

# If my people

## Introduction

- Thursday we celebrated our independence day
- Probably enjoyed picnic type foods, etc.

## Holiday

- Hope you enjoyed your holiday
- Remember the foundation of this nation
- **Illustrate:** George Washington wearing a *Make America* hat
- Obvious reference to Trump's *Make America Great* campaign

## But is America great?

- Growing up I was proud to be American - we were the greatest nation on earth
- Now - we're not!
- Politically divided
- Economically divided
- Racially divided
- Children struggling with literacy and math
- Most per capita spent on healthcare, but 22nd in mortality, etc.

## How can we make America great?

- Want to preach from a familiar passage today
- This is what we can do to make America great again
- **Note:** Often preached this passage here at ALC, yet I feel we need to be reminded again

## Text

**2 Chron 7:13-14 (ESV)** (13) *When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, (14) if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

## Consider the Context

### Given at the dedication of the temple

- People of Israel are at the height of their prominence

- David reigned, bringing the Ark back to Jerusalem
- Solomon on the throne - spends 7 years building the temple
- Dedication - the presence of God fills the temple - see **2 Chron 7:1 (ESV)** (1) *As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.*
- During the dedication, Solomon prays asking for God to hear prayers offered in the place
- That night, the Lord appears to him, making this promise

### Conditional promise from God

- **Note:** This promise is conditional
- There are things we must do, and there are things God has promised to do
- He will do his part - as we do our part

### Point

- Peak of their power
- Peak of their spirituality - possible to fall away
- Solomon understood that and prayed about it in chapter 6
- Do we see?
- It's not about how we started as a nation - but where we are now!

### Observe the Condition

#### Source

- God is the one in charge of these things
- See **When I** from v13

#### Symptoms

- Financial hardship
- Weather related (i.e. natural causes)
- See also physical hardship
- **Bottom line:** When a nation suffers financially, through *natural causes* and its people are suffering - it's time to pray.
- **Point:** Read the headlines and see! Economy is collapsing, crazy weather (earthquake in California, fires, floods, etc.)

#### Purpose

- God is trying to call his people back to himself
- Let's look around and all that's going on in our nation today
- We need to see

- **Illustrate:** Gary Burbank on WLW as Earl Pitts American. Tagline *Wake up America*

## Heed the Call

### My people

- This is a call to God's people
- Only we can save America!

### What we're not supposed to do

- Not called to point the finger of blame
- Not called to protest
- Not called to vote in the right person
- Not called to withdraw, and wash our hands

### What we are supposed to do

### Humble themselves

### See the situation

- As long as we're convinced there's no problem - that America is great - we won't do anything about it
- See the stats!
- NY Times article for the 4th *Stop calling America Great* - definitely slanted and selective - but an eye opener nonetheless

### Realize we're to blame

- It is our problem
- We are the light - but we've stopped shining
- Only we can do something about this

### Follow God's instruction

- We can't fix this some other way

### Pray

- Simple answer - but we need to pray
- The only way to fix this nation - is on our knees
- We have to pray!

- Yes we should be good citizens, yes we should vote - but the way to change the nation is to pray
- **Thought:** Imagine if churches across the nation banded together to pray - in spite of race, political leaning, socio-economic background etc!

### Seek my face

- What should we pray for? Revival!
- We need the presence of God
- We aren't praying about the issues: violence, earthquakes, etc - they are symptoms showing our need for revival
- We need to seek the presence of Almighty God

### Turn from their wicked ways

- These things that have happened are a wakeup call for God's coming judgment
- We must repent of our own sinfulness - lest we be caught up in His wrath
- Consider **Col 3:5-10 (ESV)** (5) *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (6) On account of these the wrath of God is coming. (7) In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. (8) But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (9) Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices (10) and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*
- We must be putting to death our old nature!
- It's time to repent

## Rely on His Covenant

### Hear

- God has promised to hear such a prayer
- We can seek him for revival in our nation and know that he hears

### Forgive

- I'm so glad this is true
- He will forgive our sins...
- He will forgive the sins of our nation!
- What an amazing promise
- The enemy always wants us to run and hide from God
- But if we turn towards him - he will forgive

## Heal

- He will make America great again!
- He will heal our land
- He will call back those things that are destroying us

## Closing

- Preached this passage two other times - the first was immediately after a gunman opened fire at Virginia Tech, killing 33 and injuring another 20+ - deadliest school shooting in history
- Again as President Obama assumed office
- Are we any closer to revival today?
- This is up to you - will you pray?