



PRAYING FOR

AMERICA

21 DAY PRAYER GUIDE

OCTOBER 19 – NOVEMBER 8, 2022



PRAYING FOR
AMERICA

Dear Mississippi Baptists,

Thank you for participating in the “21 Days of Praying for America” and in particular, praying for the upcoming election. The election will be held on November 8, 2022. We are asking you to seek the LORD on behalf of our nation and its leaders. On November 8th, Election Day, we are asking you to fast and pray.

An elementary observation of Scripture reveals faith increases when we fast and pray (Matthew 17:19-21). In addition, the Bible stresses the importance of prayer. The Apostle Paul reminded the Saints in Rome that they were to be “devoted to prayer.” Prayer accompanied with fasting brings an intensity and a greater focus to our prayer life.

Scripture identifies a number of situations in which fasting is appropriate. One reason to fast and pray is when seeking God’s intervention. When Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, learned of the impending invasion of the Moabites and Ammonites he responded by proclaiming a public fast and prayer. He encouraged his people to look to God who had delivered and

blessed in the past. He admitted that he had no power of his own to win this victory (2 Chronicles 20).

America is not ancient Judah, but the God they served is the God we serve. We need divine intervention. In other words, we need REVIVAL! Join me and thousands of others across Mississippi as we fast and pray. Pray that God would raise up an army of prayer warriors who are willing to persevere in prayer and wage war on their knees. Remember the words of our dear Lord Jesus when He said, "...that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

Many thanks to Dr. Shawn Parker and Dr. Kenny Digby for their contributions to this guide. I am grateful to serve alongside these two men and many others at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board who do more than write and preach about prayer — they PRAY!

Because HE Lives,

Rick Blythe
Director, Stewardship/Prayer Ministry
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

DAY 1

OCTOBER 19, 2022

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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.”

II CHRONICLES 7:14

A DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER

Our beloved nation needs our prayers. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Psalm 33:12). “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). God has blessed America, but America needs to bless God.

We, God’s people, need to recognize the urgency of the hour to seek revival in our nation, our state, our denomination, our churches, our homes, and our lives. Prayer and fasting are two good steps toward that reviving. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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” (II Chron. 7:14). Fasting is the catalyst, added to prayer, that can humble us, point us in the right direction (God’s will), and help us repent (turn).

God’s word warns us of the judgement due to any people who turn away from God and go their own way. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17). History warns us of the demise of great empires and kingdoms who forsook Jehovah God. In the United States, we have a godly heritage (not perfect, but better than most)

and a blessed history, but none of that suffices for the present, or protects the future. We must repent.

In real estate, they say the three key factors for success are “location, location, location.” Our nation has been truly blessed with our location — between the Atlantic and the Pacific — “from sea to shining sea.” But, a bigger factor in our nation has been godly leadership — courageous men and women, unafraid to stand and speak up for what’s right. November 8, the day we elect these men and women to Congress, can be a turning point or a tipping point for our nation. That midterm election can help turn our legislative branch more toward a Biblical World View. November 8 is one day in time that could affect eternity. Join us as we fast and pray on November 8 for America.

IT’S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today that God will intervene on November 8 to revive our land and our leaders.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 2

OCTOBER 20, 2022

*“This kind can come forth by nothing,
but by prayer and fasting.”*

MARK 9:29

THE CATALYST

After His disciples had failed in their efforts to heal a young man, they asked Jesus why they could not heal him. Jesus answered, “This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:29). Fasting can be the catalyst, when added to prayer, that can change lives — change nations.

Some Christians have misunderstood Mark 2:18 to mean that fasting was an activity conducted under the law but not needed under grace. Jesus said in verse 20, “But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.” The bridegroom has been gone nearly 2,000 years; in these last days we need fasting.

Again, some have misunderstood the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:16) to discourage fasting. But the issue in verse 16 is the motive for fasting. Don’t fast to get the praise of men, fast to get the power of God. The issue is not public or private fasting. This passage does not mean we cannot talk about, or teach on, fasting. We must fast for the right reason. “But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face” (Matthew 6:17). Far too long, fasting has been a blind spot for most Christians. Paul and Barnabas fasted prior to the first missionary journey (Acts 13:2-3).

Fasting is not subtraction, fasting is substitution. While fasting, our hunger for physical appetites reminds us to feed our spiritual appetites. If, while fasting, we don't study our Bibles more or pray more, we are not fasting — we are dieting.

Fasting is more than doing without food, fasting is sacrificing any physical or worldly appetite. Not watching secular TV or listening to secular music is a valid form of fasting. We substitute the spiritual in for the physical.

As Christians, we want a “spirit-controlled, mind-controlled body.” Fasting helps one bring his spirit, mind, and body under the Holy Spirit’s control. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:18).

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today that God will use our fasting to give us a “spirit-controlled, mind-controlled body.”

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 3

OCTOBER 21, 2022

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

MATTHEW 6:9B

THE OUT'S OF PRAYER

If prayer were a pie, it would have six pieces. I believe what you pray falls into six categories that can be grouped into three pairs. These are what I call the six "Out's of Prayer." These six Out's are what comes out of your heart, mind, and mouth when you pray.

1. Praise. Praise is often the first of the six to be volunteered by a congregation. We praise God (Father, Son, and Spirit) for who He is and how great He is. He is omnipresent (all present), omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), eternal, and immutable (unchanging) — the absolute attributes of God. His moral attributes are endless. He is loving, merciful, faithful, patient, forgiving, etc. Praying on our knees over an open Bible (Psalms), with open eyes and an open heart and mind, is conducive for praise.

2. Thanksgiving. We praise Him for who He is, but we also thank Him for all He has done and is doing for us. As the song says — "Count your blessings, name them one by one." We do not thank God for all things, but we can always thank God in all things. An attitude of gratitude could go a long way in curing what ails us.

3. Confession. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive

us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9). We agree with God (confess) that we need forgiveness and cleansing. We sin retail; we need to confess retail. How public should confession be? How public is knowledge of the sin?

4. Dedication. We ask for God’s help in serving Him and in ministry. We want to do well and be our best, not to get bragged on, but for His glory. Dear God, please help me make the most of that next opportunity. Confession takes care of sins of commission; dedication helps us with sins of omission. In confession, you ask God to clean you up; in dedication, you ask God to fill you up with the Holy Spirit. Here am I; use me.

5. Petition. Petition is when we ask God for our personal needs. He wants us to cry out for His provision and protection.

6. Intercession. Intercession is when we bring before God the needs, problems, and concerns of others, beyond ourselves.

How does one pray thirty minutes? Simply pray for three items in all six areas — a total of eighteen. Generic prayers (bless all missionaries everywhere) don’t take long. God wants details.

IT’S TIME TO PRAY

Pray comprehensively and specifically today.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 4

OCTOBER 22, 2022

“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.”

I JOHN 5:14

THE IN'S OF PRAYER

I have enjoyed teaching the “In’s and Out’s of Prayer” over these past fifty years. If the six Out’s are what we pray, the five In’s are how we pray. This makes up the “warp and woof” of prayer. God is a Trinity — one being manifested in the three persons — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Three of the five In’s of prayer relate to the three persons of the Trinity. All three persons are part of our prayers.

1. We pray “in” the will of the Father (I John 5:14-15). As Jesus prayed to the Father in the garden, He said, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Prayer does not just condition us to accept fate, prayer changes things within the permissive will of the Father. God told Hezekiah in II Kings 20:1, “Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.”

But in II Kings 20:5 (four verses later), God said to Hezekiah, “I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day...”. Prayer changes things, but we must pray in the will of the Father — ultimately surrendered to His will.

2. We pray “in” the name of the Son. John 14:13-14 says, “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.” I remember my

parents teaching me to close my prayers with the words “in Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.”

But praying in the name of the Son is more than just mouthing these words. Your “name” is who you are, what you stand for, and your reputation. If you have a good name in the community, you have lived and done well. We have access to the Father because of the life work of Jesus Christ. It is because of who He is and what He’s done that we have the privilege of prayer. He is our High Priest. “Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

3. We pray “in” the power of the Spirit. “Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26). Just as the fullness of the Spirit helps me preach, teach, or witness, He helps me pray. He illuminates my prayers and helps me understand the Father’s will, just as He illuminates my Bible study.

These first three (of five) “In’s of Prayer” relate to the three persons of the Trinity. I pray “in” the will of (1) the Father, “in” the name of (2) the Son, and “in” the power of (3) the Spirit. We pray “to” the Father, “through” the Spirit, and “due” the Son.

IT’S TIME TO PRAY

We pray today that our reliance on God grows in our prayer life.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 5

OCTOBER 23, 2022

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

JAMES 5:16B

EARNEST FAITH

4. We pray "in" earnest. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Our prayers should be "fervent."

When Eli watched Hannah pray for a child at the altar at Shiloh, he accused her of being drunk (I Samuel 1:14). When was the last time you saw Baptists praying publicly at an altar in such earnestness that they would get accused of being drunk? How desperate are we to see our loved ones saved, our churches revived, our nation healed?

II Peter 3:10 says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." My understanding is that the word "fervent" here is the same word as in James 5:16 concerning prayer. How "fervent" or earnest is your prayer life?

Fasting is the catalyst for a better prayer life, but right here is where fasting really helps our praying. Fasting helps me pray in earnest. Fasting helps me get down to business with single-minded prayer. Fasting helps me put aside some of my idols that are such a distraction when I pray.

Our passion and personality enter into our prayer lives the same way they enter into our preaching or teaching (II Corinthians 4:7 – “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels”). But a “Mr. Kool” approach to prayer does not avail much. A “take it or leave it” approach to prayer won’t work. We pray in earnest. Jesus prayed in earnest (his sweat became blood); He fasted when He prayed.

5. We pray “in” faith (last, but not least). “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matthew 21:22). Just as a simple, child-like faith is required to get saved, that same faith is required for any and all prayers. We are not talking “name it and claim it” — read the four previous “in’s” of prayer. We are not talking a superstar faith — a big, big God is more important than the size of our faith or quality of our faith. As a child, we either believe or we don’t — we jump, or we don’t. Faith is not a dimmer switch on a chandelier; faith is an on/off switch on a light bulb. Growing in faith is not a gallon instead of a quart or pint. Growing in faith is becoming more consistent in walking by faith every moment. Keep the switch on — especially when you pray.

We pray in earnest, as if it depended on us; but we pray in faith, knowing it all depends on God.

IT’S TIME TO PRAY

We pray today that we will balance “in earnest” with “in faith.”

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 6

OCTOBER 24, 2022

“Lord, teach us to pray.”

LUKE 11:1A

JUST DO IT

For me, the six “Out’s of Prayer” are comprehensive. Anything I pray falls into one of those six areas. But, the five “In’s of Prayer” are more subjective. They can go on and on. Pray “in” obedience. Pray “in” forgiveness. I do believe my five “in’s” would be the top five responses on Family Feud.

I stick with the five, because five is the number for grace. Only by the grace of God can a wretched sinner like me be able to pray. From the prayer of salvation forward, grace is recognized and required.

When a sculptor depicts prayer he often uses two hands, fingers intertwined. I like six “out’s” and five “in’s” of prayer, symbolizing the five fingers and six spaces around and between those fingers — thus one hand is prayer. I use the other hand to symbolize Bible study. Starting with the little finger — hear, read (systematically, comprehensively), learn (Bible lists/facts), memorize, and meditate (thumb works with the first four) in the Word. We need to get a handle on prayer and Bible study. They go hand in hand — intertwined.

A disciple came to Jesus and made the following request, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1). We often add “how” to this verse. And we need to disciple others about the “In’s and Out’s of

Prayer.” Obviously, John had taught his disciples on prayer. But I believe the real need in this passage, and also today, is not “how” to pray better, but the need to pray more. Jesus prayed, much and often. He had just finished praying when the above request was made. Judas knew exactly where Jesus would be on that Friday night — praying in Gethsemane (oil press — Jesus was pressed in the Spirit to pray). The real issue with many of us is not the quality of prayer, but the quantity of prayer. “Teach us to pray.” Prayer will never become a fad, but a good prayer life often fades as we get entangled with the cares and concerns of the world.

Some of my best prayer times in my life were Tuesday mornings at 9:00 in the Alcorn Baptist Fellowship Hall. We actually prayed for an hour (sweet hour of prayer). I wear a stop watch. I tend to be legalistic — sorry. My ministers knew they could come and go. I offered on many occasions to join their prayer groups. And yet in nearly twenty years, many of the ministers hardly ever, if ever, attended the best prayer time in which I’ve ever been a part. Please, Lord, teach us to pray.

IT’S TIME TO PRAY

We pray today that God will give us specific answers.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 7

OCTOBER 25, 2022

"Ask, and it shall be given you."

MATTHEW 7:7A

BEYOND NOVEMBER 8

I use my spiritual journal (27 in over 50 years) to keep my prayer life steady. But, too often, troubles and tragedies are what bring me back to a quiet time in the morning and “practicing His presence” (pray without ceasing) throughout the day.

I enter a prayer concern with that day’s date into my journal. As I pray through my list, I enter any appropriate notes and dates. If God says no, I put a 0 in the left-hand column. If God says yes, I put an X in the left-hand column. If we believe God answers prayer, we will pray more. We will pray until He answers.

One of the greatest things anyone can do for the Kingdom is start a weekly prayer group. Let me make some practical suggestions for your group.

1. Be prompt. When you set a time and place to pray, be prompt. If you say the prayer time is 9:00, start praying at 9:00. If you want fellowship come early; if you come late, don’t interrupt. Don’t start at 9:00 with requests; just pray your requests and explain later. A prayer time should be time praying.

2. Be progressive. The prayer should be progressive — move about the

group from person to person, like a conversation would. It should not be a chain prayer, where each person prays all their requests at one time. Pray one item and pass it on. Some call it popcorn prayer.

3. Be proportionate. The prayers should be proportionate — you don't want one person hogging all the time. A prayer group is not time for your personal prayer list.

4. Be pertinent. Pray for what is pertinent to the group. That would differ from your family altar or quiet time.

5. Be particular. Be specific, call names. Understand that a prayer does not mean the info is public knowledge.

6. Be private. You need trust and confidentiality in a healthy prayer group.

Why not do the Kingdom a favor, and use November 8 to start a prayer group? What if a lost person or unchurched adult started attending a prayer cluster? Revival could start in a volunteer fire station, in a park pavilion, or in a church building. We have not because we ask not.

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today that God will help you start a weekly prayer group — or maybe a revival.

PRAYER NOTES

"I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

PSALM 32:5

THE CALM OF CONFESSION

You are probably familiar with the saying, "Confession is good for the soul." King David certainly understood the importance of confession. Psalm 32 is ascribed to David. It was written on the occasion of his sin with Bathsheba. David was guilty of adultery, lying, and murder (Remember what happened to Bathsheba's husband Uriah?). David tried his best to cover and conceal his sin but it was only when he confessed his sin to the Lord that he found the peace he desired.

The word confess means "to agree," "to admit," or "to say the same thing." Confession is saying the same thing God does about sin, or having the same perspective on sin God does. Identifying sin for what it truly is, and honestly acknowledging the offenses we have committed is important in maintaining our fellowship with the Lord. Confession also should include repentance, which is the attitude of turning away from sin.

Before praying for America, the election, and politicians, search your own heart. Is there any sin in your life that is a barrier between you and God? Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The word "iniquity" means "to twist or distort." Is there something in your life you have taken out of its God given context and twisted or distorted? Dr. Charles Stanley says regarding Psalm 66:18, "If we refuse to

admit to some sin, despite the conviction of the Holy Spirit on our heart, we can have no confidence in prayer and no right to expect a divine “yes.” God blesses obedience, not stubbornness.”

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Allow God to reveal any unconfessed sin lurking in your life. Confess, repent and claim I John 1:9 — “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 9

OCTOBER 27, 2022

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me that they may be one, as we are.”

JOHN 17:11

UNITY

Benjamin Franklin was present for the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. As he was about to sign the Declaration of Independence, he looked at all the men in that room and said, “Remember, we must all hang together or surely we shall all hang separately.” He understood that everything would rise and fall on unity.

The doorway of prayer swings on the hinges of a proper relationship with God and with one another. The vertical relationship with God and the horizontal relationship with others should intersect and are not mutually exclusive. If one’s relationship with God is not what it should be, it will affect human relationships. The opposite is true as well. If human relationships are strained, that will affect our relationship with our Heavenly Father. What is needed and what Christ desires for His body, the Church, is unity.

The United States could be described as the divided States of America. Political, racial, religious, cultural, social, and economic divides exist in America. Presidents have promised to bridge the deep and bitter divisions in America. Try as they might, they are powerless to bring about lasting change. Division in the world is nothing new, but what should break our hearts is to find so much division in local churches among people professing to know Christ.

The unity of believers is to be like that of the Father and the Son. The Father has answered every prayer of His Son, and He has answered this one. The Holy Spirit takes all true believers and baptizes them into the body of Christ. The disgrace of it all is that down here the believers are pretty well divided. The Church's present divisions are the result of the failures of Christians.

Prayer is bolstered by unity in the church. Division in the body of Christ is a disgrace to grace and hinders our prayers. The unity of the church must spring from the new life that is imparted to all believers by the new birth; and it is manifested in the Christian's common love for Christ and for one another as they face a hostile world.

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray for a spirit of unity in your local church. Pray for a greater spirit of unity among elected leaders, that they would work together for the betterment of our nation.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 10

OCTOBER 28, 2022

“Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually.”

I CHRONICLES 16:11

SEEK THE LORD

I Chronicles 16 contains a Psalm of Thanksgiving written by David. He wrote the Psalm to thank the Lord on the day the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem. The Psalm contains an admonition to continually seek the Lord.

God has promised that all of those who come to Christ in repentance and believing faith will be saved. However, entering into relationship with God does not insure unbroken fellowship with God. We have to follow through with “Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually.”

While we lament the spiritual apathy in our land, have you committed this matter to the Lord in prayer? Christians love to talk about the “sweet by and by,” but we are living in the “nasty now and now.” Complaining about the way things are or projecting into the future does little to solve the dilemmas of the present. However, prayer can change the trajectory of a nation. Why? Because you are expressing a dependence on the strength and power of God!

Evangelist Sammy Tippit said, “Normally when revival comes, historically and biblically, it comes on the wings of a person or a small group of people who pray and seek Him desperately, wanting Him to move in

their hearts and in their lives. From my experience and from the Word of God, I believe the only way God visits His people in revival is when His people seek His face. As we see God moving and doing things, it is a great temptation to forget what God wants above all else is a relationship. He wants fellowship with us. He wants us to draw away into that quiet place and meet with Him and get to know Him. As we pray for our nation, it may get darker before it gets lighter.

What we need to pray for is not a deliverance from all our problems and our troubles and our economy, but from ourselves. What we need to pray for is a movement of the Spirit of God among His people, where there is brokenness, confession, repentance, forgiveness, and cleansing. In a word: revival. Then, with the proclamation of God's Word, will come a great evangelistic harvest. The greatest harvests always come during periods of revival, and revival always comes on the heels of those who have been praying.

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today for God's people to seek Him and place our hope and trust in Him. Pray for local, state, and national leaders to seek God's wisdom!

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 11

OCTOBER 29, 2022

*"This then is the message which we have heard of him,
and declare unto you, that God is light,
and in him is no darkness at all."*

I JOHN 1:5

GOD IS LIGHT

Cathedral Caverns, located in Woodville, Alabama, is one of the longest publicly accessible caves in the United States. You can take a 1.5 mile guided tour and descend 263 feet into the heart of the cave. Lights inside the cave allow you to see where you are going. At one point along the tour, the guide will turn off the lights and it is completely pitch black darkness. The darkness is so dark you cannot see your hand in front of your face or the person standing beside you. To have all your senses engulfed in darkness is an eerie feeling.

Worse than physical darkness is spiritual darkness. From the moment Adam and Eve sinned, humans have lived in a fallen world marked by spiritual darkness. Light represents what is good, true, and holy, while darkness represents what is evil and false.

People's understanding of who God is varies. Some view God as a detached deity far removed from the daily concerns of His creation. Bursting forth in Scripture is the truth that God has come to us in the person of His Son, Jesus. Jesus is "Immanuel," meaning "God with us." The incarnation is proof that God is for us not against us. Jesus made the astounding and true claim, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

As the pillar of fire lighted the way for the Israelites, Jesus is the light from God that lights the way for life.

Rest assured, God has a remnant of His people in some of the highest offices of the land. They need our prayers to help them stand strong so the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ will shine through them to people who are walking in spiritual darkness.

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today for Christians serving in public office (local, state, federal) to be a conduit for the Light of the Lord to shine through them in dark places. Pray the Lord would add to the ranks of Christians serving in public office.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 12

OCTOBER 30, 2022

*"The name of the Lord is a strong tower:
the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."*

PROVERBS 18:10

THE NAME OF THE LORD

Tornadoes are regarded as one of nature's most destructive atmospheric forces. According to the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station, an average of 27 tornadoes are reported in Mississippi annually. When considering just strong and violent tornadoes (EF-4 and EF-5 ratings), Mississippi is second only to Oklahoma. When a storm is brewing, many residents wisely seek shelter in a storm cellar or tornado shelter.

We are witnessing the escalation of the end time events described by Jesus in Matthew 24. Cheer up, things will get worse before they get better. While we expectantly wait for the coming of the Lord, remember Proverbs 18:10.

David stood before the Philistine giant from Gath, named Goliath, and challenged him to a fight. On the surface, David did not have a chance against someone as formidable as Goliath. David was a shepherd boy and Goliath was a warrior and considered a giant in his day. David had a sling and some stones. Goliath's bronze armor alone weighed 125 pounds, and he carried a giant-sized spear and the head of the spear weighed 15 pounds. However, David had faith God would give him the victory. Dr. Tony Evans said, "The Israelites saw Goliath and said, "That man is too big!" David saw Goliath and said, "That man is so big I can't miss!"

When the time came for the showdown in the valley of Elah, David was ready. “Then said David to the Philistine, ‘Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied’ ” (I Samuel 17:45). David found courage in the strong and mighty name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.

No matter the intensity of the storms we are facing in this country or how intimidating the enemy is, the God David served is the God we serve. The same God who gave David the victory has already given the Christian victory through Christ Jesus our Lord.

IT’S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today that as the election nears, we will place our trust in the name of the Lord our God and not in government or in politicians.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 13

OCTOBER 31, 2022

"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."

ACTS 12:5

P.U.S.H. PRAY UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS

The twelfth chapter of Acts is a mixture of sadness, gladness, and madness. Herod the king had James, the brother of John, executed; probably beheaded like John the Baptist — sadness. Peter is arrested and placed in prison but God delivered him — gladness. The chapter concludes with the violent death of Herod brought about because of his massive ego and pride — madness.

Acts 12 reveals something of the sovereignty of God. James dies and Peter lives. Could God not have spared James as well? Yes, He most certainly could. However, the key to Peter's deliverance is found in verse five. Christians were earnestly praying for his release.

Pastor Ed Rea writes, "Earnest prayer has power not because it, in itself, persuades a reluctant God, but because it demonstrates that our hearts care passionately about the things that our Father cares about." At the first church I pastored, a saintly older lady shared how she prayed for her husband for 35 years before he became a believer in Christ. I have often thought, what if she quit after 25 years or 34 years, but no she prayed until something happened. I think she would have prayed for him until her dying day had he not trusted Christ.

Ray Stedman said, “The basic motive of prayer is a sense of dependence. If you really think that God, and God alone, can work, and that there are elements of a situation in which only he can change things — then you pray. This is what happened to this early church. When they realized that James had been put to death, and that this vicious attack of the enemy could be successful, it suddenly crystallized in their minds that they had a part to play in God’s program. They were to go to God in earnest prayer that Peter might be delivered. And God set him free in a wonderful way... In the mystery of prayer, a mystery that I cannot fathom, something is happening that makes possible the activity of God’s Spirit to work in unusual ways, ways that otherwise would never happen.”

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today for divine intervention for the problems facing our nation and world.

PRAYER NOTES

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

WISE WORDS FOR WORRY WARTS

Philippians is one of four prison epistles written by Paul. He was in a terrible situation and having to endure abysmal accommodations in prison. Yet, he was not anxious about his situation and he encourages the believers in Philippi not to be anxious. Paul is not suggesting we dismiss legitimate concerns. However, he knows worry is counterproductive; plus we have at our disposal the mighty instrument of prayer.

Anxiety and prayer are two great opposing forces in Christian experience. Jesus addressed the issue of anxiety in Matthew 6:25. The Lord said, “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” Anxiety not only demonstrates a lack of confidence in God and a lack of faith in His Word, it is deliberate disobedience to the articulated command of Jesus.

The antidote to worry is to pray about everything. Concerning prayer, Dr. John Phillips writes, “Our requests are known to God already, yet He loves to hear us ask. Prayer is one of many mysterious factors in God’s administration of the universe. We do not know how prayer works, but God arranged it to encourage us to come to Him. He longs for us to come,

come often, and linger long. He longs for us to talk to Him, tell Him all about our troubles, and make our requests known to Him.”

Worry is unnecessary; there is no need for us to bear the burdens when He is willing and able to bear them for us. Talking to God about everything that concerns us and Him is the first step toward victory over worry. Do not be anxious about the outcome of the election; instead, pray and trust God. He has not abdicated His throne and He rules from on high (See Daniel 4:17).

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

What is causing the anxiety in your heart? As you pray today, “cast all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (I Peter 5:7).

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 15

NOVEMBER 2, 2022

"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth."

JAMES 5:17

THE POWER OF ONE

According to *Ripley's Believe it or Not*, Craig Dawson is always on the lookout for loose change as he runs. You might be surprised to discover that Dawson found in excess of \$8,000 in lost change over a twenty-five year period. If we could be assured of that kind of return, more of us would probably take up the grueling habit of running.

Unfortunately, many believers operate according to the idea that our little prayer can't make a difference in this massive world. The truth is that God uses little things to accomplish great feats. He used Shamgar's ox goad, David's sling, Rahab's string, Moses' rod, and Dorcas' needle to greatly impact the unfolding of His perfect plan. Someone well said that people who say small things don't matter have never slept in a room with a mosquito. Small things can, indeed, make a big difference!

During the days of Elijah, the Israelites were lured away from God by the temptations of Baalism. Elijah stood in the gap in calling the people to repentance and faithfulness. On one occasion, he prayed for the Lord to stop the rains to prove that Baal, thought to be in control of the weather, was a farce and a fake. Interestingly, Elijah's prayers were honored by God to the extent that rain was withheld for three and a half years.

Perhaps there were others praying alongside Elijah, but the text only identifies Elijah as the spiritual warrior. The bottom line is that God honored Elijah's singular request and, in turn, arrested the attention of the nation. You may think your prayers are small and insignificant, but don't be deceived. When a heart of sincerity offers a simple request to God, He listens. The truth is your prayer might make all the difference in affecting God's will for your church, community, state, and nation.

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today for God to awaken Christians to the power of one sincere heart praying faithfully to the only God.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 16

NOVEMBER 3, 2022

*"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage."*

PSALM 33:12

AMERICAN GREATNESS

Psalm 33 is a celebration of God's sovereign oversight of creation. In verse 10, the Psalmist celebrated the fact that the Lord brings the "counsel of nations to nothing," meaning the plans of a nation are subject to the approval of God. In verse 12, the Psalmist goes on to say that God blesses the nation who has enthroned Him as Lord. In other words, when a nation has collectively resolved to follow the teachings of God and submit to His instruction, they can expect the blessing of God.

The United States has seen the hand of God give blessing over the course of our existence. His hand was evident in the initial movement that led to the establishment of the United States, in the preservation of the unity of the country during the difficulties of the 1800's, and in the guidance of military and political leaders during the two World Wars of the twentieth century.

Niall Ferguson, in his book titled *Civilization: The West and the Rest*, interviewed a Chinese official who subscribed to the political philosophies of communism. This unnamed official praised the role of Christianity in the West with the following statement: "We were asked to look into what accounted for the success of the West all over the world. We studied everything we could from the historical, political, economic, and cultural

perspectives. At first, we thought it was because you had more powerful guns than we had. Then we thought it was because you had the best political system. Next we focused on your economic system. But in the past twenty years, we have realized that the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity.”

This is an astounding statement coming from an individual representing a country characterized by antagonism toward religion. May it serve as a reminder to us all that the basis of America’s greatness is our connection to the Creator!

IT’S TIME TO PRAY

Thank God for the rich heritage of faith we enjoy as Americans, and ask him to help people see His blessings in our national history.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 17

NOVEMBER 4, 2022

*"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord;
he turns it wherever he will."*

PROVERBS 21:1

WHO'S IN CHARGE

Solomon asserted that God guides the heart of the king just as He directs the paths of a river. A riverbed can sometimes take decades to change, but it often changes rather dramatically. The changes are subtle in development, often going unnoticed in the moment. It may take years to realize that a riverbed has changed direction or location. However, history proves that even the greatest rivers go through adjustments so as to abandon an old track and often cut a new one.

In the same way that a river is guided by God's hand, so a political leader is guided by God. At times, we may struggle to notice the guidance because it may be subtle in nature. Nevertheless, the guidance of God can be seen as we look through the lens of faith. God's sovereignty as the ultimate leader of our world ought never to be doubted or underestimated.

When we look at cultural norms and political developments, we might mistakenly believe that God has little involvement. Such thinking could not be further from the truth. God used Cyrus to restore His people to the homeland of Israel, and He used Pilate to fulfill His eternal plan of salvation through the death of the Son. Even those who never looked to God were putty in His hands to fashion His perfect plan of faith.

The bottom line is that regardless of partisanship and the personal faith of a political leader, God is still active to establish His eternal purpose. Many in the world erroneously believe that political leaders are in charge, but the fact of the matter is that God is in charge because He is above all. May we never lose sight of this fact, and may we learn to see His hand in the lives of political leaders and cultural developments.

Praise be to the Lord!

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today for God's hand of leadership to be evident in the lives of our elected officials, and for leaders to recognize God's guidance in their lives.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 18

NOVEMBER 5, 2022

*“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him,
‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,
and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”*

JOHN 8:31-32

TRUE FREEDOM

Warren Wiersbe once said, “The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its Master.” America is often referred to as the land of the free, and we stand on that moniker proudly. However, American culture has become desperately confused about the nature of true freedom.

Unfortunately, many think of freedom as the absence of any restrictions. A better way to think of freedom is the presence of the right restrictions. A bird is free in the air, but he’s not so free under the water. A fish is free under water, but definitely a prisoner of the open air. Freedom is discovering the right elements of existence that empower health and fullness of life.

While many in our culture would like to throw off all restraints and allow an “anything goes” mentality to prevail, those who are wiser understand this is far removed from true freedom. Instead, we need to recognize the reality of right and wrong, truth and lie, life and death. The basis for right is determining what is absolute, and the absolute truth is found in the Scriptures.

American culture needs to return to genuine freedom, and the key to doing that is to recognize the reality of God and the Lordship of Christ.

Jesus said that he came to set people free! We can do all we want to insure physical liberties, but until people experience spiritual liberty they are a prisoner of their own device.

May we not forget that we have the ultimate key to freedom in the Gospel. May we live in freedom so the world can see what it is, and may we share this freedom so they can know how to experience it. During this season of election, may freedom ring true in our hearts and may the rest of the culture hear the sound of our song!

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today for Christians to reflect genuine freedom in Christ and to speak of that freedom in love and truth!

PRAYER NOTES

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

ACTS 4:12

THE ONLY NAME

Christians are sometimes accused of being narrow-minded and bigoted because we believe that Christ is the only means of salvation. Our pluralistic world wants to give credence to every form of religion and affirm that they are all true. Common logic, however, would dictate that they can't all be true because they are so mutually exclusive. We stand firmly on the conviction that there is no other way to the Father except through Christ, the Son.

When asked how this belief can be squared with the so-called spirit of tolerance that prevails these days, I respond that it only makes sense that there is one way to God. Think about it like this. If you wanted to drive across the state, there would be many roads you could take to get there. If you wanted to travel to Europe, the travel options are reduced to a flight or a ship. If you wanted to travel to Mars (which is becoming more realistic by the year), you'll probably only have one option for getting there. I doubt that anyone would be critical because there is only one way to Mars.

The point of this analogy is that the number of routes depends on the distance to the destination. Truthfully, when we talk about going to Heaven, we're talking about a much more distant destination than Europe or Mars.

Rather than complain that there is only one way to get to Heaven, I'm inclined to say that we should be thankful that there is a way at all!

As disciples of Christ, we should be sure of our conviction of the exclusivity of Christ, and we should be sharing the avenue of salvation through Him at every turn. This fact should drive all that we do from our daily interaction with people to our involvement in the community. Whether we are at work, at the ball field, or at the voter's box, we should always be conscious of the Lordship of Christ and the world's need for His abundant life.

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today that God would make you conscious of Christ's lordship and burdened by the world's need to know Him as Savior.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 20

NOVEMBER 7, 2022

“For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

ESTHER 4:14

PERFECT TIMING

The term “accident” could be properly defined as “an unforeseen event or one without apparent cause.” I once heard about a cowboy who was talking with an insurance agent about purchasing life insurance. The agent asked the cowboy if he had experienced any accidents in the past year. The cowboy replied that he had not had any accidents, but he had been kicked by a horse, chased by a mad bull, and bitten by a snake. The agent said, “Weren’t those accidents?” The rugged cowboy responded, “No, they did it on purpose.”

Truthfully, any person of faith who remotely fathoms the sovereignty of God understands that there is no such thing as an accident. I once heard someone define the term “coincidence” as God’s way of remaining anonymous. This is actually spot-on theologically. We should be thankful that God is directing the path of the planets and the orbits of the stars, and He is also guiding the steps of humanity to establish His perfect plan.

Esther was reminded of this fact by Mordecai when he said that she had been positioned as the queen in order to intervene for the Jews who were the objects of a heinous plot by Haman to destroy them all. We may not always be fully aware of God’s guiding hand in the details of our lives, but faith calls us to accept it and to own it in our responses. Esther did own

the position God had given her, and her stewardship of the responsibility ultimately saved the Jews from a massacre at the hands of the Persians.

I'm not sure where God has placed you specifically, but I do know He has positioned us all at this cultural crossroad where we find ourselves. The question is, will we be good stewards of this opportunity? The ways to faithfully respond in the moment are to pray with intensity, to be involved in the process of electing leaders, and holding those leaders accountable to the truth we hold in God's Word.

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Pray for all believers to recognize the stewardship responsibility of being involved in the election process and to realize the incredible influence of praying for our leaders.

PRAYER NOTES

DAY 21

NOVEMBER 8, 2022

*“The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should
wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”*

LAMENTATIONS 3:25-26

LIFE'S TOUGH LESSON

One of the most repeated directives in Scripture is the instruction to “wait on the Lord.” We’re guided in this direction dozens of times ranging from Genesis to Revelation. We’re encouraged to wait on God’s salvation, His deliverance, His promises, and His return. The call to wait is typically issued during times of crisis when questions are plentiful and answers are sparse.

As a general rule, we don’t like to wait. One of the most dreaded places for most of us is a waiting room of any sort, whether it’s in a doctor’s office or at an auto repair shop. We get anxious at a red light if it takes a few seconds longer than normal. We grow frustrated when we’re made to wait for our food order longer than seems normal, and no one I know ever gets in the longest checkout line at the store.

God is calling all of us to wait on Him. His call to wait is designed to accomplish His purpose in our lives. Sometimes God’s waiting work is intended to be a test, as it was with Abraham. At other times His call to wait is a refiner’s fire intended to cull the compromise that sometimes interferes with our commitment to Him.

Many people will be watching and waiting as the news is shared about election results. Some of those results may be satisfying and some may not.

Whether an election goes the way we desire or not, we should always recognize God’s hand in the moment. Whatever the case, don’t take your eyes off the Lord who is the King of Kings. In fact, I hope you’ll wake up tomorrow with the same burden to pray for, and to impact your community, as you’ve had over these last twenty-one days.

IT’S TIME TO PRAY

Pray today that God would grant faith to see Him no matter the results of an election or the decisions of a political leader. Let’s also pray that God would use His church to bring about a spiritual awakening that would eclipse any political result.

PRAYER NOTES

MEET THE AUTHORS

DR. KENNY DIGBY OCT. 19-25



Dr. Digby has been Executive Director-Treasurer for the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention since November 2016. Prior to this, he was Associational Missions Director for Alcorn Baptist Association and director of Christ for the Crisis radio and television ministry. He also previously served as a vocational evangelist, pastor, and professor of Bible, theology and philosophy. Dr. Digby is married to Becky and they have four children and four grandchildren: Stan and spouse, Stephanie, with Jordan and Chloe; Bailey and spouse, Libby, with Andy Austin and Henry; Kaleb; and Austin (deceased 2014). He is a graduate of Blue Mountain College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

REV. RICK BLYTHE OCT. 26 – NOV. 1



Rev. Blythe has been Director of Prayer Ministry and Stewardship Promotion for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board since 2013. Prior to this, he was pastor of First Baptist Church, New Albany, and previously, First Baptist Church, Flora. He is married to Reta and they have three children: Kelly and spouse, Nathan Miller, with Sami Kate; Robbie and spouse, Angela, with Saylor, Knox, and Layton; and Katie Blythe. He is a graduate of Blue Mountain College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

DR. SHAWN PARKER NOV. 2-8



Dr. Parker has been Executive Director-Treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board since December, 2019. Prior to this, he was pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbus, for 17 years. He is married to Elizabeth and they have two children: Ana and spouse, Lawson Varner; and Nate. He is a graduate of Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with a Masters and a Doctorate. His passion is studying and teaching God's Word.

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