

Franklin Graham has a Reminder About Luke 18:1

Throughout the 2016 presidential election, evangelist Franklin Graham has urged Christian Americans to pray.

Now that the election is over, his recommendation hasn't changed. In a new message to his followers, the president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association reminds Christians of the message contained in Luke 18:1.

He wrote:

God is never surprised. The election of Donald Trump shocked the pundits and Washington elite and even surprised some of the candidate's own voters—but it is God who cleared the way for him, whether he fully realizes that or not. That's because, whichever person had been elected, the rise and fall of a nation's leaders happens under the sovereignty of God, who is often working in larger ways and with a longer perspective than we can know. The Bible says, "Wisdom and might are His. It is He who changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings" (Daniel 2:20b–21a).

No one should think electing Donald Trump will fix our country. America is still a sin-saturated and divided nation, and Trump himself is a leader with human flaws. Elections matter, and this one will have lasting consequences, but only God can heal and restore a nation—and that comes through committed, faithful prayer.

When the people of Israel asked for a king after centuries without one, God gave them one. But the prophet Samuel reminded the people that ultimately, they did not choose their national leaders: "And see that the Lord has set a king over you" (1 Samuel 12:13b). The new king was

inexperienced in governing, and God made no promise that things would automatically turn out well for either the new king or the nation. Instead, Samuel presented the people with God's pathway to success, placing responsibility on both the people and their leader.

"If you will fear the Lord, and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then both you and the king that reigns over you will continue following the Lord your God. But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then will the hand of the Lord be against you, *as it was against your fathers*. (1 Sam. 12:14-15).

After anointing the newly chosen ruler, Samuel made a personal commitment to his nation, the king and the people. I hope you take his words to heart for our own country today:

"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 12:23a).

Will you make that same commitment to pray?

During the tumultuous national election of 1860, America was in political chaos. The man who emerged to become the next president had very limited Washington experience, was considered uncouth by a significant part of the electorate and won the election without a majority of the popular vote. Abraham Lincoln became one of our most effective presidents, and several years into his presidency, a well-known pastor in New York pinpointed the reason: "The prayers of God's people made President Lincoln what he was to the nation."

Donald Trump is, of course, a far different man than Lincoln, and the conflicts and issues in our country today are entirely different than in 1860. But we know God can use any leader. We as His people can have a huge impact if we

take our responsibility seriously and are diligent “always to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1b). Will you be a part of that?

Ask God to use this man He has allowed to be put in place, despite human shortcomings, to further His great purposes in the nation and the world. And pray also for the incoming vice president, Mike Pence, a man of faith who said he was “grateful to God for His amazing grace” in his speech right after the election.

The one sure path to national restoration is repentance. The Bible says, “Therefore repent and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

Pray for America. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to change hearts whether across our nation or anywhere in the world. {eoa}