

America Bless God

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles this morning, turn over to the book of Proverbs, Proverbs chapter 14 this morning.! We're going to be taking just a few moments here to even think on the need here even as a nation.

Because, you know, as we think here at the end of the week here, we celebrate our nation's 249th birthday. You know, and as nations go, we're relatively a young nation.

And, you know, I just out of curiosity did a little search on what the oldest continuous nation on earth is. You know, that's kind of an interesting question because it has a lot of nuances to it sometimes of what things are.

But it's really interesting. The oldest nation in the world is a little microstate called San Marino in northern Italy. It's been established in 301 A.D. and has been under the same constitution and the same form of government since then.

They've had a consistency, you know, and it's hard to imagine, you know, 1,700 years of autonomy. You know, in our world today, that's kind of an odd thing to understand that there wasn't something that had overtaken them.

[1 : 19] And there's many reasons for that. But I found that interesting, you know. So when we compare our nation to that, it was really a pretty young nation. 249 years compared to 1,700 is just a drop in the bucket.

And, you know, sometimes people will talk about Iran and Egypt as being the oldest. But they've seen many transitions throughout the generations and times. Their government has changed.

Their structures have changed. But so our nation is just like a youngster on the scene of history. And even though we're going to celebrate our nation's birthday, it's important to understand that our nation, we have received a lot of blessings from God.

I mean, we enjoy today a lot of blessings that God has given our nation. You know, and we ought not to never forget what God has done in the course of our nation.

And it's important because as we're going to look here this morning, you know, instead of God bless America, really what America needs to get back to is for America to bless God.

[2 : 25] To raise God up. To honor God in the things. Because as we're going to look here this morning, you know, oftentimes we've heard, God bless the USA. You know, you hear that phrase roll off and it's just kind of a phrase that people just sort of say without really contemplating.

Because I believe God can bless a nation. But also we have to understand there's some parameters for that blessing. There's some essentials for that blessing that we need to pay attention to.

And it's been time and time again that's been said throughout the generations. And we've enjoyed those blessings. But, you know, have you ever stopped to consider is why should God give his approval to our nation?

Why did God bless our nation in many ways? You know, we need to rewind a little bit and consider those things. Why should God give his approval?

Well, the very thought of God's blessing us is something that should cause us to be humbled and not prideful. The fact that God blesses you ought to be something that humbles you and not something to be proud about.

[3 : 41] That God blesses us as a nation. But I want to tell you that America is not special because God, I believe, gives some principle or declaration in his word about how a nation can be blessed.

And those important points to that. So if you found Proverbs chapter 14 this morning, let's stand together. And we'll read one verse here this morning. And that's a familiar verse.

And then we're going to talk about it a little bit because I think it's important to understand what it's saying and how it's saying it and for why. But look here in verse 34 with me.

The word of God says this. It says, Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. Let's pray.

What you have set forth. And Lord, I pray we just consider these things as it applies to us as individual citizens of this nation.

[5 : 09] And Lord, the importance of it. And Lord, we just ask it all in your precious name. Amen. May be seated. You know, as we see here, it says, Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Proverbs 14 gives a lot of contrast between good and evil. You see this whole contrast down through and it comes to the end of the chapter. And it makes mention of nations and the result of sin.

You know, you could go back in history and find many nations that once honored God have turned away from God. Have turned away and have faced the consequences, not of just God rejecting them, but really when we understand this verse, it's the consequences of sin.

Sin always has consequences. Those things are there. So we need to ask ourselves, why has God blessed this nation? Why has God blessed?

Because, you know, the word here we find is righteousness exalteth a nation. Now, I want you to see here, because we need to define and understand, what kind of righteousness is it talking about here?

[6 : 23] Because the Bible speaks about a couple different ways righteousness is applied. Because we understand as a sinner that needs salvation by the grace of God, we need to put on the righteousness that's in Christ Jesus.

That's God's righteousness, holy, pure, just, nothing evil, nothing there that God will put on. He'll clothe us in his righteousness at the moment of salvation.

We are righteous before God because of what Jesus Christ did, not because of what we did. But I want you to see here, the word righteousness here has a little different connotation than talking about salvation.

It's talking about here something very important because it involves that which is just and that which is right in action. It literally means to follow the moral laws of God.

You know, they could have lost people that follow God's moral law. I want you to understand, you don't have to be saved to understand the laws that God gave are beneficial for you.

[7 : 30] You know, you'll see that throughout history. Man, this works! And you look back and you go, well, God told you it would work. You know? They're kind of like the blind squirrel that stumbles upon a nut every now and then.

It's like, it just, it's a truth, and so therefore it works. So I want you to see here this morning as we understand what this is.

And for many years, I want you to understand, especially the founding of our nation, there was many men in our founding of our nation that had a righteous attitude about the things of God.

They wanted things to be done according to the Bible. They wanted to follow God's order of things. And you'll see that throughout. But I want you to understand that that does not mean we are a perfect nation.

Matter of fact, far from it. We are a nation of sinful people. And I want to understand that what we're not saying is promoting America as a great, bright, perfect, righteous nation, because what it talks about here is a direction.

[8 : 35] God's application, this doesn't mean everybody's going to do exactly what they ought to do, but it means as a whole, the direction, the laws, the way the laws are enforced, are trying to do that which is just and right.

And so that's important. But consider, because we fall short of God's laws. Think about for a moment. Turn over to Isaiah 64 for a minute. And you'll be scooting through your Bible here this morning.

We've got a lot of Bible verses this morning we've got to get through in the time frame that we have. But I want you to understand that this is God's principles in action. And here we find this, Isaiah 64 and verse 6.

You find there, it says, But we are all as an unclean thing. And notice this, And all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquity like the wind have taken us away.

I want you to understand what he's talking about here is not perfection, but direction of a nation. Because I want you to understand, we can try to be righteous, we can try to live righteous even after salvation, but you know what?

[9 : 45] Pretty soon you soon realize you do what? You'll fail along the way. You'll fall along the way. You'll look back and say, Man, I should have done that differently. Things happen along the way in our life, and that's the reason the Bible tells us that we need to go to the Lord.

We need to confess and to forsake our sin, and return to Him, and to understand that. And we understand that principle. But look a little earlier in Isaiah, chapter 56.

Chapter 56, because this is important to understand, Isaiah 56 in verse 1. Notice what it says, Thus saith the Lord. Now anytime you see that in your Bible, what ought your ears to do?

You better be listening, because something important was being said, for sure. Now I want you to understand, all the Bible's God's word, but when it says, Thus saith the Lord, that's like saying, that's the highlighted portion in the book.

Okay? That's like, pay extra attention to this. And he says this, Keep ye judgment, and do justice, for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

[10 : 52] Now I want you to see something here, because where it says, do justice, is the same word from Proverbs 14, where it says righteousness. It's translated a little different, because of the context, but it's the same application.

It's to do justly, to do right, to do properly. You know? It's been said that righteousness, is the only foundation, of permanent national prosperity.

You know, I thought, let me say that again. It's been said this, righteousness is the only foundation, of permanent national prosperity. Because you know what, if you had a nation, that followed God's laws, and said, I want to do, and build, and act, and do justly, because people are going to sin, against one another, but how is that settled?

That's doing justly. Doing those things right, and proper, that's important. When the justice system, gets turned upside down, you know what, the morality of a nation, is upside down.

If you have any questions, watch the news. When the justice system, gets corrupt, righteousness, is chased away. To do justly, to do right, to do the things, and to do it properly.

[12 : 05] But I want you to understand, the beginning of our nation, I believe, was the foundation, of our blessing. Because, let me look at a few things, I'm just not promoting, these gentlemen, as being perfect, but I want you to understand, they understood something, that we need to understand, as a people today.

Because, because we're not going to be perfect, just as those founders, of our nation, were nowhere near perfect men. But they understood, something very important. Consider for a moment, Samuel Adams, as the declaration of independence, was being signed, declared this.

He says this, we have this day, restored the sovereign will, to whom all men, ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven, and from the rising, to the setting of the sun, let his kingdom come.

I want you to understand, they did something very important. We had founders of our nation, that did something else, that talks about in Proverbs, and that's, they had the fear, of the Lord. The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of knowledge, the fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom.

They understood, a principle. Consider the words, of John Adams, our second president, who also served, as the chairman, of the American Bible Society. He said this, our constitution was holy, was made only, for a moral, and religious people.

[13 : 24] It is holy, inadequate, to the government, of any other. In other words, he says, there's outside, these things that are, already established, that makes what we wrote, function.

If we follow, God's plan, and God's righteousness, this will function correctly. But it's dependent, upon people knowing, what they need, to make it function. You know, I want you to understand, it's kind of, the reality of, of function.

It's the power, that makes it happen. You might say, you know, most of us drove here today, and most of us, I'd say, probably put gas in your car. Now you can have a car, but if it runs out of gas, you know what, you're in trouble, there's no function.

For a nation, we can have all the right, best constitution, we can have all the right things, but without God, and the principles, of God's word, it's not going to function, correctly.

There's going to be a hindrance, you know, even Benjamin Franklin, it's interesting, that you know, when you read through the life, of some of these guys, of the things, that they came to understand, or even things, they struggled with.

[14 : 28] You know, because I want you to understand, Benjamin Franklin, wasn't exactly, when you study history, the most upright individual. He had more, than his fair share, of issues. But you know what, you can have issues, in your life, you can have sin, in your life, but you can still have, an understanding, of some things, that are very important.

Notice what he, he noticed here, that had an impact, on his life, in the first, constitutional convention. He said, in the beginning, of our contest, with Britain, when we were, sensible of danger, we had daily prayers, in this room, for divine protection.

He said, our prayers, sir, were heard, and graciously answered. We have been assured, in the sacred writing, that except the Lord, build the house, they labor in vain, that build it.

I firmly believe this, and I also believe, that without, his concurring aid, we will have, we shall succeed, in this political building, no better than, the buildings, building, builders of Babel.

In other words, he said this, he says, if we don't follow, God's principles, we're doing all this, in vain. Patrick Henry, of the famous line, you know, what's, Patrick Henry's famous line?

[15 : 39] Give me liberty, or what? Give me death. He wrote this, he says, I cannot, it cannot be emphasized, too strongly, or too often, that this great nation, was founded, not by religious, but by Christians, not on religions, but on the gospel, of Jesus Christ.

You know, Jacob Duke, was the first, he led the first, congressional prayer, you know, our nation opened in prayer. Even in the very beginning, of our nation, before it was even, officially a nation, when they met together, they prayed.

According to the, Congress, or the, Congressional Library, this is the prayer, that he made, on that day, the first prayer, of the Continental Congress, in 1774.

It says this, Lord, our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, the Lord of lords, who does from the throne, behold all the dwellers of the earth, and reignest with power supreme, and uncontrolled, over all the kingdoms, empires, and governments.

Look down, in mercy, we beseech thee, on these, our American states, who have fled to thee, from the rod of the oppressor, and thrown themselves, on thy gracious protection, desiring to be henceforth, dependent on thee, to thee have they appealed, for the righteousness, of their cause, to thee do they now look up, for that countenance, and support, which thou alone, canst give.

[17 : 09] Give them therefore, heavenly Father, under thy nurturing care. And he continues on, in this prayer, he says, be thou present, O God of wisdom, and direct for the counsels, of this honorable assembly, enable them to settle things, on the best, and surest foundation, preserve the health, of their bodies, and the vigor of their minds, shower down on them, and the millions, that they represent, since temporal blessings, as thou seest expedient, for them, in this world, and crown them, with everlasting glory, in the world to come.

All this we ask, in the name, and through the merits, of Jesus Christ, thy son, and our savior, amen. You know, I'm thinking to myself, it'd be great, if we had prayers like that, in Congress today.

You know, I want you to understand, that we enjoy today, still some blessings, from what they did. The direction they sought, the importance they placed, you know, we've been a nation, that I believe, truly has been blessed, but why?

Because God, is true to his word. His word says, that righteousness, does what? It exalteth, or lifted up, a nation. It lifts up a nation. You know, Psalm 37, in verse 3, the Bible tells us this, trust in the Lord, and do good.

So shalt thou dwell, in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Psalm 33, verse 12, says this, blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he have chosen, for his own inheritance.

[18 : 41] Now, I want to make something clear here, because sometimes people conflate things. Before we go any farther, I want you to understand, the United States of America, is not God's chosen nation.

Because that gets confused sometimes. I want you to understand, America, I believe, was blessed, because we followed, on our establishment, godly principles. God says, you do that, and I will bless.

It's just a result, of what God promised to do, and what God did. But we are not God's chosen people, God's chosen nation. I want you to understand, that's Israel.

It has long since, achieved God's favored nation status. That's important, even in our current political climate, to understand what's happening. Because people begin conflating some things, that get us in trouble.

Because I'm not saying, in any way, that we are above, what Israel. I'm saying, we are blessed, because of what God promised. He says, if you do righteously, I will bless. Because we're going to look in a minute, the result of going the other way.

[19 : 44] You know, but there's a lot in the news, about Israel, and our nation's connection with them. I just want to make a statement here, to help you understand, biblically, some things. To stand with Israel, as a people, is being on the right side, of history.

And it's also being, on the right side, of the future. If you read your Bible, you'll understand, that very specifically, the land and a people, promised to Abraham, in Genesis 12, Genesis 15, Genesis 17, doesn't mean, that we have to agree, with everything.

You know, you can read Romans 9, 10, and 11, and find out, that God's not done, with Israel. Their status, has never changed. God still, is going to do something, with Israel. That's a whole lesson, for another day.

But I want you to understand, don't conflate those two. America did not, replace Israel, by any means. We are a blessed people, and if you're saved today, you are blessed, because you are, a child of God.

I tell you what, you have more blessing, because you're saved, than anything else. We enjoy great blessings, because of what Christ, did for us. And we need to always, keep that in mind.

[20 : 56] But don't conflate, those things together, and don't let others, conflate them together. Just because, we are standing, with Israel, against people, who want to annihilate them, that's the right thing, to do.

It doesn't mean, we have to agree, with everything, and every choice, that a government makes. But I want you to understand, to stand with Israel, as a people, is right. God says, that if you bless them, he'll bless you.

If you curse them, he'll curse you. Like I said, you don't have to agree, with everything, but I want you to understand, that you need to understand, you best not be on the other side. Because the other side, I don't know what, people are thinking, but you don't want to be, under the curse of God.

God's judgment, is a fearful thing, that you ought to understand. Let's move on. But God, has clearly blessed America, because he exalts righteousness. Now I want you to understand, it doesn't mean, everything they do is right, but the focus, of trying to do that, which is right, and just, and proper, according to the word of God.

That's where our founders, established our nation, was built upon the word of God, and God's principles. How do you do things justly? How does something look justly? You go to the Old Testament, God gave the children of Israel, how to deal with all sorts of situations legally.

[22 : 15] Land disputes, or if somebody borrows something, and it gets broke, or somebody borrows an oxen, and it falls over in the field, how do you settle the responsibilities?

And God gave them all sorts of things, of moral law, of what does justice look like, and to establish those things. We've enjoyed God's blessing, but I want you to understand, this verse also has the contrast.

Righteousness exalts a nation, but look at the second part of that, our text today. Proverbs 14, verse 24, look at the contrast. He says, righteousness takes you one direction, but it says, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Why will God judge America? Because of sin. I want you to understand, if God exalts a nation for righteousness, the other side of that, God holds you accountable for what you do.

Read your Old Testament. Israel, blessed by God, honored, has his most favored nation, and you know what? They started sinning, and God said, I'm going to hold you accountable.

[23 : 27] You can read through. Israel faced God's accountability, God's judgment. Why? Because of sin. Sin is a reproach to any people.

I want you to understand, God's blessing will not save a wicked people from God's judgment. Just because you may have once been blessed, doesn't mean God is obligated to continue if you turn away from him.

Now, I want you to understand something very important here. I'm not talking, this message today is not talking directly about salvation. Because I believe the Bible makes it clear, once you're saved, you are secure in Christ.

Nothing can take you away from Christ. But in this life, even as a believer, I want you to understand, if you start making choices counter to God's word, God will hold you accountable.

He chastens his children, he corrects them. As a nation, God corrects nations. God holds nations accountable. For what they do also, you know, as we prepare to celebrate this week, it's necessary to be mindful of just how wicked our nation has become.

[24 : 40] You know, it's, ought to sadden us to see the things that take place. How we can call evil good, and good evil. That tells you there's been a change of thought.

You know what part of that problem is? Is sometimes when we see God's blessing, we think God's going to just continue to do that. And we forget that the promise here has nothing to do with salvation, but it has to do with the course of actions, of choices that you make here, as an individual, and even as a nation.

Because as a nation, you know what? Even if you're a believer, you're going to face God's accountability to the nation. The children of Israel, there was many righteous people who died because of the sins of others, and the sins of their leaders.

You know, look over to Isaiah chapter 5 for a moment. Isaiah chapter 5, and Isaiah 5 is, when you read through Isaiah 5, it's really a chapter of woe.

Six times in Isaiah 5, it says, woe. Now, woe doesn't mean telling the horse to stop. It means you better be paying attention. It means you better heed what's going to be said because it's going to be detrimental if you don't.

[25 : 53] Notice what it tells us here in verse 20. It says this, woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight. You know, the sad part is, is this, if you compare this to what we're going on in our nation today, it describes it.

Why? Because sin is the same no matter where it is. Woe to them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight. Verse 22, woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine and men of strength to mingle strong drink, which justify the wicked for reward and take the righteousness of the righteous from him.

Now I want you to understand, we live in a nation that this is exactly what's taking place. We live in a nation that's turning its back on God and saying, well, God's going to bless us anyways. Let me give you something. God says, no, if our nation continues on the path that it's on right now, we're going to face God's judgment.

I believe there's some things we're facing God's judgment because understand sin is our reproach. That word reproach means it's our shame. We live in a nation that has no shame.

[27 : 11] When perversion is allowed in the streets and people celebrate it and expect God's blessing, I want you to understand that the United States leads the nations of the world in murders, in violent crime and imprisonment, divorce, abortions, sexually transmitted disease, teen suicide, drug consumption, and pornography production and consumption.

And people say, God bless the USA. And you know what? God can't. We might enjoy some of the benefits of generations past, but you know, the problem is sometimes we don't think of how what we choose today impacts the future generation.

We think as long as it doesn't affect me, it's okay. You know, it's really a great shame to us that we often are entertained by that which God calls evil. It's a great shame that in our state and across the land, you have legalized gambling and lottery and we rationalize it by saying it's good for the schools.

You know, it causes far more destruction to the family. It causes far more destruction to society than it ever is going to help the schools. You know, the first thing that's going to help schools, strong families.

Moms and dads who care about kids. I want to let you know, that'll do more good than any amount of resource or money. Look in history, there's been some very intelligent, well-educated people raised on minimum budgets.

[28 : 39] It had to do with what they decided to do and not how much money they threw at it. You know, we live in a nation today that thinks if we just spend more, it'll solve the problem. We have parents who treat their kids, my kid will get better if I just spend more money on him or if I do this or do that.

You know, I want you to understand, money is not the answer. Money is just a tool God gives us. You know, it's a great shame that we promote perversion in the name of diversity and call it alternative lifestyle.

I want you to understand, as a believer, you need to take a stand to say, no, I'm not going to get caught up in what they're trying to indoctrinate. I'm not, I'm going to stop the next generation from being indoctrinated.

I'm going to do my part to do that. It's a great shame that the biblical form of marriage has been destroyed by a court decision. They step into a place they have no authority.

Proverbs 17 verse 13 says this, whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. You know, if you're going to run the principles of God, you better read the whole book because we like to cherry pick and not take the parts we don't like.

[29 : 49] But you know what? God keeps his whole word, not part. And he tells us very clearly that he's going to hold sin accountable.

Psalms 119, 126 says this, it is time for thee, it is time for thee, Lord, to work for they have made void thy law. You know what? Sometimes you have to understand if people want to reject God, turn away from God, we have a responsibility to tell them the truth about God, but people still make choices.

People choose to turn away from God. Proverbs 15, 9 says this, the way of the wicked is an abomination under the Lord, but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

Remember, righteousness, if you follow after righteousness, and righteousness does what? Exalteth a nation, a people as a whole. It's important to understand. So the question is, what can the righteous do?

What can we do? What can believers do today to make a difference? What is our responsibility in this? Because I want you to understand, we can't control everything that happens in government.

[31 : 03] You can go down here on election day and you can try to put into office the best person that you can put in. And we ought to always be participating in that because that's a right we have as a people.

I think it's a great sin when Christians don't vote. Now, some people upset, but I don't care. That's the reality because God has given us the ability to influence our government.

And if you choose not to influence it, you're making a choice to say, I'm going to permit the evil. That's the reason it's essential to participate. Now, I also want to just do a little caveat here to be careful because we can't make politics our God.

But as God's people, we need to have our voice as citizens of our nation, we need to make our voice heard.

How do you make it heard? By standing for that which is right. Not throwing a temper tampering in the street. You know? I'm so tired of watching three-year-olds running through the streets having their little tantrum that they're throwing.

[32 : 12] That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about standing for truth and standing for right where you are. That's what makes a difference. What can the righteous do? It starts not just in the ballot box, but the ballot box and how the ballot box is influenced in the pew and in the pulpit.

From the very founding of our nation, you'll find that the pew and the pulpit influence more things than anything else. Because when the word of God was sent forth and they addressed what righteousness looks like, they understood what they needed to do.

You know, the sad part today, there's many pulpits who downgrade the righteousness of what God says is right and what God says is wrong. But I want you to understand, what can the righteous do? It starts with you and I.

It starts with decisions we make. Look over to 1 Peter for a moment. 1 Peter chapter 4 and verse 17. 1 Peter chapter 4 has got a lot of things in the chapter, and he talks about sin and righteousness, and he comes to this and he says, For the time has come that judgments must begin where?

At the house of God. Notice what he says, And if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?

[33 : 28] I want you to understand, Peter's making a contrast here, a very important element, that how are the others going to be held accountable if God doesn't hold us accountable? If you're his child, you ought to consider what does God expect?

How do we honor God to do the right things? Because I want you to understand, righteousness does not begin amongst the lost. You know, some people say, Well, I'm shocked that person did that.

You know what? I'm never shocked anymore what a lost person does. When you are without Christ, your mind is darkened. Sin has you enslaved. What ought to shock you is what people profess the name of Christ do.

If it doesn't begin among those who have been redeemed, then who? You know, one thing that has happened is that we allow things to be passed to the next generation. You know, Hezekiah was a good king.

But you know, at the end of Hezekiah, there were some things coming to account. The prophet Isaiah comes and tells him that the nation was going to be taken over. God's going to hold to account the sin of the people.

[34 : 33] Now, while Hezekiah tried to get the nation back on, there was God going to hold to account some sin that took place. Even generation before Him. You know, look over to 2 Kings chapter 20 for a moment because this is important to understand.

Because if we look at this illustration from God's Word, verse 16 says this, So in other words, Isaiah says, Hey, God's judgment has come.

God's judgment is coming. Verse 18, And thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shall beget, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Well, let that sink in for a moment. What's it telling you? Hezekiah, Isaiah comes to Hezekiah, and he says, Hezekiah, God's judgment's coming, and your children are going to become eunuchs.

If you need an explanation of that, see me afterwards. Or you can use your dictionary. Because the reality of that has stark consequences. But I want you to see, it's not that God announced His judgment.

[35 : 49] Look at verse 19. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. That sounds pretty good. Now look at the last part.

And he said, Is it not good if peace and truth be in my day? Let that sink in for a moment. What's Hezekiah saying? Yeah, I know that's coming, but I'm enjoying what I have now, and they can just deal with it when it comes.

That's really a pretty sad statement. But you know what? I think it's a statement that reflects a lot of people today. As long as I'm doing and get what I want out of this life, it doesn't matter about the next.

Generation to come. Is it not good if peace and truth be in my day? I want you to understand, how do we make a difference? Turn over to the book of James for a moment, because I think James gives us a good New Testament illustrations here through of some practical things.

James is a very practical book in the Bible. You know, we can look into some Old Testament and Second Chronicles and others that talk about these things, but I think it's important to know what we're talking about here is not just something for the past, it's something for the present.

[36 : 56] It's something of what moving forward, because the first thing we see here is humility. Humility. To humble ourselves before God.

James 4.6 says, James 4.10 tells us this, I want you to understand, from the very beginning all the way to the end of the book, all throughout the Scripture, you'll find that it's required of us to humble ourselves before God.

Pride will keep you from God. It hinders that. We ought to be humble enough to say, hey, I need to do something. I need to take responsibility.

I need to do my part. To humble ourselves before God. Secondly, to pray. Pray for forgiveness. Pray for God to search who we are.

Pray for God to use us. You know, consider what James says in James 1 and verse 5 and 6. It says, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and abradeth not, and it shall be given him, but let him ask in faith, not wavering.

[38 : 13] For he that wavereth is like the wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. James 5.16 says, Confess your faults one to another and pray for one another that you may be healed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. If you want to make a difference, we need to pray.

We need to seek God's face. We need to seek the Lord. Seek the Lord. Consider James 4.8 says, Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.

You know, that's a principle you see throughout the Bible that if you want to understand who God is, God says, I'm here. I haven't moved.

I'm available. God will always answer a humble heart seeking him. He will bring to light those things. Notice Psalm 119 verse 9 says this, Wherefore with all shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word and with thy whole heart have I sought thee.

[39 : 15] Let me not wander from thy commandments to seek the Lord, to know what God wants and seek God. How do we know what God wants? From his word. And lastly, we need to turn from wickedness.

James 4.8, the last part of that verse says this, draw, it says, Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Now, that's, we could spend a whole message just on that right there.

Because the problem is, is that we do is call evil good and good evil. You don't want to get rid, oftentimes, you don't want to let go of sin because we get caught up in the pleasure of the moment, not considering the end.

You know, I want you to understand, sin can seem like it's something that's easy to contend with or easy to control or it provides something you might enjoy for the moment.

But the Bible says the end thereof is death, destruction. You know, there's a lot of things that look good on the outside to draw you in and capture you. You know, think about it for a moment.

[40 : 12] Do you ever set a trap that says, a big flag that says, it's going to be a problem if you do this? Have you ever seen advertisers advertise something? Don't buy our product because it's going to cause harm in your life.

You don't see that, do you? You see, what's the benefits? How does this help you right now? How does this help you enjoy things and to be able to see all these things or do all these things?

We need to turn from wickedness. Look over to Psalm 51 for a moment. Psalm 51, David here says this, he says, Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know thy wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. David's heart was to turn to God to say, God, show me what needs cleaned up.

Show me what needs to change. You know, this morning we live in a nation that's been blessed but is now, I believe, going to be facing the judgment of God in many areas. We see the effects of it happening within our families, within our communities, in our nation.

[41 : 18] I want you to understand we need to be careful not to just expect God's blessing but to seek God's blessing by doing that which is right.

And it begins with you and I. It begins, even here this morning, it begins with your relationship with God because it begins by one being transformed, being changed by the power of the Holy Ghost through faith in Jesus Christ because if you've never been born again, you cannot grasp fully what I'm speaking of, of what Christ has done for you.

This morning, have you been born again by faith in Christ alone? Not resting in what they call a Christian nation. You know, that's kind of a misnomer because nations aren't Christians, individuals are Christians.

Now, a group of Christians can influence a nation in a direction that God can bless. You know, this morning, that also includes just being obedient to what God's word has declared in your life.

It's an important reality for each of us to consider. You know, this morning, have you considered, are we just expecting God's blessing or do we need to do the things that raises and exalt it to blesses God that he might bless us in his promise?

[42 : 38] His heads are bowed and eyes are closed this morning. What about you today? What about you? Heavenly Father, as we come before you this morning, Lord, we just thank you and praise you for your word.

Lord, we're thankful for your promises. Lord, help us to take a stand to do our part. Lord, trusting you for the outcome, Lord, but be able to say that we trusted you.

Lord, you make note of those things. Lord, help us to do those things that are right help us to promote righteousness. But Lord, help us to understand the need to apply it to our heart first.

Lord, I pray that you have your hand upon each one today. Lord, that you might stir hearts and stir minds. Lord, to convict and convince as needed with each one. And Lord, we just turn this opportunity to respond to you today.

Lord, we just give you all the praise in Jesus' name. As piano plays, what about you today?