

The American Church Can Choose Humility or Humiliation

We have a choice. God is calling the American church to repentance- and must respond with brokenness.

It is my belief, based on my personal understanding of prophecy, that true prophets of God sometimes predict future acts and events or consequences. The messages can be alarming or refreshing, but they always are intended by God to give or improve life.

Every believer, however, can prophesy or speak words of life. The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:5, “Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy” (NASB).

In my opinion, this means that when we speak prophetically we should prayerfully seek to speak words that edify and enhance life itself. I do not believe that when Paul encouraged Christians to prophesy he specifically was encouraging us to predict future events, but rather to strengthen the lives of the hearers.

We should never attempt to reduce the end times to a specific time frame or date. Jesus Christ will return quickly in the sense that He will come suddenly, unexpected by far too many. Believers are exhorted to live prepared for His return at any moment.

The truth is, all the Bible’s prophecies will be fulfilled. The misunderstanding of the Bible’s truth is often the result of humanity’s finite attempt to comprehend infinite wisdom.

We need prophets today—not fortunetellers and wild-eyed

mystics but exhorters and edifiers. We need prophecy today to encourage believers and to correct the family of God by speaking words of life. It is my prayer, therefore, that in what I am about to tell you, you will hear God's voice and sense His heart.

The Great Shaking

What I share next concerns believers in the New Testament church family and all whom God loves but who haven't yet received His abounding grace and abundant, eternal life. I believe the following things will occur before Christ returns or before "the end of the world as we know it."

All that can shake will be shaken to its foundation. Those unfruitful things that do not pertain to true life will be revealed. The unshakable will remain, including the true and holy remnant. No one will be excluded from pain and suffering, apart from supernatural intervention.

A healthy church will await Christ when He returns. I am convinced there will be a healthy church found on earth when Christ returns—the true, spotless bride, prepared, adorned in His glory, ready for the glorious appearing of Christ the groom. He will come for a bride who is like Him.

This has nothing to do with qualifiers such as "how large" or "how many" but with a prepared body of believers determined by God. This prepared bride will eagerly watch for His return because of deep love, not fear or escapism.

God knows the hour. It cannot be determined by time or space. But we do know that He will come for a people in love with Him and one another—living in fullness, free from fear, abiding in peace amid storms and turmoil, and shining as unfading light in the darkest of hours. Their eyes will be fixed on Jesus, their hearts will be focused on His kingdom purpose, and their hands will be doing His work as faithful servants.

Tragically, those outside the family of faith will miss His life and godliness. There is no reference here to religious traditions that lack true expressions of life and love. These people, along with unbelievers, will face separation, death and the eternal consequences of their choices in life.

Though we know this is true, we must leave judgment, vengeance, wrath and justice in the hands of God, the supreme judge. Be assured that our God can be trusted with justice, mercy and judgment.

Humility or Humiliation

For several years I have sensed in my spirit some awesome and alarming things when I meditate on the Scriptures and pray. I have waited a long time, but I believe the time has finally come for me to share these impressions.

I earnestly pray that the free world and especially America—my home and the land of the free, where many choose to live as slaves bound by appetites and actions, demanding their way rather than God's way—may somehow be spared the horrendous results such decadent practices have produced throughout history. I don't want us to get what we deserve.

I cry out for mercy for me, my family members, my friends—everyone—even those who choose to be our enemies. I don't want anyone to perish but all to repent, just as the Bible expresses. This is the desire of God's heart.

I am convinced that brokenness will come to the church and to America. The choice is ours: humility or humiliation! Our population will cry out to God on our faces, desperate beyond comprehension, in unity of spirit and heart, longing for what really matters.

The whole world will long for peace—not just national or world peace but peace within. It's not peace like the world gives—having everything our way—but having it His way, having

what only Jesus can give. People, not material things, will matter most. Our focus will be on love, relationships, family, joy, compassion and serving others.

Those who claim no faith will respectfully acknowledge the importance of our First Amendment guarantees. They will be accorded the same respect from the faith community. Open dialogue, debate and difference will no longer be rooted in a desire to destroy opposition.

Brokenness will lead to true character. A change of heart and direction will take place in this nation. Brokenness will lead to true character, determination, self-sacrifice and a sincere desire to know and do what is right, regardless of the cost or sacrifice.

The line distinguishing good and evil will be as distinct as the difference in light and darkness—as clear to all as the difference between terrorists who fly airplanes into towers, killing and injuring unsuspecting people of all nations and races, and the brave souls who risk their own lives and give of themselves, seeking to rescue the victims.

It will be as distinctly different as suicide bombers who kill innocent school children and the compassionate doctors and relief workers who strive to ease suffering around the world.

There is the force of evil on one side and life-enriching righteousness on the other. We cannot continue to deny that evil is a reality while tolerating and defending it as a mere difference of opinion.

What I share next is sobering. I have resisted sharing what I believe I've seen in the Spirit, not because I doubt the accuracy of it but because I long and pray for what I see to be averted.

I pray for a change of heart and direction, for true repentance to occur until our nation receives the truth of

God; begins to live with the character, strength and faith that made America great in the first place; and allows selfless love rather than selfish indulgence to prevail.

As I said, I am convinced brokenness will come. Count on it.

The Bible says God's Word is a hammer; its power can break our stubborn will. His Word is a fire; it can purify us. His Word is water; it can cleanse us. The choice is ours: Choose life or choose the way that seems right to men and women—the fruit of which is death.

We must witness the change of heart. If the current practice of abortion on demand—destroying the most helpless and innocent of human life—continues with bold, open approval, then we will find all innocent life vulnerable to what has become the culture of death. How can we possibly expect our lives and rights to be protected when we fail to offer the same to the most precious little ones?

We must witness far more than the changing of any court's decision. We must witness the change of heart that will no longer terminate innocent life, however foolish some judge or legislator may be. Rest assured, our laws will reflect the condition of our hearts.

We have made such an idol of economic gain and material possessions, I am not certain brokenness will come, apart from the collapse of our economy and the loss of treasured possessions.

Selfish indulgences, revealed through sexual excesses and perversions, are promoted and defended as perfectly acceptable and normal. This attitude must be changed from within—and its effect will be visibly manifested in the lives and practices of our general population.

It's my hope that the church family will pray, seek God, turn from any wicked ways and see our land healed. I pray that

unbelievers will respond to God's offer of life, forgiveness and grace, resulting in supernatural intervention and protection.

God is described in the Bible as "a mighty fortress," "the shield of the earth," "our Deliverer" and "the solid rock." The intentions of evildoers can be supernaturally detected and thwarted. The enemy must be changed or defeated.

We must have God's power and protection in order to miss our enemies' plans for us. Without this divine miracle, unparalleled, indescribable devastation is coming to our shores—truly "the sum of all fears."

I'm not referring to the natural disasters we already are witnessing and the challenges that reveal our nation's soul and character. I'm talking about deliberate destruction directed by the deadly actions of evil men.

"Where was God when this happened?" Many times in prayer, I have seen agonizing pain and suffering resulting from a direct nuclear or biological strike in major population centers in the United States. I see masses of people crying out in fear and panic from destruction and death beyond comprehension. There is a cry for help and mercy, for a way of escape, for protection, for communication, for news of loved ones.

Comfort is totally disrupted. A sense of total loss jeopardizes our way of life. Prayer is prevalent. People are desperate for help—even divine intervention.

No one asks, "Is there a God?" It seems everyone is looking for Him, including those who once worked to keep God out of public life.

Many ask, "Why?" Others ask, "Where was God when this happened?"

But people are not questioning the faith of others. They are

looking for faith in others. There is brokenness and humility, along with humiliation, as those who once thought they stood firm rapidly fall.

Many high towers crumble. Households and communities tremble in the aftermath. Our way of life pales compared with the simple desire for life itself.

The only strength and hope for the future comes from those who are truly strong in the Lord. The most courageous prove to be the most compassionate. They understand pure love and willingly sacrifice on behalf of others.

Their genuine strength of character is revealed, and people wholeheartedly seek to hear truth. They want someone to provide clear direction, inspire proper action and promise a stable, secure future. Prosperity is suddenly defined as life itself rather than life's possessions.

I have seen the pain and suffering, and I cry out to God, "Have mercy!" The life of privilege and opportunity is a distant, often faint hope, but it is actually possible for those who will endure the unparalleled hardship.

For those of us who experience this horror, things will not be the same. Our true character will face a supreme test, and survival will depend on whether we turn our hearts to the supreme power; the one who gives life; the merciful, everlasting God and Father, the one and only blessed hope.

I have seen the pain and suffering, and I cry out to God, "Have mercy!" Then in my heart I hear: "I am offering it even now, if only it will be received. I will not force My way into the lives of men. They can choose whom and what they serve. They can eat of the fruit of their ways or receive liberating truth and life-changing love."

In prayer I ask: "Is it too late? Lord, please help us." I pray for repentance, brokenness and humility, for mercy

received and mercy shared. I hold on to God's promise, "'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy'" (Matt. 5:7).

I pray: "God, break our hearts by the power of Your Word and the love revealed through the cross of Christ. Break our stubborn will. Humble us that we may be mightily exalted as we exalt You and build our lives and future on Your rock-solid principles."

Only right relationships with God will produce the necessary resolve to fight the right fight the right way. It is only through commitment to godly principles that we will have the character to make the sacrifices necessary to protect and preserve the truly priceless aspects of life.

It has become increasingly difficult to hear transforming truth when much of the mass media and the entertainment community so blatantly mock truth, promote twisted lifestyles and assail traditional family values.

I am grateful that for the moment we have some national leaders who acknowledge the importance of prayer and faith.

It is critically important that all believers pray for those in authority because they must have the resolve and wisdom from above to make and stand by correct decisions. As we pray, we must remember: No political leader or party can be seen as our hope and security apart from the guidance of divine providence.

We will bow before God or be broken before God. The only way we will miss the agony I have seen is by supernatural intervention—by God giving us wisdom and clear communication between all concerned parties, enabling us to uncover sinister plots.

I believe with all my heart that we will bow before God or be broken before God. America cannot continue to rebel and choose

darkness when throughout our history we have been exposed to so much light.

I am not speaking of perfection or perfect hearts. I am pleading for all to sincerely seek to share life, to know love—God's love—and admit the need for personal and public change. Real repentance will produce the necessary change in people's hearts and minds, which will result in a renewed national desire to protect all life, because life is precious.

We will be moved by compassion and unselfish love. Our laws will begin to reflect the transformed hearts of voters and legislators guided by time-tested, proven principles. The family will once again be defined properly—husband, wife and children.

Not only will our freedom be diligently protected but its benefits and blessings will be freely shared. While enjoying the privileges true prosperity affords us, we will cherish the responsibility and joy of sharing what we have with others. We will not be manipulated or motivated by greed but moved by compassion and unselfish love.

A major part of the entertainment community will forsake the promotion of indulgent and perverse lifestyles and will seek to inspire us to rise above our natural, depraved tendencies. Their tremendous ability will be used to present great and admirable acts, as was Steven Spielberg's in *Schindler's List*. They will use their great talent to present people and stories worthy of respect rather than those committed to decadence.

Let me make it clear: Caring people no longer will be merely cursing the darkness. As surely as light dispels darkness, when the light begins to shine freely its effect will be visible and undeniable. History confirms the need to defend the faith, but in this day it will be the demonstration of faith's transforming power that inspires repentance and change.

I invite all who bear witness of the concern I have shared to join me in praying, in pursuing the God of holiness and in reaching out to others to share our blessings, whether great or small. Let's discover that the "joy of the Lord" is indeed our strength and hope.

Pray, fellow believers. Please pray and share this message as God leads you to, while encouraging others also to join in prayer.

James Robison and his wife, Betty, host the *Life Today* television program, seen in more than 200 million households worldwide. Their Life Outreach ministry helps feed thousands of children in crisis areas of Africa. This article was originally published in 2006 but its contents are still applicable today.

Consider reading this message again each week and praying daily about the issues addressed.

Specifically, let's pray:

- For all to bow before God in humility and not wait to fall before Him in humiliation
- For all in authority to have wisdom to make the right decisions and the resolve to stand by them
- For the family of faith and all who love freedom to search their own hearts and turn from evil
- For our enemies to be turned from deadly intent and acts, and their plans and deceptive practices to be exposed, thereby nullifying their actions and protecting the innocent
- For the ultimate defeat of all terrorist activities

- For peace in our hearts and on earth
- For America and the free world not only to enjoy the fruit of prosperity, but also to share compassionately and consistently their blessings with others
- For the Christian church family to live in oneness with God and the unity of the Spirit that Jesus prayed for, so the world will know we are truly His disciples and that He is revealed through us as the ever-living Lord of all.