

God Does Not Want Us to Be Judgmental

A religion without love is an abomination to God. The church needs to learn that God desires love and compassion, not merely an adherence to ritual and sacrifice. Thus, Jesus said His Father's house would be a "house of **prayer** for all nations" (Mark 11:17). True prayer is born of love and comes in the midst of sin and need. It comes not to condemn, but to cover.

All nations sin. All cultures have seasons of moral decline and spiritual malaise. Yet these periods can become turning points if, in times of distress, **intercessors** cry to God for mercy. Thus, Christlike prayer brings **redemption** out of disaster.

The church is created not to fulfill God's wrath, but to complete His mercy. Remember, we are called to be a "house of prayer for all nations." Consider passionately this phrase: "prayer for." Jesus taught His disciples to "**pray** for" those who would persecute or mistreat them (Matt. 5:44). When Job "**prayed** for" his friends, God fully restored him (Job 42:10). We are to "**pray** for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. 122:6), and "pray for" each other so that we may be healed (James 5:16). Paul wrote that God desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). Therefore, he urged "that entreaties and **prayers** ... be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority" (vv. 1-2, NASB).

"But," you argue, "my country (or city) is a modern manifestation of ancient Babylon."

I don't think so. But even if it were, when the Lord exiled Israel to Babylon, He didn't order His people to judge and criticize their new cities. Rather, He commanded, "Seek the

welfare of the city where I have sent you ... and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare" (Jer. 29:7).

Time after time the scriptural command is to pray *for*, not *against*; to pray *mercifully*, not *vindictively*. God's call is for **prayer** moved by compassion, not condemnation. Indeed, at its very essence, the nature of **intercession** is to appeal to God for forgiveness, and then redemption, to come to sinful people.

We have studied what is wrong with our society and can prove, with charts and surveys, the trends of iniquity, yet we have failed to appreciate the influence of the **intercessions** of Christ. We consider ourselves experts on the nature and cause of sin, but deny the nature and cause of Christ, which is redemption. My friends, being informed by the news media is in no way the same thing as being transformed into the nature of the Savior.

The media sees what is wrong with the world and exposes it; Christ saw what was wrong and died for it. Study Isaiah 53. It reveals in wondrous detail the Savior's nature: Christ numbered Himself with the sinners (v. 12). He interceded for the transgressors (v. 12). He is "with us" and "for us" (Matt. 1:23; Rom. 8:31), even when He is speaking to us of our iniquity.

God does not want us to be judgmental; He wants us prayer-mental. As instinctively as we have judged people, we should pray for them instead.

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