

Prodigal Nation

by Ken Graves

The sermon emphasizes the importance of letting go and allowing the prodigal to learn from their mistakes, while also highlighting the need for revival and repentance in the nation.

Duration: 59:28

Scripture: Luke 15:11

Topics: "Repentance And Restoration", "Financial Stewardship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of the prodigal son from the Gospel of Luke. He highlights the major attitude change that occurs in the son throughout the story. Initially, the son demands his inheritance and displays a sense of entitlement. However, after squandering his wealth and experiencing a famine, he realizes his mistakes and returns to his father with a new attitude of humility and repentance. The preacher then transitions to discussing the future of the United States, predicting financial failure and emphasizing the importance of being right with God, staying in fellowship, seeking good financial counsel, and storing treasures in heaven.

Transcript

We interrupt our regularly scheduled study in order to focus on something I think is necessary for right now today. While the lights are coming up, would you turn to the 15th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. It's a familiar story.

We always refer to it as the story of the prodigal. Truthfully, it's a story of a father with two sons. And usually when we study this, we find ourselves relating most to the younger of the two sons, the one who was wasteful.

The story begins in Luke chapter 15 verse 11. It is written, And he said, A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.

And he divided unto them his living. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

He went and joined himself to the citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. And

when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I bearish with hunger.

I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father, but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. The father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand, shoes on his feet, bring out of the fatted calf and kill it, let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again.

He was lost and is found, and they began to be merry. The story goes on, but that's as far as we read this morning. We all are well familiar with the story.

We all know the story. When we relate to the story, we have all been that younger son, so we're grateful for it. Are we not? We're grateful for the things that the Lord reveals in the story about the very heart of God, how he is depicted in this as that father who is wise enough to let his son go, hopeful enough to be lurking down the road.

Apparently, he did it every day because he saw the boy coming before the boy saw his father. They were still a long ways off. His father ran to embrace him and kiss him.

It's a story we all relate to because and we're grateful for the story for what it reveals to us about the mercy of our God, the grace of God, how he is toward every one of us who are sinners, who finally come to themselves. It's a story about a major attitude change in a young man, is it not? His attitude in the beginning of the story is, give me what is mine. His attitude at the beginning of the story is, I have something coming to me.

I want what is due me. I want what is mine. His attitude is, I have my rights.

I know my rights. I have a right to an inheritance. Give me what is mine.

But he returns with a whole new attitude, doesn't he? A whole new attitude. And that attitude is, I'm not worthy to be your son. Would you please just give me a job? Would you just make me a servant? The attitude that I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, I'm not worthy to be called your son.

I'm not asking for that. Would you just make me a servant? I've preached here a number of times. The need for us who are dealing with prodigals, the need, indeed need, for us to be willing to let them go.

The need that some people seem to have to learn things the hard way. It is the case. There are two ways to learn.

There's the smart way, learning from other people's suffering. And then there's the way most of us choose to learn, that is from our own suffering, pain being our teacher. I have taught you here as a pastor to every one of you who are parents, I've taught you that I don't believe that deviation from the right way of living is necessarily a one-way road.

For those that have children who have been prayed over, who have the example of parents who live their faith, even though they're imperfect, they live it. For those who've got a foundation, it is really difficult to escape it. I have preached here before to you as a church family that it is not a one-way road, but rather I maintain that it is a big painful cycle.

That the deviation off of the path of what is right and what you know and what you've taught them. I'm talking about these kids that you have prayed over, that you have labored over, and you've prayed over, and you've been an example to them, and you've given them the truth, even as I believe the father in the story we've just read did. And he was willing to let that boy go.

And he went in another completely different direction from that which, and you know that's the reason why the story says as soon as he received his inheritance, not many days after, he went to a far-off country. He went away. Because there was a lifestyle that he planned to live with his money, that he knew would not be acceptable to his father.

That was radical deviation from everything that he's been taught by his father. We have a tendency to worry a lot. We who are prodigals, if you've got children and they stray, you've got friends and they stray.

We have a spouse that strays. We find ourselves, we who love those who stray, we find ourselves worrying. Afraid for them, because we love them.

We're afraid for what their choices are going to cost them. But I have encouraged you as godly parents, godly husbands and wives, to recognize that God himself gives men the freedom to choose and then honors their choices. And so we must likewise.

We need to give people the freedom to choose. And sometimes it's the fear of what their education is going to cost them that causes us to interfere with their learning. Trying to bring them back, trying to keep them from going.

And I'm all into reproof and, you know, warning people, exhorting people. I'm all into confrontation and telling your friend or your child or your husband, your wife, listen, you're going the wrong direction. It's going to cost you.

But ultimately, I believe you got to let them go. But recognize that that person that you are praying for is on a big painful circuit. It is not a one-way road that's going to, you know, end in the abyss.

I don't see it that way. I'm talking about my faith. I see it and I've experienced this.

I've witnessed it. And so have you. That it is a, now some circuits are larger and longer than others because some people are dumber, thicker.

Others are really short, short, small, tight little circles. They deviate from the path and they come all the way back around full circle to the place where they knew they should have been all along. You know what I'm talking about.

In fact, some of us have our own daily little circles. Don't we? It's not the end. And I've preached that moms, especially who tend to worry, you know, they think in worst case scenarios, it's built in.

It's the kind of thing that keeps little kids from getting hurt, poking each other's eyes out and that kind of thing. But in adult life, it can be tormenting to a mother because you entertain all of the thoughts of what

could be, what might happen. It's frightening.

And you can, you can word yourself in a terrible state of anxiety, thinking about all of the potentials because you know the potentials, but you must not, you must take every thought captive. You've got to exercise discipline over your thinking. You've got to choose to hold on to the promises of God.

When you're dealing with the product, when you've got one that's out there on the circuit, you cannot obsess over what this education is going to cost them. You instead have got to stay prayerful. You got to just keep being prayerful.

You got to be hopeful. And you've got to be looking down that road, expecting them to return. And the fact is the vast majority of prodigals do return.

I've told you before, more than 80%, according to Focus on the Family, more than 80% of all of those who reject parental values, who become prodigals and take that deviation, complete their circuit by the time they're 24 years old, more than 80% return to what their parents taught them by the time they're 24. Now they're going to go out there and suffer and they're going to collect scar tissue, they're going to maybe collect a criminal record, or maybe they're going to return with children. But they're going to return.

You stay hopeful on that. It's really not what I wanted to preach to you this morning. Now that's just a review of things that I have already preached.

Sometimes you worry about people. Sometimes you're tempted to worry, but you got to just be prayerful. You know that sooner or later they're going to have a crisis.

That person that you love, that is in disobedience, that's walking in totally the wrong direction, you know this, you can be sure of this, they are going to have a crisis. Now you don't know which of the crisis is going to be the one that causes them, as that kid in the story, when he came to himself. You don't know what it's going to take.

You have no idea how big the circuit's going to be. But you can be confident that sooner or later they're going to come to themselves through that which they suffer. Suffering is the teacher.

Pain is the educator on the big circuit of the prodigal. Well this morning I wanted to talk to you about the circuit that our prodigal nation is on. That actually is the reason I went to Luke chapter 15 this morning.

Luke chapter 15 tells us of this prodigal who came to himself. We have experienced in our own life our wrong choices and that which we suffer from those wrong choices have taught us things. We must not ever waste the lesson.

It's too hard earned, right? What about our country? What about a prodigal nation? You know I've been my whole life long, my whole life, well I should say ever since I was about 13, when I first started really being taught Bible prophecy, when I first heard, when I first started hearing preachers that believed the prophecies of the scriptures were for this particular time, this day in this age. The fulfillment of prophecy in the rebirth of Israel, significant, happened before I was born. So by the time I came along there were guys that were proclaiming that this is significant and I heard their proclamation, I'm grateful for it, but I found myself as a young guy wondering and a young preacher, I wonder often what about the United States? What about us? My daughter has a t-shirt that used to fit me.

She wears it still. It's faded, it's old, and it came from a big push, a big movement that happened coming out of the end of the 70s. In fact the year was 1980 when the big rally took place, the Washington for Jesus rally.

I wanted to go, my heart was there, but I was tied down in ministry that I was in. I was 16 in 1980 and I remember real well the movement. I remember the hope, I remember the fact I remember the president at that time, Ronald Reagan, was the guy who actually was bold enough to say that one thing that we need as a nation, what is at the heart of everything wrong with us, is we need a revival.

He used the word. That was an amazing time. Washington for Jesus, it's the only hope.

It's what was written across this t-shirt. The t-shirt was dark navy blue and the words were just all red, white, and blue. Washington for Jesus, the only hope.

That's a long time ago. Washington certainly has not turned to Jesus. My mind then, as a young man, was turned to the scriptures and wondering where is the United States in the Bible, where in Bible prophecy.

It's as if the United States doesn't exist. There are these veiled references that may perhaps be references to the United States, Ezekiel 38, and the whole prophecy which we have covered here with regard to an attempted invasion, the whole Magog invasion, the confederacy of Russia and Iran particularly. And in that prophecy, in the middle of that whole context, there's that 13th verse in Ezekiel 38 that may well be the only reference, the only direct reference to the United States and its allies issuing condemnation of this act against Israel, but otherwise largely uninvolved.

I wondered how it could be. I used to think about it a lot. I used to think, how in the world could that be? How is it that the United States would turn its back on Israel and that Israel would find itself standing alone? I wondered a lot.

And over the years, I've developed a sort of scenario. I don't want to pretend this morning, I'm not even making any attempt to present this to you as any kind of prophecy. I'm not a prophet.

I'm not telling you the future. What I'm going to tell you is about as, well, wrapping up my 45th year, I've seen a few things prayerfully in all of these years of being in the scripture, being involved in ministry, and watching the direction of my country. I have made some observations, and I see some things that have happened, and I can see that they are going to continue to happen and probably intensify.

I'd like to present those things to you this morning. I did that evening. For those of you who were here last Wednesday night, I will not apologize for the repetition.

And I'm sure you won't ask for an apology. What about the future of the United States? I'll give you six things that I believe are going to happen. Six things that are going to happen, that are already happening, but I believe are going to happen in a bigger way.

I say to you again, I'm no prophet, just an observer. Number one, this is no big surprise, right? Financial failure. This is not a big shock to anybody, especially right now.

Well, actually, I find myself amazed that there are people that are really worried, people that are sort of caught up in panic, and the thing that amazes me is not that they're worried or that they're in panic, but that they were not worried a long time ago, that they're just now getting worried. I believe financial failure is

on a level that we perhaps have never seen before, is inevitable, just because of the waste and the immorality, because of the wickedness of man. We are the heirs of a wonderful system of government and a wonderful economic system we inherited from those who were godly men, and I believe geniuses.

Godly geniuses formed this government and this whole free enterprise system, and they gave it to us. We inherited it, and we have squandered it. They gave warnings, and they said that this whole system will only work if the people govern themselves.

Only a moral people can remain free. They said it in so many different ways. It is recorded in so many documents.

The reason why they knew that men are wicked is the reason why in establishing a free government that would be for the people and of the people, they built in checks and balances because they knew of the wickedness of man. They've seen it. They'd experienced it.

They were biblical thinkers, and they knew that men are sinful and prone to abuses of power, and they warned, and their warnings have been ignored, and we have squandered a prosperity that we inherited. We have turned, I say we, we as a nation have turned what was once the greatest, richest, most powerful nation on earth into the now one of the greatest debtor nations on earth. It has happened in a variety of ways.

The biggest thing is a change of human heart, a change in the heart of the people. People have become lazy and greedy. Lazy and greedy, and everybody's after that easy money.

Fraud and outrageous decisions by courts with regard to tort and penalizing people in lawsuits. Theft, millions, probably billions of dollars that are tied up in vice. Think about the drug trade in this country.

The rampant epidemic of drugs and prostitution that goes with it. Think of all that is criminal and illegal, and the billions of dollars that are wrapped up in all of those things, and you have no problem understanding why we are coming to financial ruin. We watched it happen just in the last decade, where the United States, the U.S. dollar, once the most honored form of currency on earth, began to fall, as other forms of currency, particularly the euro, began to rise and has surpassed the U.S. dollar.

The rise of Europe, the rise, in fact, the reformation of a Roman Empire, the reforming of a Roman Empire, is very significant prophetically. In fact, I really believe that as we see the United States decline, primarily because of its own sin. The elected officials that we, the people, have given power to.

All of the crazy finger-pointing when all the stuff comes down, like it is right now. Financially, it's all coming down. There is a great deal of hysteria.

I don't know if you have seen, as you've listened to the addresses from our president of the last week, have you seen the fear in his eyes? The man who believes in free enterprise, the man who believes in capitalism, is willing to make a move and lead us in a move that is complete socialism. Tells me he knows some things. He's on the inside.

It makes me wonder, what does he know that nobody else is as alarmed about? He's alarmed. The use of the word apocalyptic, you know what apocalypse means? The Greek word actually just means the revealing, the unveiling. But in modern English, in America now, it's become to mean something different, something scary and sort of doomsday.

People talk about it's sort of an apocalyptic thing. And there, one journalist used those words with regard to the actual tone of our president in private meetings, closed meetings, with national leaders. They said he was apocalyptic.

I think there's good reason to be afraid. If you are anybody in the know, we have transferred the wealth of the United States to Colombia, to the drug trade. We have transferred the wealth of this great nation, the wealth we inherited, to all of our enemies in the Middle East.

And we continue to, continue to transfer the wealth of the United States through our purchasing and limiting ourselves to the resources of their fossil fuels, rejecting the call to drill and to develop. I'm not all into that whole thing. And I really believe that it has been human greed all along.

The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. But I do believe, brothers and sisters, that you can expect that we're going to see financial failure happen. And I'm no prophet.

I'm just watching what has happened and telling you, this is the trend, and this is where it's going, and it's picking up momentum. Number two, natural disasters. We have experienced them.

We have seen this. It is trackable. It is possible for us to actually verify that these things are on the increase, that the extent of the damage, the severity of each one of these disasters, and it's one on top of the other before any of our relief organizations can replenish or even regroup the next disaster is hitting.

Now, what's the deal with that? You see, the world has always been, ever since the introduction of sin and death by Adam, there has always been the sort of conflict of creation against creature. We've always had disasters. We have always had.

We've had every form of disaster that can happen on earth naturally is recorded in the scripture. They've been happening ever since sin came into the picture. But there is no denying that all of those disasters are on the rise, and especially right here in the United States of America.

I'm not one of those people that would tell you. In fact, I flat out reject the idea that God is judging America. I don't believe God is judging America.

I actually believe that God in his mercy has withheld judgment from America, continues to hold back judgment. In fact, I believe that God is storing up wrath, both for this country and the entire world that he plans to unleash in that period of time we call the tribulation. I don't believe God is judging America.

I don't think that the things that we're seeing happen naturally are the judgment of God, but I do believe that the hedge of protection is down. Clearly it is down. We have never in our nation's history seen the frequency and the intensity of the natural disasters that we have been seeing.

Everybody wants to talk about the warmer oceans due to global warming, due to industrial pollution, and I don't buy it. I believe all of this. In fact, I believe that the root cause of all that's wrong with the planet is human sin, and it's picking up momentum.

Don't blame human industry on it. Blame human sin on this, all of this. But it is very clear to me, I don't know why it's not clear to everyone else, that the hedge is down, that this is a nation who in its infancy depended humbly upon God, even in the days of Abraham Lincoln, only a generation or two ago, a president could call the nation to a day of prayer humiliation before God.

Such language is not used anymore, humbling ourselves before God, as we sang here today. There was a humble people that put their trust in God. In fact, the story of the American Revolution, the story of our fight for freedom is full of accounts of natural events working to our favor, to our deliverance, fog blowing in to completely blind the fleet of our enemies.

The stories are all there. Read Peter Marshall's work, *The Light and the Glory*. Just read it and see the intervention of God on behalf of the United States.

When we as a people sought the Lord and were humble, when we depended upon him, he protected us. I do not believe we're experiencing the judgment of God, but I do believe we have rejected the protection of God. In fact, listen, you walk out on this very rainy day as we are experiencing the leftovers of a hurricane having come this far north, you walk outside today, you'd be wise to have an umbrella.

I hope that it happens that we see men holding umbrellas for the woman that they love, and I hope that that woman is wise enough to stay under the umbrella. Don't deviate. Take a hard turn from your direction, walking with your husband, standing out there in the rain and blame him.

If you have a destination, that being the next building where you're going to pick up your children after the service, or the car where you're going to get it and drive to lunch, you have a destination, go there together under the umbrella that he holds. But if you deviate and go off your own direction, you have nobody to blame but yourself if you get wet. And I do believe that we have stepped out from under nationally, the federal heads of this nation, the leaders that we have chosen have taken us in a direction out from under the very protection of God.

And when it comes to natural disasters, I maintain we ain't seen nothing yet. And this is a little bit scary. Are you aware, do you guys actually stay abreast on the new geological discoveries as it applies to natural disasters? I'm up on this.

Geologists have determined that that heat source beneath Yellowstone National Park, the very thing that has entertained generations of Americans with the geysers, the pressure and all that steam blowing up, the very heat source for that happens to be what the geologists now know is a super volcano. That's a happy thought, a super volcano. Not just another North American volcano.

We've got a significant number of those, particularly in the Northwest. We're talking about a super volcano that according to the geologists, if it did in fact erupt, if it blew, it could destroy all life on the North American continent. That boils just beneath the surface of Yellowstone National Park.

I do certainly hope that the Lord keeps it below the surface. I'm praying for him too, that such a thing doesn't just like hell boiling over and he can keep it there until the tribulation begins. And that is my hope.

There's, are you familiar? You guys remembered just a couple of years ago, all of the, the terrible loss of human life on Christmas Eve, when a tsunami struck Asia, parts of Asia, parts of the Indian Ocean. You realize that a tsunami generated by an undersea earthquake, great transference of energy produces a wave that is very destructive, powerful indeed, but maybe only 10 to 30 feet tall, the actual wave. And as destructive as we have seen such a wave can be, it is nothing compared to what the geologists have now called a mega tsunami.

Mega tsunamis have actually, the evidence is there that they've happened in the world's history. They are generated not by the shift of earth or little upheaval from an earthquake, but rather from a great landslide,

the transference of energy of huge pieces of shoreline falling into the ocean. Happened in 1953 in a bay in Alaska.

Eyewitnesses, geologists were able also to go there and study the damage of a wave that was hundreds of feet tall. It's never happened in human history. Where there's a human population there in Alaska, there were eyewitnesses to it.

I mean, think about this when it comes to natural disasters, there are worse things that can happen. Now the geologists tell us, and they tell us with a little bit apocalyptic tone, that on the northwest corner of the African continent, in the Canary Islands, there is one island that is about to break in half. It is volcanic, as all of that series of islands are, and it has fractured.

And if this piece of the island drops into the sea, as indeed all of their science says it probably will, according to their best computer models, it'll generate a wave. The energy will travel eight hours across the Atlantic Ocean to destroy every single city on the east coast of the North American continent. A wave taller than the skyscrapers in New York City.

So when it comes to natural disasters, I believe we have seen many. We've got record droughts, record floods. We have got record storms.

All of these things certainly are increasing, but I believe there are worse things that can happen. My prayer is continually for the mercy of God. The 1950s were significant when it comes to natural disasters.

Are you all familiar, have any of you guys ever read about the meteor that struck in Siberia in the 1950s? Are you guys even aware that our planet has been collided with a little divot like Winslow, Arizona's crater? But it actually brought about a level of destruction that was more powerful than anything men have the weaponry to do today. But it happened in an uninhabited region near to the Arctic Circle. Whole forests were leveled by the explosion.

And I do believe you guys have read the book of Revelation and you know about that period of time that we call the Great Tribulation. That period in which God is just letting it fall, letting it all rain upon the earth and just pouring out judgment. I don't think we have to necessarily wait for that period of time for disaster to strike where it has already struck.

And the fact that we've already experienced natural disasters on the level that we have causes me to be fairly confident we'll experience more and greater. But it's not all, certainly not all. Number three, we have experienced terrorist attacks.

We've experienced a breach of our security like that has never happened in the history of this country. Troubling to me still to this day, it makes me angry every time I think about what 19 Muslims did with box cutters. 19 men boarded our planes, crossed our borders, boarded our planes, hijacked them, used them as weapons to kill thousands of people in one horrible dark day.

Now you got to acknowledge together with me that our security was down. I'm not just talking about what is written in Psalm 127, unless the Lord watches the city, the watchman is to wake in vain. We were attacked by Muslims with box cutters.

They took down our World Trade Centers. They crashed a plane into our Pentagon. Should we not be humbled, humiliated? I personally was humiliated this last week when the modern day Hitler, Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad was standing in our country, marking our failure, gloating over our financial failures.

Angered me. And I know that that man has intentions of attacking Israel, who he considers to be the great Satan in the United States. Just every bit as much Satan.

And we welcome him here to our shores. We honor such a man. That is messed up.

We have experienced terrorist attacks from our enemies outside, and we've experienced them from inside our own people. You know, you put in this category of terrorist attacks, our own domestic terrorism that happens every time some demon filled kid walks into school and just starts shooting people. And they target the Christians, although that's not a hate crime.

It's only a hate crime when they target a homosexual. Something else altogether when it's a Christian and they're always attacking, they're always targeting Christians. They walk into church.

We don't have to wonder about this happening and being a thing that happens to weaken the United States. We don't have to wonder whether or not this is going to be one of the things that actually make us fail as a nation and bring us to a lower place, bring us to a place where we are not involved worldwide. The place where we don't appear in prophecy.

We don't have to wonder about it because it's already happening. It's not going to happen. It only has.

We have experienced the last few years free of such direct attacks. Grateful for that. And I think it absolutely does have something to do with the fact that immediately after the darkness of those days in 2001, people were praying.

There was prayer that took place. People did pray. There was, you remember those, it was a brief little window and it didn't last long, but you remember everywhere.

You remember even, even the most wicked of our congressmen, our senators stood on the steps of Congress and saying, God bless America. You remember? The very same people who would, many of them, if they have their way, appoint radical activist judges who will get God kicked out of every other institution in this country. But they sang of him that day.

They knew that day it would be politically expedient because they knew where the people were at. The heart of the people was to call out to God. It didn't last very long.

It didn't. I believe we have, and I believe we will experience further breaches in our security. It could be way worse.

We talk about mega tsunamis and super volcanoes. You know that the worst enemies of this system, the worst enemies of this land are arming themselves with nuclear weaponry, with advanced technology. And now we have Russia again, flexing, sending its warships to the Americas.

Number four, internal conflict. We are a very, very divided people and it troubles me. I've seen the division grow in my lifetime, grow to the extent that today, I honestly believe, as I say to you right now, we could experience civil war.

We are that divided a nation. And there are extremists from every side in this great division. What troubles me, I want you to think, just guys, think about this for a second.

Just think about this. The war between the states, the one we refer to as the civil war, the war was fought largely over the Southern states claim to sovereignty and claiming the right to own slaves. Slavery was at the core of that war.

Great atrocities were committed from those on both sides. But in the midst of that, there was honor displayed by men and officers on both sides. Think about this for a second.

Those who went to war then in this nation, even those who were wrong, were biblical thinkers. Even the guys who were wrong had an outrageous interpretation of Christianity and outrageous interpretation of what the scriptures taught on the subject of slavery. But still I'm talking about officers from the Confederate army that would begin their day with prayers to God and humble themselves.

The nation was in those days so divided that we went to war and hundreds of thousands of men died over that conflict. And I'm telling you that in those days, we were not as polarized as we are today. And that war happened then.

I do believe it can happen again. It can happen on a smaller scale, it can happen on a larger scale. As people really do in desperate, if things do get worse, if we expect the conditions in our country to continue to worsen, don't be surprised if there are those who look at violence as a solution.

Certainly it is taught already. Already it is taught by those in black liberation theology. All of the reverend rights hold to the doctrine that black man should be free to use whatever means that he, the black man, deems necessary.

You guys all know about the white supremacists and the militias that are all over the northwest, the midwest, here, and our own state. I do believe that we may well experience internal conflict to a degree that we have never seen. Number five.

Number five, apostasy. That brings the resultant change. That's the buzzword everybody's throwing around in this election year.

Change. Exactly what do they mean by change? It's actually quite frightening. Change.

Apostasy. You see, we ended up where we are right now when we are experiencing what we are experiencing, and we are going to experience what I believe we're going to experience because at the root of it, there has been change in the heart of America. You guys know all about that.

For decades now, mainline denominations have abandoned, and it came subtly. It came first on the seminary level as the seminaries abandoned the belief in the word of God. As the institutions that were built by the godly men who founded the country deviated from a confidence in the scripture, and liberal theology crept in.

Then it came from the inside. Mainline denominations long ago have abandoned the creed. It's not long after you abandon the creed that then you abandon the code.

Denominations rich with a history of courage and faith standing for Christ are now ordaining homosexuals, denying the truth of the gospel. At the same time, the gospel is being betrayed in what is still left that has been called evangelical Christianity. The gospel is regularly betrayed by the leaders of the new megachurch movement.

The very fact that a man like Joel Osteen would still be considered a pastor the day after his interview with Larry King Live. That interview on Larry King Live, where Larry King put the question to him, that was the very same question that has been put to martyrs down through the centuries. That question, do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only way? Joel Osteen, boasting himself as the pastor of the largest church in America, caved in cowardice and said, I don't know, and repeated it, I don't know.

And the fact that he would still have a church the very next day is evidence of the apostasy that I speak of. Consider this. The U.S. Religious Landscape Survey report by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life details the religious makeup, beliefs and practices, and social and political attitudes of the American public.

This survey of more than 35,000 American adults is one of the largest and most comprehensive of its kind. Data on their beliefs and practices reveal that although more than half of Americans say religion is very important in their lives, most hold a non-dogmatic view of their faith, with majorities believing that there is more than one way to interpret the teachings of their own faith, and that many religions, not just their own, can lead to eternal life. Listen to these numbers.

53% of evangelicals believe there is more than one true way to interpret the teachings of my religion. This is a scarier one. 57% of evangelicals.

Now listen, evangelical is already a minority. The evangelical is what is really left of Christianity in America. 57% of evangelicals believe that many religions can lead to eternal life.

Many. Do you understand what that number means? That means 57% of those who profess to be Christians no longer believe in Christ as the only way. Have denied that truth that all around the world, other Christians and other nations are dying for that truth, standing for that truth.

In recent weeks, thousands have been slaughtered in India by militant Hindus because they believe Jesus Christ is the only way. All over the Muslim world, people are coming to faith in Christ and they are being martyred. All over communist China, they're being martyred.

And all of that martyrdom just fans the flame. The gospel spreads and the faith grows, but at the same time, they are dying for that truth. That Jesus Christ is the only way here in this country.

It's the faith itself that is dying, being betrayed. And it is the preachers who are to blame. 83% of mainline Protestants and 79% of Catholics believe that many religions can lead to eternal life.

I believe that apostasy is resulting in change already. Number six is my hope. Number six, rapture.

The rapture, dude. My hope is the decline of the United States or the apparent seeming disappearance of the United States as a superpower in Bible prophecy can be attributed, I hope, to the rapture of the church, to mass evacuation of God's people. Now, if you're a visitor here and you don't know what the rapture is, it is an event described in the New Testament, particularly in first Thessalonians, second Thessalonians, first Corinthians chapter 15.

It's a, it's an event where God himself prior to pouring out his judgment on this earth, removes from this earth those who are his. Everybody that's born again, every true Christian. Mass evacuation takes place by God.

God evacuates all of his ambassadors before he declares war. The rapture. Now, you guys have heard about the great revival that's taking place, the actual advance of the gospel in Muslim countries where it's not even legal.

The Lord is revealing himself to Muslims by the thousand dreams and visions. People are coming to faith in Christ, being born again. Rapture takes place, and I do believe it could happen anytime.

The rapture takes place. Those countries will experience the loss of many people, but I their governments will certainly stay intact. Russian government growing more aggressive by the hour will probably stay intact and the machinery of that government be absolutely functional.

The day after millions of Russians disappear, communist China, likewise, Venezuela, likewise, Hugo Chavez will still be there. And all those who follow his leadership, but everybody who follows Christ will be gone in an instant. Now, what is going to happen in the United States in that same event? See, I really believe this.

Our government would be instantly crippled because there are those within it, significant members of our military, significant people in key positions that believe in Jesus Christ that are genuinely born again, gone in a minute, instant confusion, vulnerability, instant power vacuums. And I believe that could be the full explanation of why when Ezekiel 38 goes down and Russia and Iran make their move against Israel, the United States is doing nothing more than speaking against it. I really do have a hope in the rapture.

I have hoped my whole life that the rapture would be the primary reason that the United States just disappears from Bible prophecy. I now have to acknowledge it's not the only reason. It is a combination of all of these things that are already going on and that will continue to go on.

One last thought, one last thought, one last thought, and it is positive. It is our hope. Number seven, revival.

See, with all of this stuff going on, this is the reason why I spoke to you this morning out of the text of Luke chapter 15, the story of the prodigal. Because in the same way, pain becomes the teacher for the individual. And I do believe it's a big circuit that the prodigal goes on, not a one-way road.

I believe that there is, I believe right around the corner, a greater receptiveness, a greater humility and welcoming of the truth than what we have ever seen. We have read in our history books of what they call the great awakening. It was a move of God where men were convicted of their need for the Lord, where preaching was powerful and biblical and the gospel was simply proclaimed.

The great awakening. Decades later, the second great awakening. They happened at times when people became very conscious of their need for God, but I maintain that we are approaching a time where there will be a greater potential for people to become aware of their need for God than there has ever been.

See, I really believe that with all of these things that we've talked about today, all of them, with all of these things coming down, I believe right around the corner, the collapse of our economic system is going to bring about a human, and I'm not rejoicing over any of this stuff. It grieves me. It troubles me.

I hate it. It frustrates me greatly. But in the same way, I have seen the Lord work in many individuals who have chosen pain as their teacher.

I have a hope that I'm going to see the Lord work in my country with pain as its teacher. And I am encouraging you, my brothers and my sisters to hope for that, to hope for a revival, a revival like we have never seen, a revival that the only kind of, the revival that can only be generated by the humility that comes from pain and suffering and crisis, trouble. We've seen little glimpses of it.

I mentioned right after the terror attacks in 9-11, there was an openness. There was a willingness. You could be in New York City on a subway, stand up and say, I am a preacher of the gospel.

I've come here to pray for you, to encourage you. As many of my friends did. And it passed quickly.

I believe that very same openness, that very same willingness to listen will return. And we need to be ready to speak. I really do believe that we need to be prayerful.

If all of these things take place, if all of them do as they already have and they continue to, I'll tell you three things you need to do real simple in preparation. Ready? I'm not going to expound on these, just real simple. Number one, you need to be right with God and you need to live right with God daily.

You need to live in a state of right relationship with your maker. Number two, you need to be in fellowship. You need, this is not a time to isolate.

There have been times in American history and in our own lifetime where you could live happily in your own little place. The trouble that is coming is the kind of trouble that we must pull together. Stay in fellowship.

Fix the stupid things that are wrong. Fix the, get bitterness out of the way. Do not in your pride, isolate yourself, but be right with your brothers and sisters in the Lord.

And thirdly, you know, get good counsel financially. You get the best counsel you can. Don't panic.

Fourthly, store your treasure in heaven because it's the only place where thieves cannot break in and steal. It's the only place. Do not shrink back from the ministry that God has called us to.

Don't shrink back from generosity. Don't start shrinking back from giving. Certainly not.

Step forward and give more. Somebody's going to get it. You might as well pick who does.

Send it to heaven. That's my advice to you. Let's all stand together.

Christians, I am hoping for a revival. I really believe that the third great awakening could happen. We could actually find ourselves in the middle of the most exciting days of being a Christian that anybody's ever seen in America.

But it's going to be in the midst of great trouble. In the midst of great trouble, where they'll know that we are his disciples if we have loved one toward another. We back each other up.

We help each other out. We put our resources together. We share.

We'll get through whatever's ahead. The Lord will be with us. But all that is ahead, I believe, is going to bring about for us the same thing that happened to that boy in Luke chapter 15 when he came to himself.

I don't believe it's possible for us to avert all of the bad things that our sowing is going to guarantee that we reap as a nation. But I believe that in the midst of it, we could see millions of people come to themselves. Wouldn't that be sweet? Isn't that exciting? Isn't that something to look forward to? Don't freak out.

Don't panic. Don't go getting all weird. Dig in a bunker.

Start stockpiling weaponry to defend your dry goods. New love and hope. Be biblical.

Be a Christian. Father, thank you for letting us be here today and for the opportunity to cover these things. And I do pray that you would help us to see the day that we live in, to recognize the times and the seasons.

It is very late in time. I believe soon. I really believe it, Lord, that we are living in the days of that revived Roman empire.

And your word says in the days of those kings, you are going to set up a kingdom on this earth that will never be destroyed. The kingdom of God. We long for that kingdom, Lord.

It's that that we look for. And our blessed hope that is the rapture of the church, mass evacuation. I'm being pulled out of here and taken to heaven.

We long for it. But between right now, where we live right now today, and all of that, there are opportunities that we must not miss. And I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, that you'd help us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, knowing that according to your word, all the other things that we need will be added to us.

Help us, Lord, to seek that kingdom, the advancement of that kingdom through the preaching of the gospel. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Bless us as we go and bless our fellowship with one another.

Amen. Grace and peace to you guys.

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