

June 7, 2009 AM

FRIEND DAY

## WHAT WILL HEAL OUR LAND AND OUR LIVES?

***“If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14, NLT)***

It's no secret that our country is in a crisis; job loss, major businesses going under. Politically, a polarization based on promises to give people whatever they want, culturally we are secular, and internationally we are hated by the majority of the world. Even the liberal press admits we need a national healing.

- Crime soars.
- Corruption is common place.
- Crazy people terrorize innocent people.

As bad as a picture this is, I have some great news. Our wounds are not fatal, there can be recovery. I'm not optimistic, but I do have faith that gives me hope. Hope is a biblical concept that sees the problems as real, but it believes God is faithful to do what He says He will do. God's promises are still good to us today. The promise of our text was given 900 years before Christ and it's as true and valid today as the day God said it.

It's a promise for a Christian, for a church, and for a country. Let's read it together. God is not talking to everyone. Notice He said, "My people," not religious people, but children of God. God's promises have a premise; a condition. God says I will do this if you do certain things. God lays out the conditions for forgiveness and healing.

### **I. I must confess my sin with humility.**

***“...will humble themselves...”***

#### **A. The source of our problems is our pride.**

1. Why does God resist pride in our lives?
2. Pride says, "I know better than God what will make me happy."
3. Pride disconnects us from God.
4. Pride forgets about God. It disregards God's.
5. Pride sets us on the opposite side of God. It was pride that turned Lucifer into Satan and brought about his great fall from heaven. (Isaiah 14)

6. The middle letter is sin is “l.”

**B. God gives grace to the humble.**

1. What is grace? Grace is the power to change.

***“If you cover your sin you will not prosper, but if you confess your sin you will receive mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)***

2. Everyone wants to prosper.

3. If I try to hide my sin, it does nothing to remove my sin.

4. Cover ups are what turns mistakes into scandals.

5. Cover ups happen because of pride.

6. You are more concerned with what people will think or consequences people will bring than what God thinks or what His consequences will be.

***“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so you may be healed.” (James 5:16)***

7. The beginning of healing is revealing your feelings. What you cannot talk about controls you.

**\*NOTE** To confess means I agree with God about it. Most people live in self-deception. A clear conscience is due to a bad memory. We have a call down invitation because part of repentance is being willing to admit our failures. You might say, “But that’s humbling to do that.” Yea! God gives grace to the humble. What you don’t want to do most is what you need to do most. We need to let other people into our lives!

**TRUTH:** I need others to help me change!

I don’t care if it’s dieting, working out at a gym, or getting your life right with God. We are wired in such a way that we need others. That’s why we emphasize days like this ... “Friend days!” That’s why we emphasize Sunday School and recovery support groups. Healing may not happen overnight but it will come. Most people don’t know how sick they are until they start to get well.

**II. I must pray with tenacity.**

***“...and pray...”***

**A. I must pray intentionally.**

1. Remember the story in the Old Testament of Jacob who wrestled with God and would not give up until he got a blessing.

2. God honors those who won’t give up.

3. Most people pray shallow and superficial.

**\*NOTE** Do you know any parent that gives their child anything they ask for the first time they ask for it? That would be an unloving parent. It would make that child a spoiled brat! God is not a genie or a vending machine.

### **B. Why does God want us to continue in prayer?**

1. Does God want us to gravel?
2. Do I have to convince God?
3. No, but persistent prayer helps me discover the difference between a genuine longing and a whelm.
4. God is not concerned with our whelms.

***“Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer, being alert and intent in your praying with thanksgiving.” (Col. 4:2, Amp.)***

**QUESTION:** How serious are you about having your life transformed and healed?

5. We are as close to God as we choose to be.
6. The secret to persistent praying is to make a prayer list.
7. You will see God answer your prayers.
8. Over 20 times in the Bible God says ask. There are things God will not do if you do not ask Him. One is you have to ask God to save you. Have you done that?
  - Ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened.
  - You have not because you do not ask.

***“Pray in the spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers, asking for all you need. To do this you must always be ready, never giving up! Always pray for all of God’s people.” (Eph. 6:18, NCV)***

9. Don’t just pray God bless me. You would not know a blessing if you saw it. A blessing is sometimes a problem.

Jesus said, “Keep on prayer and never give up.”

**TRUTH:** In life you are either continually praying or you are giving up.

**III. I must seek God with intensity.**

**“...and seek My face...”**

**“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.”**  
**(Jeremiah 29:11-14)**

**A. Seeking God is to be the primary focus of our life.**

**“God rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” (Heb. 11:6, NIV)**

1. Most people seek the blessings of God instead of the person of God.

**QUESTION:** Do you know what God wants from you more than anything else? He wants you to seek Him with all your heart!

2. The people who do that are wise. They have discovered the real purpose of life.
  - We seek wealth.
  - We seek popularity.
  - We seek comfort.
  - We seek an experience.
3. They waste their life, never finding meaning or purpose.

**“The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.” (Ps. 14:2)**

4. Will you be that person?

**B. Most people want only enough of God to bless them, but not so much to bug them.**

1. God does not want to be the number one God in your top 10 list of gods.
2. He wants to be your only God.
3. How do I seek God with all my heart?

**“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)**

**TRUTH:** Seeking God intently means I make God my first priority and my daily passion

**\*NOTE** I start my day recognizing who God is in my life. That is so rare there is almost nothing God will not do for the one who is not seeking Him with His whole heart.

***“If you seek the Lord your God, you will find Him if you look for Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, you will return to the Lord your God and obey Him. For He is a merciful God; He will not abandon or destroy you...” (Deut. 4:29-31)***

4. Are you in distress and are bad things happening? Turn to God!

#### **IV. I must repent with sincerity.**

***“...and turn from your wicked ways...”***

##### **A. To repent means “to change your mind.”**

1. Repentive means that I change the way I think about:
  - Myself.
  - God & Satan.
  - What matters in life.
  - People.
  - My past, present and future.
  - Money.
  - What success is.
2. I know people might respond, “I am not a wicked person.”
3. The truth is no matter how good we are trying to be, we all have a struggle with wicked ways.
4. The closer we get to the Lord’s return the more people will do wicked things.

##### **B. What are wicked ways?**

***“For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. <sup>3</sup> They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. <sup>4</sup> They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. <sup>5</sup> They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!” (2 Tim. 3:2-5, NLT)***

1. People will love only themselves. We are self-absorbed.

2. We are money focused, greedy.
3. Self-promoting. Always talking about you.
4. Self-centered and stuck up.
5. Profane and God-insulting.
6. Rude and disrespectful of authority.
7. Unappreciative, ungrateful.
8. Crude, make fun of Holy things.
9. Unkind – heartless.
10. Unwilling to forgive.
11. Slanderous, gossip. That’s like the devil.
12. Uncontrolled, impulsive.
13. Love violence.
14. Syndical, hates people who do good.
15. Back-stabbing.
16. Reckless, irresponsible.
17. Puffed up with pride, arrogance.
18. Choosing pleasure over God. Addicted to lust.
19. Fake spirituality.

Our president says his mother is the most spiritual person he has known. Many say they are spiritual. Do you read God’s Word, worship God with believers? No, you are not, it is fake! The world is filled with hypocrites.

**TRUTH:** Until your heart is changed, real healing can not come into your life.

***“Repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.” (Acts 3:19)***

### **C. There’s a word for refreshing: Revival!**

1. You can revive that which is dead.
2. Many people need life.
3. Many need to be revived.

***“If we judge ourselves in the right way God will not have to judge us.” (1 Cor. 11:31)***