

Revivals And Church History :: seek the Lords Mercy in the midst of Judgment**seek the Lords Mercy in the midst of Judgment - posted by EAGLEFLYING (), on: 2020/10/26 17:16**

Seek The Lord's Mercy In The Midst Of Judgment

By John Newton

Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not? (Jonah 3:9).

When afflictive providences lead men to a sense of their sins, and excite a spirit of humiliation, repentance and prayer, the Lord often mercifully averts from them the impending evil. Such was the effect of Jonah's message to the Ninevites. The people humbled themselves, and repented of their wickedness; and God suspended the execution of the sentence which He had pronounced against them.

My brethren, may we not fear, that the men of Nineveh will rise up in judgment against us and condemn us (Matt. 12:41), if we do not imitate their example, and humble ourselves before God? They repented at the preaching of Jonah (and immediately, on their first hearing him), and they sought for mercy upon a peradventure, when they could say no more, than, Who can tell whether there may be the least room to hope for it, after what the prophet has so solemnly declared? We have free access to a throne of grace, and, like Israel, we have power, by prayer, to prevail with God and with man (Gen. 32:28). And shall it be said of any of us, that the Lord gave us space to repent, and invited us to repentance, and we repented not? (Rev. 2:21). May His mercy forbid it!

God's Judgments

God's judgments are abroad in the earth (Isa. 25:9-11). His hand is lifted up, and if any are so careless, or obstinate, that they will not see, yet, sooner or later, they must, they shall see. The great God has controversy with the inhabitants of the earth (Jer. 25:31; Hos. 4:1). The point to be decided between Him and many abroad, and, I fear, too many at home, is, whether He is the Governor of the earth or not? But He will surely plead and gain His own cause; and either in a way of judgment or of mercy, all men shall know that He is the Lord. I believe there is no expression in the Old Testament so frequently repeated as this, 'Ye shall know that I am the Lord!' (e.g., Ex. 6:7; Ezek. 25:11).

God is not acknowledged, yea, in some places, He has been formally disowned and renounced. Therefore men are left to themselves, their furious passions are unchained, and they are given up, without restraint, to the lusts of their own evil hearts! A more dreadful judgment than this cannot be inflicted on this side of hell.

I should think the prospect dark indeed, if I did not rely on the Lord's gracious attention to the united prayers of those who fear and trust Him, and who know it is equally easy to Him either to save or to destroy, by many or by few (1 Sam. 14:6).

Our Sins and the Sins of Others

In many things, we all sin in thought, word, and deed. The sins of the Lord's own people are so many, and so heightened by the consideration of His known goodness, that if He was to enter into judgment with them alone, they could offer no other plea than that which He has mercifully provided for them, 'If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared' (Psa. 130:3-4).

It is easy to declaim against the wickedness of the times. But only they who are duly affected with the multitude and magnitude of their own sins can be competent judges of what the prophet meant or felt, when he said, '...I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...' (Isa. 6:5).

It is not necessary to inform you that infidelity, licentiousness, perjury, profaneness, the neglect and contempt of God's worship, abound. The laws of God, and the laws of the land, so far as their object is to enforce the observance of

His commands, are openly and customarily violated in every rank of life. In a day when the Lord Almighty calls to weeping and mourning, thoughtless security, dissipation, and riot, are the characteristics of our national spirit (Isa. 22:12-13). The loss of public spirit, and that impatience of subordination so generally observable, so widely diffused, which are the consequences of our sins against God, are, in themselves, moral causes sufficient to ruin the nation, unless His mercy interposes in our behalf.

Take Courage in the Lord

But though we have much cause to mourn for our sins, and humbly to confess our deserved judgments, let us not despond. The Lord our God is a merciful God. Who can tell? Perhaps even yet God will have pity on us and hold back His fierce anger from destroying us!

If, by His blessing, our praying may produce sincere repentance, then I am warranted to tell you, from His Word, that there is yet hope! You that tremble for the cause of God, whose eyes affect your hearts, who grieve for sin, and for the miseries which sin has multiplied upon the earth, take courage.

He who loved you, and died for your sins, is the Lord of glory. All power in heaven and in earth is committed unto Him. The Lord reigneth, let the earth be never so unquiet (Psa. 99:1). All creatures are instruments of His will. When the enemies would come in like a flood, He can lift up a standard against them (Isa. 59:19). As He has set bounds and bars to the tempestuous sea, beyond which it cannot pass, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:10-11), so, with equal ease, He can still the madness of the people (Psa. 65:7).

You do well to mourn for the sins and the miseries of those who know Him not. But if you make Him your fear and your dread, He will be a sanctuary to you, and keep your hearts in peace, though the earth be removed, and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea (Isa. 8:13-14; Psa. 46:2).

Pray with Hope

Let us pray for ourselves, that we may be found waiting, with our loins girded up, and our lamps burning, that we may be prepared to meet His will in every event (Mark 13:35; 14:38). Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for God's church, for the spread of His Gospel, and the extension of His kingdom "until His great name is known and adored from the rising to the setting of the sun (Mal. 1:11), and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory!

Let us earnestly pray for a blessing from on high, upon our rulers, upon the counsels of government, and upon all subordinate authority in church and state "that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty, that true religion and good order may be established, and iniquity be put to shame and silence!

Pray in Faith

And let us pray in faith. Let us remember what great things the Lord has done in answer to prayer. When sin had given Sennacherib rapid success in his invasion of Judah, he did not know that he was no more than an ax or a saw in the hand of God (Isa. 10:15; 37:14-36). He ascribed his victories to his own prowess, and thought himself equally sure of capturing Jerusalem. But Hezekiah defeated him upon his knees. He spread Sennacherib's blasphemous letter before the Lord in the temple and prayed, and the Assyrian army melted away like snow.

The present is a very important crisis. All that is dear to us, as men, as Christians, is threatened. Our enemies are enraged! Our sins testify against us. But if we humble ourselves before God, forsake our sins, and unite in supplications for His mercy, who can tell but that He may be entreated to give us that help which it would be in vain to expect from man? Yes, we have encouragement to hope, that He will be for us (Rom. 8:31), and then none can prevail against us. But without His blessing, our most powerful efforts and best concerted undertakings cannot succeed for a moment!

You who have access to the throne of grace, whose hearts are concerned for the glory of God "you, I trust, will show yourselves true friends to your country, by bearing your testimony and exerting your influence against sin (the procuring cause of all our sorrows), and by standing in the breach and pleading with God for mercy, in behalf of yourselves, and of the nation. If ten people, thus disposed, had been found even in Sodom, it would have escaped destruction! (Gen. 18:32).

"John Newton (1725 " 1807) was an Anglican minister who had previously been involved in the slave trade before

e renouncing it and working to abolish it. He wrote a number of hymns including "Amazing Grac