

My text will be taken from 2 Chronicles 7 14.

-Here begin-eth the reading of God's holy word.

2 Chronicles 7 14.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

-Here end-eth the reading of God's holy word.

This is a wonderful promise from the Lord, but it is not a New Covenant prayer. Under our better covenant, the sins of God's children are already forgiven. Plus we have the promise in James 1, 13 to 17 that the Lord will not send drought or pestilence upon us.

The bible is saying, God only puts good and perfect opportunities in our path. Adversity will come, but not from God. If it is good, it is God. If it's bad, it's the devil. James goes on to say there is no variableness or shadow of turning with God. This is to say that this is an absolute truth. There are no exceptions. God is always good.

If my people. First and foremost we are talking about God's people. They are called by the name of Christians. They are called by the name of Christ. They are called to do four things. Thing 1 is Humble themselves. Thing 2 is pray. Thing 3 is stop doing evil. Finally thing 4 is seek his face.

---

First thing 1. They must humble themselves. Take the focus off of themselves and place the focus on God. Not my will but your will be done.

1 Peter 5 6 says.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Ephesians 4 2 says.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

The flip side of humility is exaltation. There is a wrong type of exaltation or pride, and God resists the proud.

Nevertheless, there is a Godly type of exaltation. If you read over in Joshua chapter one, the Lord told Joshua, every place that you set the sole of your feet, I am going to be with you. The same promises I made to Moses, I am going to make to you. Then he told Joshua, I am going to exalt you in the eyes of the Israelites, so that they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. So God talked about exalting Joshua. There is a Godly type of exaltation. It also says over in 1 Peter 5, "humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he might exalt you in due time. It was this Godly type of exaltation that Satan buffeted Paul against. Satan came against Paul to keep him from being magnified, that is glorified in the sight of people. Paul went in and saw people healed and miracles, and the people fell down and began to worship him or exalt him, because they saw the power of God operating in him. Paul wanted the Corinthians to respect him and acknowledge his apostolic authority, but he didn't want them

worshipping him. Paul's desire was not to draw attention to himself; rather, his ultimate goal was that Christ should be glorified. Satan continuously attacked Paul in order to stop people from honoring Paul. This concludes thing 1, humble themselves.

---

Now, next, thing 2, pray.

In persecution, the Lord doesn't deliver believers; He strengthens them to be able to bear all things, thereby bringing glory to Himself and conviction to their persecutors.

Anytime we cease trusting in ourselves, and trust in God, the Lord shows His strength. It is when we lean on our own abilities that we get in trouble.

We should learn the lesson of not trusting in ourselves. Like Paul we should count all of our accomplishments as manure, and we should become totally dependent upon Christ, living through him. We should learn to be weak in ourselves, so that Christ can be strong in us.

The Lord's power delivers us from things such as sin, sickness, and poverty. That is not to say that we Christians never sin, never get sick, or never have financial problems. But the Lord's power is always available to bring us victory over all these things. However, concerning persecution and the many day-to-day problems that we encounter, the Lord hasn't provided deliverance from these. Rather, He has given us the strength to endure. We have to have the motivation to change the things that we can change, the strength of Christ to persevere through the things we can't, and wisdom to know the difference.

As Paul said, therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

God's grace, can strengthen us to continue in victory regardless of the circumstances of life.

There is a big difference between suffering for Christ's sake and just suffering. Some teach that all suffering is therapeutic, but that is not so. Peter said, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf". Suffering persecution and hardships related with preaching the Gospel is what Paul preached about.

God's strength is infinitely superior to ours, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Therefore, one of our biggest liabilities is trust in ourselves. When we are recognizing our comparative weakness and trusting in God, then we are truly strong. This concludes thing 2, pray.

---

Now, thing 3, stop doing evil.

True repentance is a change of heart, a change of mind, and a change of direction, to stop doing evil. True repentance is to make restitution so far as is possible for all the wrongs that we have done.

It is, to make a radical turn, from one way of life to another. It is a summons, to a personal, absolute, and unconditional surrender to God. Though it includes sorrow and regret, it is more than that. It is a call to conversion, from self-love, and self-trust; to obedient trust, and self-commitment to God. It is a change of mind, that involves a conscious turning away from, wrong actions, attitudes, and thoughts, that conflict with a Godly lifestyle, and biblical commands. It is, an intentional turning, toward doing, that which the Bible says, pleases God. In repenting, one makes a complete change of direction, 180°, toward God.

Repentance, typically requires an admission of guilt, for committing a wrong, or, for not doing the right thing. It requires a promise not to repeat the offense, and, an attempt to make restitution for the wrong, or in some way, to reverse the harmful effects of the wrong where possible. It is to pay our debts, and restore to God and man their rights, that which is due them from us. This concludes thing 3, pray.

---

Finally, thing 4, seek his face.

Sin is habit forming. We find pleasure in sin. Often, it is extremely hard, sometimes, almost at the level of impossible, to overcome strong habits or strongholds. We often have to seek God's help. We must replace the habit of doing evil, with an on purpose and deliberate attempt to do good. Praise God for his word.