

A Keen Awareness Of The Church's Loss

by Roger Ellsworth

This sermon delves into Isaiah 64, focusing on the prayer of the captives in Babylon, highlighting their keen awareness of loss, the realization that their own sins led to their captivity, and the hope in God's ability to restore what was lost. It emphasizes the need for the Church to repent, acknowledge their sins, and cry out to God for restoration, drawing parallels between the captives in Babylon and the modern-day Church's need for revival through genuine repentance and seeking God's forgiveness and restoration.

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Transcript

It is a joy and delight to be with you, and I do thank you for your prayers. I want to call your attention to verses found in the prophecy of Isaiah, the 64th chapter. The dear brother mentioned a moment ago that some years ago I penned a little book based on this prophecy, this chapter of this prophecy.

And that little book consists of seven sermons from Isaiah 64. You'll be happy to know that I do not intend to preach all seven of those sermons this morning, but I do want to give you something of an overview of this great chapter. I want to read a few verses from it, Isaiah chapter 64, beginning with the first verse.

And the prophet is crying out here to the Lord, and he says, Oh, that you would rend the heavens, that you would come down, that the mountains might shake at your presence, as fire burns brushwood, as fire causes water to boil, to make your name known to your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at your presence. When you did awesome things for which we did not look, you came down, the mountains shook at your presence. For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides you, who acts for the one who waits for him.

You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, who remembers you in your ways. You are indeed angry, for we have sinned. In these ways we continue, and we need to be saved.

But we're all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags. We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is no one who calls on your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and have consumed us because of our iniquities.

But now, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you our potter, and all we are the work of your hands. Not be furious, O Lord, nor remember iniquity forever.

Indeed, please look, for we are, we all are your people." Well, as you know, this is a prayer. But it's unlike any other prayer that you and I are probably familiar with. This is a prayer that was prayed years in advance of the captivity that the people of God would experience under Babylon.

The prophet Isaiah was, indeed, a prophet, ladies and gentlemen, and he was, by the Spirit of God, enabled to look down the corridor of time. And as he looked down the corridor of time, he could see the Babylonians coming in. He could see them devastating Jerusalem.

He could see them destroying the beautiful temple that Solomon had built. And he could also see the Babylonians carrying most of his fellow Jews into captivity. I say that Isaiah was given a preview of this.

We might call it a sneak preview. He could see all of this in advance. And the last several chapters of his prophecy were written for the people who would be in captivity.

Isaiah, himself, would not be on the scene at that time. So he's looking down the corridor of time. He's seeing the captivity to come.

And the last 27 chapters of his book, I say, are devoted to those years of captivity. And they were intended to encourage the hearts of the people who would be in captivity. I do not doubt for a single moment that what the captives carried with them, the last 27 chapters of Isaiah's prophecy, and they found encouragement and comfort and strength there in the captivity as they read those chapters that we know as chapters 40 through 66.

Now, this particular chapter, the 64th chapter of Isaiah, as I said a moment ago, is a prayer. Isaiah penned this prayer years before the captivity took place. But this was, in fact, ladies and gentlemen, the prayer that the captives themselves would be praying in Babylon.

You and I are familiar with the connection between revival and prayer. It's right there in that best-known of all revival texts, 2 Chronicles 7, 14. 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 will I hear from heaven I will forgive their sin and I will heal their lame.

So there is a very definite connection between revival and prayer. Matthew Henry said when God intends to bless his people with revival, the first thing he does is set his people to pray. So we have here a prayer for revival.

And I say again that this is the prayer that the captives themselves would be praying there in Babylon. Now, there are three things that feed this particular prayer, and these are the three points of my message. Listen carefully.

First of all, there is here a keen awareness of loss. That's the first thing that feeds this prayer, a keen awareness of loss. And secondly, there is here a keen awareness of what produced the loss, a keen awareness of what produced the loss.

And thirdly, there is here a keen awareness that God could restore what was lost, a keen awareness that God could restore what was lost. Now I want to ask you to think with me about each of these three things. First of all, think with me about this keen awareness of loss.

We have to review the history of the nation of Israel for just a bit. And we find as we go back here into the 63rd chapter of this prophecy, look please at verse 15. The prophet is praying here, and he says, Look down from heaven, and see from your habitation, holy and glorious.

Where are your zeal and your strength, the yearning of your heart and your mercies toward me? Are they restrained? Well, ladies and gentlemen, let's talk for a moment about the history of the nation of Israel. And I think that this verse that I just read will become plain to us. The history of Israel was a history of God working mightily on behalf of his people.

Just press the rewind button for a moment and go back to that time when the people of Israel were in captivity in Egypt. They were in bondage there in Egypt. And they had been in bondage there for over 400 years.

It was a very dark and distressing time. But God came into that situation. We might say God looked down, and God came down.

And he delivered the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, and he did so with a mighty and strong arm. You remember the pledge that he rained down upon the land of Egypt. And you remember how that he finally, after the death angel passed over the land, he finally brought the people out and he miraculously opened the Red Sea before them so that they could cross over on dry ground.

And you remember how that he drowned Pharaoh and his army in that same Red Sea. Now, some of you will perhaps recall that there is some skepticism about that particular part of God's dealings with Israel. We're told that it's impossible for us to believe that God would open the Red Sea and allow the people to cross over.

What we're told is by some scholars that there's really a very shallow part of the Red Sea. Some scholars suggest that the Red Sea is only about three or four inches deep in this particular place. And this is actually where the people of Israel crossed over.

And one man, after hearing that, said, praise God, God drowned Pharaoh and all of his army in three or four inches of water. And so what it comes down to, brothers and sisters in Christ, is you just simply can't get around the miraculous in the Bible. You should not expect a great and sovereign God to do anything less than great things.

And God did this great thing for the people of Israel. He brought them out of Egypt. He opened the Red Sea before them.

He drowned Pharaoh and his army. And that set in motion a whole string of things that God did for the people of Israel. We could think, for instance, about how that he defeated the army of Amalek.

We could think about how that God miraculously provided there in the wilderness for the people, feeding them with manna and drawing water from a rock. And we can think about how that after they wandered there in the wilderness for 40 years, God opened the River Jordan for the people of Israel to cross over, much as he had the Red Sea, and how he caused the walls of Jericho to fall down. And then we can go farther in the history of Israel and find other great instances in which God moved on behalf of his people.

We think about David defeating Goliath. We must understand that this was not just some kind of a personal battle between David and Goliath, that David was fighting on behalf of his people, and it's a glorious picture of the Lord Jesus Christ fighting on behalf of his people, the enemy of their souls, a far greater enemy than Goliath ever was to the people of Israel. And so with these things in mind, we have to ask ourselves this question, why did God do these things? Well, there was no doubt in Isaiah's mind about the answer to that question.

He tells us right there in that 15th verse that it was God's zeal, I'm talking about verse 15 of chapter 63, it was God's zeal, it was God's strength, it was the yearning of his heart toward his people. This is the reason that God had done these things for the people of Israel. It wasn't that they were such good people.

It was rather that God was zealous on their behalf. That means that God was passionately devoted to his people. It was rather that God was showing his strength, showing himself strong on their behalf.

It was rather that God was showing his warm-hearted affection to the people of Israel. Now we come back to that time I've been talking about, that time in which many of the Jews would find themselves in captivity in Babylon. And ladies and gentlemen, the thing that would be very clear to them there in Babylon was that God was now withholding from them the very things that he had so abundantly showered upon them in previous centuries.

God had shown his zeal, that he was passionately devoted to his people. God had shown that he was warm-hearted toward his people. God was showing his strength.

But there in Babylon, the people would not be seeing evidences of these things. They would be conscious that they had lost these things. And so they would be crying out, where now is your zeal, O God? Where now is your strength? Where now is the yearning of your heart toward your people? It's not that God did not possess these things any longer.

It's rather that God was withholding them from his people. And now we're in a position, I think, brothers and sisters in Christ, to think about the Church of Jesus Christ today. And we have to ask ourselves, is God showing himself strong on behalf of his people today? Is God passionately devoted to his people in such a way that it's evident to all who are around? Or is God withholding these things from his people today? And if we say God seems to be withholding these things, we must ask ourselves, why is it that God is withholding these things from us? And the answer is very clear in this passage of Scripture.

I think most of us would say, as we just look at the Church today, as we look at the modern scene, we would have to say that there have been times in which God has shown himself strong on behalf of his Church. There have been times when God has shown that he's passionately devoted to his people. But we're not living in such a time now.

The Church can look upon times in her history when God was at work in a powerful and mighty way, but ladies and gentlemen, it doesn't seem to be that way today. And I could give you all kinds of evidences for

that. I could talk to you about how doctrinal preaching has all but vanished from our churches, how that apathy abounds, how that there is very little holiness in our living, and all of these things are evidences that God is withholding from his Church today, things that he used to grant them in abundance.

Now, the thing that troubles me so very much in these days is that we are living in a time of loss, but most of God's people do not seem to be keenly aware of the loss. We're living in a time of loss, but it seems that few really keenly feel that loss. I think the Church today is very much like Rehoboam.

We read about this in the 2 Chronicles. You remember how Rehoboam came to the throne after his father Solomon had died. You remember how the kingdom was divided into two parts, and Rehoboam retained the part of the kingdom known as Judah.

And there's an account there about Shishak, king of Egypt, coming up against the nation of Judah, and he takes home with him, he invades the kingdom of Judah, and he takes home with him the beautiful golden shields that Solomon had made and that Rehoboam had inherited from his father. And so what does Rehoboam do after Shishak comes in and makes off with these beautiful golden shields? Well, we might expect to read that Rehoboam was incensed by all of this, and he got his army together, and he pursued Shishak, and he took those shields back. But that's not what we read at all.

We read rather, ladies and gentlemen, that Rehoboam made brass shields, bronze shields to replace the gold shields. And that leads me to say, that seems to me to be a very wonderful picture of what has taken place in the Church the last several years. The Church has lost many of her gold shields, we might say, but instead of mourning the loss, instead of mourning the loss of God's power, instead of mourning the loss of holiness, instead of mourning the loss of true biblical preaching, the Church is in the business of manufacturing bronze shields and hanging them on the wall and pretending as if she hasn't lost anything at all.

The Church is putting up today the shield of pop psychology. She's putting up the shield of entertainment. She's putting up the shield of business expertise and not mourning the loss of God's zeal and God's strength and the affection of God's heart.

And so this prayer begins then, ladies and gentlemen, with a keen awareness of loss. Those people in Babylon would come to the realization, they would not realize it before, that there in captivity in Babylon they would come to the keen realization that God had not been doing for them what he had done for their fathers, that God had been withholding from them his zeal and his strength and the affection of his heart. And they there in Babylon would finally come to their senses and they would finally begin to mourn the loss.

And that's one of the things that feeds this particular prayer. Now that brings me to the second thing that I want to emphasize about this prayer, the second thing that feeds this prayer. And that is a keen awareness of what had produced the loss.

Have you followed me up to this point? They could look back to the history of their nation and they could see that God had shown his zeal and his strength and the affection of his heart toward his people. But they could not claim those things now. They were in captivity in Babylon.

And those things that Israel had experienced in abundance in the past, they were no longer experiencing them. They were in captivity in Babylon. They would become keenly aware of the loss.

They would be saying, God's not doing for us what he did for our fathers so many years ago. But again, now, the second thing is they would be keenly aware of what had produced the loss. The fascinating thing to me about this particular prayer, this prayer in Isaiah 64, is that there is no mention here of the Babylonians.

There's no mention here of the Babylonians. That is intriguing to me. Isaiah wrote this prayer for people who would be captive in Babylon.

And we might expect to read in this prayer something about the Babylonians are to blame here. They're the ones who have brought this heartache, this misery, this woe upon us. But there aren't any Babylonians to be found in this prayer.

The Babylonians, ladies and gentlemen, are not the ones who produced the loss that the captives would feel in Babylon. The Babylonians were simply instruments in God's hands. And as you look here at this prayer, you see that the captives would put their finger on the real reason that they were in captivity.

It wasn't the Babylonians. The Babylonians were just a secondary cause. The real reason that they were in captivity is because of their own sins.

Look down there at verse 5 of this 64th chapter. And there it is in the middle of the verse. You are indeed angry for we have sinned.

This would be the prayer of these captives in Babylon. We have sinned. In these ways we continue and we need to be saved.

Verse 6. We are all like an unclean thing. Our righteousnesses are like filthy rags. We all fade as a leaf.

And our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And down there at the end of verse 7, after he says, you have hidden your face from us, that would be the experience of the captives in Babylon. They would be keenly aware that they had lost the smiling face of God.

And there in verse 7 he continues to say, and you have consumed us because of our iniquities. In other words, the captives would realize there in Babylon that they were there because of their sins. And that's the reason you do not have them blaming the Babylonians here.

Now may I say a word to you, brothers and sisters in Christ, from my heart. I want to say that much of our time today in our churches is spent blaming the Babylonians. And it's time that we stop blaming the Babylonians for the situation that we're in.

And it's time that we took a good, long, hard look at our lives and our hearts. How much of our time in recent years has been spent blaming the Babylonians? You listen to evangelical Christians and you can easily get the impression that all of our troubles are due to Hollywood. That's blaming the Babylonians.

All of our troubles are due to the Supreme Court. That's blaming the Babylonians. All of our troubles are due to Congress.

That's blaming the Babylonians. And to listen to the evangelical community the last several years, you can easily get the impression that if we can just get the right people elected, if we can just get the right people appointed to the Supreme Court, if we can just sign enough petitions, if we can just bring enough political pressure to bear, then our situation will be dramatically improved. And I'm saying to you, my friends, the

situation of the Church will not be dramatically improved until the Church learns to look at herself and see her sins and repent before a holy God.

We have to look no farther than this very prophecy of Isaiah to see this point so powerfully illustrated. You remember the sixth chapter of Isaiah, don't you? Isaiah goes up to the temple in the year that King Uzziah died. And there he sees the Lord high and lifted up.

His train fills the temple. And the seraphim are there. And they're crying, chanting, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And Isaiah takes it all in. And he cries out, woe is me, for I am undone.

I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. And, ladies and gentlemen, revival waits for the woe from the people of God. We need not expect God to move mightily until we are willing to look long and hard at our own sins.

Well, it's right there in the verse that I referenced earlier, 2 Chronicles 7.14. Listen to it again. If my people, not if Congress, not if Hollywood, not if the Supreme Court, if my people who are called by my name will not sign enough petitions, not bring political pressure to bear. No, 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 will I hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land.

It's the same thing as what we found in Isaiah 6. God's people have to turn the spotlight on themselves, and they have to join Isaiah in saying, woe is me. I'm the one who is undone. And, my friends, there are certainly a lot of woes for us to lament, aren't there? We're talking about what produced the loss for the captives in Babylon.

It wasn't the Babylonians. It was the sins of the people of God that had placed them in Babylon. And there in Babylon, those people became keenly conscious of their sins.

And that always happens in true revival. Someone said that when revival takes place, every sin is like a sharp stick in the eye. Can you imagine anything more painful? It almost makes you wince just to hear that description, a sharp stick in the eye.

And sin becomes intolerable to God's people when God moves mightily among them in true revival. But sin is not intolerable to most of us, is it? We've settled down with sin. We are more inclined to cry woe about somebody else than we are to cry woe about ourselves.

And yet, God is pointing unrelentingly to our sins and saying, if my people will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. Now, what do we have to lament today? What do you have to lament? We could talk about sins of omission, failing to do those things that God has told us to do. We could talk about sins of commission, doing those things God has told us not to do.

There's a lot of ground to cover here. We could talk about these filthy tongues of ours. And you may be saying, wait just a minute, you're going too far.

I don't engage in profanity. I don't blaspheme. I don't take the name of God in vain.

And by the way, there is an epidemic of taking the name of God in vain today. And you and I should not be a part of it. But there are other ways in which our tongues become filthy and defiled.

We gossip, we criticize, we complain. The people of Israel were in Babylon primarily because of the sin of idolatry. That's the primary thing that put them in Babylon.

Is that not right? Idolatry. And that means that they had given to other things the allegiance and the devotion that belongs to God and God alone. Are you thinking that we don't have any idols today? You're dead wrong.

The fact of the matter is, ladies and gentlemen, idolatry is flourishing even in the evangelical church today. And I'll go so far as to say that the sports mania that we're seeing in this country constitutes one of the major idols. It takes time and attention and devotion that belong to God and God alone.

And we can talk about revival all we want, but we're not going to see it until we break with our idols. And we've got idols from whom we need to break. I could go on and on today.

I could talk about the addictions that have a hold of many in the evangelical church today. We're talking about how that it's not anything other than our own sins that causes the loss of God's favor. That's what the captivities in Babylon would realize.

We're not here because of the Babylonians. We're here because of ourselves. We put ourselves here because of our sins.

And, ladies and gentlemen, we're not seeing an absence of God's favor today. I get so tired of hearing this. Well, we can't really expect to see revival today because, after all, times are different now.

The times are more difficult. That's blaming the Babylonians. The times are different, but God is the same.

He hasn't changed in all the passing of time. And he calls upon us to look at ourselves. His searchlight falls upon our hearts.

And so many of us, while we pay lip service to revival, we clutch sins to ourselves. How many are in the grip of an addiction today to pornography? People who are under the roof of the evangelical church. I can talk to you about this sin, which is becoming more and more prevalent, which is a loss of confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ so that the gospel is becoming almost silent in many who profess to be Bible-believing pastors and in many so-called Bible-believing churches today.

That is a sin before God, and we need to repent of it. A loss of confidence in the gospel. You'd never get the impression by attending many churches today that the gospel of Jesus Christ is her glory, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is her message.

It's possible to go to church after church, week after week, and month after month, and hear very little of the gospel. May God forgive us. May God help pour out upon us the spirit of repentance until we can say with the Apostle Paul, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

And just so you are not in doubt about the gospel, let me state very clearly that the gospel is the good news of what God has done in His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue sinners from their sins and to give them forgiveness of their sins and eternal glory with Himself. That's the gospel, and it is good news. The good news of what God has done in His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue sinners from their sins and to give them right standing with Himself and to give them eventually eternal glory.

But ladies and gentlemen, the gospel is almost silent today. And one reason it's almost silent is because we seem to have lost the belief that men and women apart from Jesus Christ are sinners. We're almost embarrassed by the word.

And we hear well-known preachers today who frequent some of the well-known talk shows saying, well, now, we don't want to talk too much about sin. People feel bad enough already. But the Bible talks much about it.

The Bible talks about our guilt before a holy God. The Bible talks about eternal destruction for all those who are not forgiven of their sins. Why should we be hesitant? Why should we be so mealy-mouthed about things that are central to the word of God? Ladies and gentlemen, this prayer was fueled by a keen awareness of loss, and it was fueled by a keen awareness of what had produced the loss.

And what had produced the loss was sin. And you and I may today be aware that the Church is not experiencing the favor of God as she has in times past. Let us also be keenly aware of this, that if we're not experiencing the favor of God, we have to look no farther than our own hearts, our own minds, our own lives.

These captives did. But it took the captivity to bring them to their senses and to make them face their sins. But thank God there in Babylon they did face their sins.

There it is in verse 5. Yes, verse 5. We have sinned. Make those words your words today. If you have been guilty of that irresponsible use of your tongue, take upon your tongue these words, I have sinned.

If you're in the grip of some God-dishonoring addiction, take upon your tongue these words, I have sinned. If you have drifted from the centrality of the gospel, take upon your lips these words, I have sinned. And as there's a mighty corpse crying out to heaven from the people of God, we have sinned.

We have sinned. Then, my friends, we can expect God to restore to us his favor. And that leaves me in the time I have remaining.

Just a moment to say a bit about my third point. This prayer was also fed by a keen awareness that God could restore what was lost. First thing, it's fed by a keen awareness of loss.

God's not toward us the way he once was. A keen awareness of what had produced the loss. We have sinned.

Not the Babylonians have caused this loss. We have caused it. And then a keen awareness that God could restore what was lost.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the devil is a liar, and the devil has a vested interest in keeping you from believing this, that God can restore that which has been lost. Some of you are sitting here this morning, no doubt, with a keen sense of failure and a keen sense of guilt before God. And the devil is sitting there on your shoulder, and he's saying to you, ah, you've really done it this time.

You've really messed it up. God's got no more use for you. It's over.

God has washed his hands of you. My friends, it is a lie from the devil. This God we serve is a God of grace.

He's a God of pardoning grace. Don't you love the story, the parable of the Lord Jesus about the prodigal who went down into the far country, and there he wasted his substance in a riotous living? And, oh, how much of the church today is down there in the far country. How many pastors are down there in the far country today, wasting, wasting, wasting? But the parable says that he came to himself.

Yes, God had to knock the props out from under him. God had to pull the rug out from under him. God can do that, you know.

And there in the far country, he came to himself, and he realized what he had done, and he decided to return to his father. He said, I will arise and go to my father. Oh, would to God today that a cry would sweep across the modern-day evangelical church like that.

We will arise and go to our father. And you know what happened? When he made his way home, the father saw him while he was still far off, and the father formed a cold-hearted steam. He said, ah, just wait till he gets here.

I'll be able to spit out those delicious words, you see. I told you so. But no, while he was still yet a long way off, the father saw him, and he ran to him, and he embraced him.

And he said, bring a robe here, and put it around his shoulders, and put shoes on his feet, and put a ring on his finger. And all of these things were simply the father saying, I'm receiving my son back as a son. The son said, I'm going to go back and offer to be a servant.

The father would have none of it. No, I'm not going to bring you back as my servant. I'm going to bring you back as my son.

And ladies and gentlemen, that parable trumpets the wonderful truth that there is forgiveness with God. There's a way back to God. God can restore what the far country has eaten up.

There would have been no point in these captives praying this particular prayer if they did not have the confidence that God can restore what is lost. Now, that captivity was a very large problem indeed. The Babylonians were so very strong, and the people of Judah were so very weak.

And if we could propel ourselves back through time and go back and interview these Jewish people in Babylon and ask them, what do you think are the chances you'll ever be released from Babylon? We would probably have heard them say something like, oh, it's impossible. The Babylonians, they've got everything on their side. There's no chance.

There's no hope. This much is clear, ladies and gentlemen, that the problem was too great for the people themselves. There would have been no point in appointing a committee, say, let's appoint a committee and go to the king of Babylon.

There would have been no point in signing a petition. That's what the church is doing today. But the problem was too large for that.

And the problems we're facing today are too large for that type of thing. But ladies and gentlemen, the captivity was not too large a problem for God. The captives must have looked at that captivity, and they must have said, this problem is as big as a mountain.

But look there at your 64th chapter and your first verse, and you find that God can shake mountains. And the good news is that God brought these people out of captivity. He brought them back to their homeland.

They rebuilt the temple. They rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. They rebuilt their own homes.

And it's all because of the greatness of the heart of God to forgive people who repent. And those people did repent there in captivity in Babylon with a wholehearted repentance. They cried out to God, we have sinned.

And God brought them out, and God restored them, and God renewed them. And this is the hope for the modern day church. When the church realizes what she has lost, and when she realizes what has produced the loss, her own sin, then and then alone, she can cry to God with the confidence that God will hear and God will restore.

The Bible says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Oh, there's forgiveness with God. There's restoration with God.

There's a whiteness in the mercy of God, a whiteness to such an extent that even when his people have failed, fallen flat on their faces, if they will cry, he will receive. The question today is, are we crying? Have we come to the place yet where our hearts are broken before God? Are we crying? And if we're not crying, the question is, what will it take to make a start? Let's bow together for prayer. Father, impress upon us today the similarities between that ancient situation and our own.

Help us to see the church today living in a time of loss and help us to be keenly aware of what has produced that loss. And may we begin to mourn over our sins with a brokenness of heart. And then, oh God of grace, restore your people.

Restore your people as only you can. We bless your name and we pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

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