chargeable as individuals and as a nation; beseeching him, at the same time, of his infinite Grace, through the Redeemer of the world, freely to remit all our offences, and to incline us, by his holy spirit, to that sincere repentance and reformation which may afford us reason to hope for his inestimable favor and heavenly benediction;

That it be made the subject of particular and earnest supplication, that our country may be protected from all the dangers which threaten it; that our civil and religious privileges may be preserved inviolate, and perpetuated to the latest generations; that our public councils and magistrates may be especially enlightened and directed at this critical period;

That the American people may be united in those bonds of amity and mutual confidence, and inspired with that vigor and fortitude by which they have in times past been so highly distinguished, and by which they have obtained such invaluable advantages:

That the health of the inhabitants of our land may be preserved, and their agriculture, commerce, fisheries, arts and manufactures be blessed and prospered: That the principles of genuine piety and sound morality may influence the minds and govern the lives of every description of our citizens; and that the blessings of peace, freedom, and pure religion, may be speedily extended to all the nations of the earth.

And finally I recommend, that on the said day; the duties of humiliation and prayer be accompanied by fervent Thanksgiving to the bestower of every good gift, not only for having hitherto protected and preserved the people of these United States in the independent enjoyment of their religious and civil freedom, but also for having prospered them in a wonderful progress of population, and for conferring on them many and great favours conducive to the happiness and prosperity of a nation.

Can you imagine a President actually wrote that and believed it?

Here's a prayer for the nation Thomas Jefferson prayed on his first day as the third president of the United States.

Almighty God, Who has given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and glad to do Thy will. Bless our land with honorable ministry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one

united people, the multitude brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endow with Thy spirit of wisdom those whom in Thy name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to Thy law, we may show forth Thy praise among the nations of the earth. In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in Thee to fail; all of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONCLUSION: The prayers and calls to prayer by our first three Presidents are incredible. Where are we today? I don't have to answer the question, do I? I hear people say, "We should pray for the President." Yes, that's true, but at the same time, I want a president who prays for his country. And, with the upcoming election, I don't see prayer as being a priority of anyone running for president.

APPLICATION: So what are we to do?

- (1) We must humble ourselves. We must realize we are at God's disposal. We are nothing without him.
- (2) We must pray. We must remember prayer is the key.
- (3) We must seek God's face. This means we must seek God's will. Our will cannot be in the picture.
- (4) We must turn from sin. Sin is the cancer of the soul. We must repent and start refreshed and anew.

To preachers, teachers, students, and anyone else reading or using this message: I have posted this for all to use as you see fit. There is no need to cite me as the source. You are free to delete sections, add your own, or do whatever you want. There is no copyright. My request is that you do not copyright or sell my work. I am sharing my preaching notes in good faith with you because I know the challenges of putting together a lesson, especially when your week gets consumed with other things. Use it and enjoy!

I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

Find me at www.thbc.com Click on sermons or YouTube channel: Pastor Paul Gunn
Thanks to Judy Andrews, Kori Bailey, and Nancy Claire Smith for their editing assistance.

Sincerely, Paul Gunn
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Nashville, Tennessee
USA