

Pray for the Nations (April 19, 2020 by Rev. Anthony Menzel)

The title of today's sermon is "Pray for the Nations..."

There is a passage of scripture that I keep going back to during the COVID-19 crisis:

Scripture: **Ezekiel 22:30-31**

³⁰ So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. ³¹ Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

I am also very concerned by the fact that some people's attitudes are not changing toward the Lord Jesus and moral issues, in spite of this crisis. In fact, Gov. Cuomo, the Governor of New York, declared that God had no role in making things better during this crisis.

<https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/beware-governor-declaring-god-did-not-do-this-help-us-in-our-pandemic-pain-we-need-all-the-divine-help-we-can-get/>

It scares me that such a prominent government leader would have no idea of the concepts in passages like **Deuteronomy 8**.

Scripture: **Deuteronomy 8:11-20**

¹¹ "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² lest—*when* you have eaten and are ^[e]full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell *in them*; ¹³ and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are ^[f]multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴ when your heart ^[g]is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵ who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, *in which* were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might

humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end— ¹⁷ then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’

¹⁸ “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may ^[h]establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. ¹⁹ Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.

I personally do not want to go back to business as usual. There is so much wrong in our society, so much that displeases the Lord Jesus. I want to go to spiritual awakening, like the Great Awakening of 1730-1750 and the Great Awakening of 1790-1840, which helped to reform society in the United States, including the abolition of slavery, for example.

I want the United States to bless God, so that God can continue to bless America...

That brings us back to standing in the gap...

Last week I taught about praying for protection for us, our loved ones, and other individuals...

This week I want to provide us with strategies for praying on a larger scale, which is also very important...

If we want an end to COVID-19, if we don't want to see more plagues and trials that equal to or worse than COVID-19, then we have to change as a society...

Scripture: **Joel 2:12-14**

“Now, therefore,” says the LORD,

“Turn to Me with all your heart,

With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”

¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments;

Return to the LORD your God,

For He *is* gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm.
¹⁴ Who knows *if* He will turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him—
A grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?

***It is true that prayer can be defined as communication with God...
That communication can be in many forms...

Scripture: Matthew 6:7-13

⁷ And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

⁸ “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. ⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as *it is* in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

¹³ And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

[d]For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

“Hallowed be Your Name” and “Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever” refer to praising and worshipping God...

“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” has to do with repentance...

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” has to do with asking for protection...

“Give us this day our daily bread” has to do with asking for our needs and wants.

“Your Kingdom come. Your Will be done” refer to basing our prayers on God’s Word...

We base our faith on His Word...

Scripture: Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Thus, it is true that prayer should often be a spontaneous conversation with God...

Moreover, if I am going to use prayers that are written out, I have to focus on what I am saying as I pray. Otherwise, these prayers become vain or empty repetitions...

However, Scripture-based prayers that are written out can be powerful weapons when we focus on what we are saying because our faith grows by reading and studying the Word of God...

Thus, last week we prayed for ourselves...

This week I want to refer you all to the Prayer Resources section of the church’s Web site for a special prayer that you can say for the nations, including the United States, in these times of trials...

It is entitled “Simple Prayer for National and Personal Protection”

I encourage each of you to combine saying this prayer with some sort of fasting...

I encourage each of us to fast for our personal protection, the desires of our heart, spiritual awakening, and the end of COVID-19...

Scripture: Matt. 17:21

²¹ [a] However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Let us go through this prayer for the nations together...(Please refer to the Web site for the prayer...)

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE SERMON...