

America: The Prodigal Returns

I. The Prodigal Returns

We must address the awkward truth, we are far from God. We know of Him, we have a rich heritage of faith and the blessing of God. Yet, we have wandered from the truth and imagined we could secure our future apart from God's direction. In an expression of great mercy God is stirring our hearts. We do not want to ignore His mercy or respond with defensiveness, rather in humility we want to turn to God and begin realigning our lives.

Isaiah 1:18-21 (NIV®)

¹⁸ "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; ²⁰ but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. ²¹ See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her-- but now murderers!

Luke 15:17-24 (NIV®)

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

Prayer of Repentance

O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with all who love Him and obey His commands, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from Your commands and laws. We have not listened to Your direction. Now, O Lord our God, hear the prayers and petitions of Your servants. For Your sake, O Lord, look with favor on Your people. Give ear and hear; open Your eyes and see the desolation of our day. We do not make requests because we are righteous, but because of Your great mercy. O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For Your sake, do not delay, because Your people bear Your name. Amen.

II. Awakening — *American Heritage of Faith*

Asleep: 1) Unaware 2) Unconcerned 3) Uninvolved

Ephesians 5:14 (NASB®)

For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."



Romans 13:11-12 (NIV®)

¹¹ And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

First Great Awakening
Second Great Awakening
Third Great Awakening

III. God Works Through People . . . (Broken People)

George Whitefield

"Take care of your life and the Lord will take care of your death."

"Fight the good fight of faith, and God will give you spiritual mercies."

Nathan Hale

"I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country."

Clara Barton

"I may be compelled to face danger, but never fear it, and while our soldiers can stand and fight, I can stand and feed and nurse them."

"The surest test of discipline is its absence."

Alvin C. York

"Liberty and freedom are so very precious that you do not fight and win them once and stop. They are prizes awarded only to those peoples who fight to win them and then keep fighting eternally to hold them."

"In my case God helped me out. I had been living for God and working in the church some time before the army. So I am a witness to the fact that God did help me out of that hard battle; for the bushes were shot up all around me and I never got a scratch."

Jesse Owens

'The battles that count aren't the ones for gold medals. The struggles within yourself – the invisible, inevitable battles inside all of us – that's where it's at.'

'Find the good. It's all around you. Find it, showcase it and you'll start believing in it.'

- A. Character Counts
- B. Faith is Necessary
- C. Hardship is Not Optional



IV. Prayers of Compassion

Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV®)

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, **he had compassion on them**, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 14:14 (NIV®)

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, **he had compassion on them** and healed their sick.

Matthew 20:33-34 (NIV®)

³³ "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight." ³⁴ **Jesus had compassion on them** and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, You are rich in mercy and delight in showing grace. Look upon us now in kindness and pour healing upon our land. Restore health to those who are suffering and heal our wounds. May the spirit of death and destruction be turned back. Give strength, protection, and wisdom to those who are caring for the sick. Awaken us once again to the awareness of Your presence and provision — for it is only in You that we have security and wholeness. It is You who saves and heals; we rejoice in the God of our salvation. In Jesus' name, amen.