

## **WITH ONE CRY – LESSON 5**

### **Lesson 5: The Role of Repentance in Praying for a Nation**

Perhaps the most important kind of prayer for any nation is the prayer of repentance. “Repent” (Matthew 4:17) is the first word of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this lesson, Dave Butts will share scriptural reasons why repentance is a key to any nation’s survival and prosperity. Discover the biblical reasons for repentance and how to pray these kind of transformative prayers.

#### **In this lesson you will:**

- discover the essential nature of repentance for a people and a nation.
- look at biblical models of national repentance.
- see past examples of national repentance in the United States.
- learn how to pray prayers of repentance.
- understand how Satan has attacked our nation and is intent on doing even more destruction.

#### **Reading:**

- With One Cry – Chapter 6: The Role of Repentance
- With One Cry – Chapter 8: This Means War
- Jeremiah 18:5-10
- Jonah 3
- Joel 2:12-17

#### **Watch Video for Lesson 5**

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. What did God impress upon you as you watched this video?
2. In Matthew 4:17, Jesus declared, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What do you believe it means that the first word of the gospel is repent? Do you believe that what is true for an individual is also true for a nation? Why or why not?
3. Why do you believe it is so difficult for Christians to humble themselves before God to confess and repent of sin? Do you see repentance practiced and experienced in the Church today? Explain your answer.
4. If you have been a part of a national call to repentance, describe your experience. If not, can you envision a national call to repentance? What would it look like?
5. Do you see any similarities between our nation and the city of Nineveh? Why or why not?
6. What can we learn from the nation of Israel about repentance?
7. What do you think of Paul Harvey's "If I Were the Devil" (pgs. 67-68 of Chapter 8 in *With One Cry*)? Considering it was written in 1965, how prophetic is this message for today's culture?

## **Spend Time in Prayer**

### **A Short Prayer Guide for 2 Chronicles 7:14**

Be sure to allow plenty of time for this season of prayer, or consider using this short prayer guide again as a pattern for prayer when the experience can be longer.

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 out loud: "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and

turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Spend some time in prayer based on this passage:

- **Father, we are Your people, called by Your name, and we will humble ourselves before You!** Perhaps consider kneeling or lying prostrate on the floor before God. These are two very biblical postures of humility. Spend time repenting of your lack of humility before Him individually, as a church, and as a citizen of our nation.

- **Lord Jesus, we are Your people, called by Your name, and we will pray.** Take some time to confess prayerlessness and times when prayer has been your “last resort” instead of your first response. Confess the prayerlessness of the church you attend if corporate prayer has not been a consistent practice for your community of believers. Focus time upon the prayerlessness of the Church in our nation and confess the sins that have happened nationally on our watch.

- **Holy Spirit, we are Your people, called by Your name, and we will seek Your face.** Confess times when you have sought after other things for your wisdom and counsel before the Lord, and/or when you have placed your trust in people or government or \_\_\_\_\_. The Holy Spirit was given as a gift to teach us, comfort us and to intercede for us. If you have neglected or ignored the ministry of the Spirit by not seeking the face of God, take time to experience godly sorrow in whatever form that takes for you.

• **Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are Your people called by Your name.** Right now we repent of these sins we have confessed before You: lack of humility, prayerlessness, and seeking other things, idols or gods before seeking Your face. We turn from our wicked ways and ask for Your forgiveness. We mean to turn towards You now, giving You our full attention. We will walk in humility. We will give ourselves to prayer. We will seek Your face and forsake lesser things in which we have placed our dependence.

• **Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, we give You thanks for listening to our prayers...for hearing us from heaven!** We thank you for the forgiveness that is now ours through Christ Jesus. And in faith, we trust in Your ability and stand upon Your promise to heal our land.

### **Next Steps:**

This week and beyond, consider these steps that Dave Butts suggested:

Praying for Leaders:

• **Pray for the President and Congress.\*** In spite of how you feel about our current situation, ask God to grab the hearts of these leaders and turn or return their hearts to Him. Pray that God will burden them with the situation we are in and show them the need for personal and national repentance. There is a gift of repentance...ask God to give our leaders the courage to stand up and call the nation back to God.

• **Vote your values.** It is important to understand the issues of our times, and to elect leaders who align with our values, whether or not they are believers. We all want to have the

godliest leaders possible, but we are commanded to pray for all of our leaders, good or evil, (1 Timothy 2:1-4), and to pray for them to become followers of Jesus. We can always assume that God will hear our prayers and change hearts, minds and values. It is crucial for Christians to vote – even when the options seem less than optimum in the moment. If we don't vote for those whose values are most aligned with our own, then we can be those who allow the ungodly to get a foothold in our government on every level.

- **Pray for your state government officials – governors and legislators and for your local leaders (mayor, city council, school board, etc.)** because these are the people that affect you closer to home. Ask God to draw them to Himself, and to give them wisdom and courage to do what is right.

**\*ifapray.org is a great resource to help you pray for your national leaders, and to guide you in praying for issues of our day.**

**Spend time in personal confession and repentance this week.** Learn how to keep “short accounts” with God. As soon as you recognize something as sin in your life, bring it to God as quickly as possible. This is a powerful practice of humility and allows you to fulfill 2 Chronicles 7:14 on a personal level. Consider these Scriptures as you spend time in prayer:

- **James 1:21** – “Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”

- **Psalm 32:5** – “Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.” And you forgave the guilt of my sin.”
- **Psalm 38:18** – “I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.”
- **Proverbs 28:13** – “Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”