

Devotional

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, prayer, and dependence on God in order to experience His presence and guidance in our lives.

Duration: 15:57

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 6:33, John 15:7

Topics: "Devotional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses a man who is struggling with a pornography addiction. The preacher emphasizes the impact of this sinful behavior on the man's relationship with God. He explains that every time the man watches pornography, he is forcing Christ, who lives in him, to watch it as well. The preacher highlights the greatness of God and the insignificance of humans in comparison. He encourages humility before God and emphasizes the importance of turning away from sinful ways.

Transcript

Okay, if you turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 6, this is a very important chapter because it gives us a background to 2 Chronicles 7.14 which is often fully overlooked. God is responding in chapter 6, God is responding to what Solomon had been saying in his prayer to God. And 2 Chronicles 7.14 is God's response to what Solomon was praying.

And I'd like us to notice what he was praying, at least we can't look at all of it, it's rather a long chapter. There's certain specific things. Five times he used the phrase, hear and forgive, hear and forgive, hear and forgive, hear and forgive.

And God said, if my preacher called my name, shall repent and do this, then I'll hear and I'll forgive. So he was asking God to hear, hearken, hear, hearken. And then 12 times he asked God to hear actually, a total of 12 times, not connect with the word forgive, but to hear.

So he's calling on God to hear, and he sets up some scenarios there, some things that could possibly happen. And we want to look at some of those. So beginning in verse 22 of chapter 6, If a man sin against his neighbor, and loath be laid upon him to make him swear, and loath come before him, before thine office in this house, then hear thou from heaven, and do and judge thy servants.

So there's the first scenario he sets up. Then 24, if thy people Israel be put to the worst before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall return, and confess your name, and pray, make supplication before you in this house, then hear thou from the heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people, and bring them again unto the land which you gave them to their fathers. Another scenario, verse 26.

When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee, yet if they pray toward this place, and confess your name, and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of your servants, and of thy people Israel. Another scenario, verse 28. If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locusts, caterpillars, if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land, whatsoever sore, or whatsoever sickness there be, then what prayer, or what supplication, shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, then hear thou from heaven, thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways.

Then verse 32. Moreover, concerning a stranger, who is not of your people Israel, but has come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm, if they come and pray in this house, then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for. Another scenario, verse 34.

If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name, then hear thou from the heavens their prayer, and their supplication, and maintain their cause. Notice all these ifs, if, if, if. Verse 36.

If they sin against thee, for there is no man who sins not, and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives into a land far off or near, yet if they bethink themselves in the land where they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, we have done wickedly, if they return to thee with all their heart and all their soul, in the land of their captivity, whether they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which you gave unto their fathers, and toward this city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name, then hear thou from the heavens. It was on the same verse. Forgive thy people who sinned against thee.

And as he closes his prayer, Now, my God, let I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, let thine ears be attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place. And verse 42. O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed.

Remember the mercies of David thy servant. So this is a background. You see the 2nd Chronicles 7.14. And God's response is then, and it starts with an if too.

If my people who 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. So that's God's assurance to Solomon that the things he's been praying about will come to pass, providing they meet the conditions. And you know, many of the promises of God, perhaps we could say most of the promises of God are attached to an if or a promise.

If you abide in me, my words abide and you shall ask what you will and shall be done unto you. There's God's side and my side. On the other side, God said, if you walk contrary to me, I'll walk contrary to you.

There's an if in that as well. And so, just sort of an introduction to the verse itself. If my people... You remember that verse in Ezekiel 16 where God said about Israel, you became mine.

And in 1 Corinthians 6, where we're God's people, you're not your own, you're bought for the price. The church is mine, God is saying. It's my church.

These are my people. And we belong to him. And so if my people who are called by my name the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch and the word Christian means little Christ.

We have to ever keep that in mind because we're supposed to be as Paul spoke it in 2 Corinthians 3 living epistles of Jesus Christ known and read of all men written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God not in tables of stone but in fleshy tables of the heart. So if my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves. We often ask God to humble us.

He tells us to humble ourselves. We can do that. It's quite easy to humble yourself when you stop, get alone with God, begin thinking, meditating on the scriptures that tell us how great God is.

As a matter of fact, in 2 Chronicles 7 the first part tells us that God is so great that the universe cannot contain him. The heaven of heavens can't hold him. And when you know, if you know anything at all about the vastness of the universe in which we live then to understand that God is greater than the universe itself is just absolutely hard to even grasp.

It makes us so tiny and so small. Isaiah used the phrase in chapter 40 that we're like grasshoppers. Grasshoppers are ugly.

I mean if you compare a man to God we're just like a grasshopper. Both in size, in utility, usefulness and all the rest that goes along with it. We're really nothing before God.

Less than nothing in vanity yet precious to God, we become his. And it should be easy, it should be very easy for us to humble ourselves before him. I don't know how it's possible for a mere mortal even if he doesn't know God to look at the universe and then get proud.

How is it possible? I don't really know. You know in the northern sky there's an empty place at least it looks that way when you look at it unless you look at it with one of these radio telescopes Take for example the four stars that make up the bowl of the Big Dipper on a night when the moon isn't out and the stars are brighter see how many stars you can count inside the bowl of the Big Dipper. Maybe four or five but they tell us there's a hundred and fifty cosmic units in that area each unit containing several billion stars.

That's an empty place in the universe and it's absolutely when you get into that you just stand in awe and our God is so great the universe can't contain him. How can I be proud? It's no wonder that God looks at pride the way he does. It's a devil's sin but beyond that for a little ant on this mud ball to be getting proud about anything you know if you had sixteen degrees after your name you probably couldn't write the entrance exam to the kindergarten in heaven.

We stop and think we are but of yesterday and know nothing the Bible says. If a man thinks he knows something he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. And even all the knowledge there is in this world the wisest man in the world they say the experts are saying I read it somewhere is the wisest man in the world today probably doesn't know more than 5% of all the knowledge there is.

Because people after all are trained in certain specific fields they may know a great deal about geology and nothing at all about other scientific disciplines. There's nobody that's trained in all these disciplines because today it's a staggering field it's split up into thousands of various disciplines so 5% is about all that anybody knows that people get so proud of what they know, what they've done, what they are or even about their appearance. You know if we were to be transported to heaven the way we are I think they'd kick us out just because of the way we look you know because we have our standards and God has his.

So if my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray it was Billy Sunday who said the average Christian prays like a rabbit nibbling at a cabbage you know we say out of the prayer you know but prayer is talking with God prayer is fellowship with God I think perhaps in prayer the last note is just this matter of having fellowship with God he made us in his image so we can have fellowship with him and you've never ever seen a horse pray or a dog pray or a fish pray or a bird pray God didn't make them for that he made us for that and we're his and he wants us to come to him and treat him as our creator, our father, our savior our friend, our guide he's all of that and more we pray men turn from their wicked ways you often hear people say well I'd like to turn but I

can't why would God ask me to turn if I can't funny thing you know like sometimes, like take a drinker if a doctor tells him you go on one more binge you'll die he doesn't go on one more binge no they aren't one might most of them don't, they find they don't have to now because they're faced with death we can do it of course we can turn if we want to turn the problem is we don't want to turn I remember talking with a man who you know his problem was pornography and he loved it and his wife loved it he let her into it and so I asked him well you're talking about it, you want a break with it no I don't he said I love her too much he was a Christian so was his wife they had felt a call of God in the full time ministry but he confessed he couldn't of course go into full time ministry while

they had this problem and uh so all I said to him was this I would like to tell you what you're doing to your God the God who saved you, who loves you who's your savior, who lives in your heart every time you watch that filthy garbage you're forcing the Christ who lives in you to watch it with you and people that's all I had to say he fell on the floor, I mean he literally fell on the floor and started bawling like a baby when he could finally articulate words he kind of held one hand up and said oh my God what have I been doing to you can you forgive me and he went to bible college I don't know where he is now I understand he's going to full time Christian work we can turn the grace of God is always there I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me you can love the unlovely you

have to learn to pray for the people you don't like and you start to love them when you start praying for them you can't pray long for a person before you begin to feel an affection and a love for them and turn from their wicked ways then God said Solomon listen I'll hear and I'll forgive I'll heal I'll do all that needs to be done my people will meet the conditions so revival we want that we want our country to be forgiven to be healed one thing we have to keep in mind is this that God is not out to convert the world he never was he's out to to bring out of the world a people for his name the bible says that may I have a little disturbance when you read certain leaders let's claim the world for Christ let's claim the city for Christ I hope they mean that with this particular reservation

that God is not planning to do that we can never expect Canada to become all Christian or the United States either we can certainly expect God to reach the lost God told Paul when he was engaged in ministry in the early days of his ministry at Corinth and I think that Paul was afraid that he might be might be a riot as there often was and so God said in a dream a vision one night Paul don't be afraid which tells

me he was being afraid no man will send you to hurt you then he said this I have much people in this city he didn't say I'm going to convert Corinth but I have a lot of people here now Paul wasn't told who they were and the people who were God's chosen they didn't walk around with a mark on their forehead and Paul didn't know who they were so he preached to everybody and then God

called and so was his saying I have much people in this city but to have that assurance that people if we do what God says we should do he'll hear us not to worry about it not to have to ask him 12 times to listen like Solomon did I don't know if it's wrong that Solomon was praying the way he was because he seemed to partly understand what was going on even when he prayed the way that he did

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