

Why All of America Needs to Hear Arthur Brooks' Speech at National Prayer Breakfast

Dr. Arthur Brooks, a Harvard professor and the former president of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), delivered an impassioned speech at the National Prayer Breakfast on Thursday, calling all Americans to help usher in "national healing."

Surrounded by politicians, including President Donald Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Brooks, who is a political conservative and a Catholic, spoke about the importance of "loving others," regardless of political disagreement.

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"I'm a follower of Jesus—the Jesus who taught each of us to love God and who taught us to love each other," Brooks said. "The biggest crisis facing our nation ... [is] the crisis of contempt and polarization that's tearing our societies apart."

Watch the speech at the 55-minute mark:

But he went on to say that this crisis can also usher in an amazing opportunity to bring people together, and he pointed to Jesus—"history's greatest social entrepreneur"—as the litmus test for positively moving forward.

"Here's what [Jesus] said," Brooks recapped, quoting from the book of Matthew. "'You have heard that it was said, 'love your neighbor and hate your enemy,' but I tell you 'love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'"

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The professor noted that these words have had a shocking impact on human history—one that continues to reverberate today.

“It changed the world starting 2,000 years ago,” Brooks said. “And it is as subversive and counterintuitive today as it was then.”

He then offered a truly powerful, introspective moment to the thousands in attendance at the National Prayer Breakfast when he posed a transformational question: “Let me ask you this: How many of you love somebody with whom you disagree politically?”

Brooks then said he would round the response “off to 100%” and joked that anyone not raising their hands must have been on their phones.

But he then made another convicting proclamation about true “moral courage.”

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“Moral courage is standing up to the people with whom you agree on behalf of those with whom you disagree,” he proclaimed. “Can you do it? Are you up for it?”

For those struggling with this—something Brooks himself admitted he has grappled with—he encouraged people to turn to the Scriptures and prayer.

“Ask God to give you the strength to do this hard thing ... to love your enemies,” he said. “To take political contempt from your heart.” {eoas}

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