

Bible Recap

Heal Our Land

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Sermon in a Sentence: God wants to heal our land, but we must humble ourselves

Application: While Solomon was on the mountaintop of his life, having just achieved one of the biggest things he would ever achieve, he gets a promise from God. God says that one day things won't be quite as good, and that in the hard times Solomon needs to humble himself and return to God again.

Me

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

King Solomon is a fascinating character.

- The wisest person in the world, but he completely misses the point
- We get to look back and decide if we will learn from his mistakes or repeat them ourselves (the answer is both)

The place is Jerusalem. Solomon has been king for a short time and knows that he needs to finish his father David's work by building a temple for the Lord.

During the dedication Solomon prays and asks for God's blessing, then fire comes from heaven to consume the sacrifice! Wouldn't it be nice if God put His stamp on your decisions like that!

We're going to approach the verse this week in reverse order, starting with the goal and moving backwards to the cause.

[SLIDE] God promises to heal our land

- God both wants to and has the ability to heal our land.
- Healed from what? In our city: people don't have enough food, kids we work with are currently living in a motel. I bought gas for someone living in their car, with their teenage daughter. Another person went through the housing authority and had to move to Othello.
 - There are reasons for this. Some of the responsibility is on the person.
 - Some ignore help because they don't want to follow the rules.

- But something happened that made them turn to drugs, gangs, or homelessness.
- Those are just the more obvious sins.
- Guy who works a 9-5, then drinks and abuses his wife and kids
- Couple who are so worried about appearances that they dive further into debt
- We live in a broken world. Our sin has caused this, but thankfully we know who can heal it.

“The” world is too big. Let’s talk about “our” world.

- Are there parts of your world that need healing?
- What about a work environment where you are overworked and under appreciated?
- Do you lay in bed at night and worry about stuff (all the stuff)?
- Are your kids struggling and far from Jesus

Tension Set: Where do we turn when our world is broken beyond repair? Thankfully God addresses this in talking to King Solomon

What is the big picture (sermon in a sentence): **[SLIDE] God wants to heal our land**

God

Heal our land is the promise of rain (v13-when I shut up the heavens so there is no rain).

- To the farmer, rain represents abundance, prosperity and hope.
- In a time/place without dams and sophisticated irrigation systems you were totally dependent on rain in the right times and right quantities to produce a good harvest.
- We’re not believing for physical rain, but a rain of the Spirit of God!
- ! What does that drug addict need? The gang member? The alcoholic? The abuser? The arrogant? **They need the Spirit of God poured out on them** because that’s where restoration will come from.
- And as the people get better, the nation gets better.
- America is broken because her people are broken, but God promises to come to the rescue.

[SLIDE] This healing comes through the forgiveness of sins.

We are fallen people living in a fallen world.

- Kids drawing circles on Wednesday (no perfect people, just a perfect God)
- We need God to change our hearts if we want to see our world changed

- It's easy to see other people's faults, but we need a mirror to see our own (the Bible!)
- God, search me and show me what changes you want me to make (Search me, from May 23rd)

[SLIDE] God's promise is to hear, forgive, and heal

- We know intellectually that He hears, but it doesn't always feel that way
- Do you want to know God is listening?
 - **2 Chronicles 7:15 (NIV) - ¹⁵ Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.**
- Kids don't like wearing life jackets, but have to when I work (present but not attentive)
- God's promise is that He is both present AND attentive!
- He hears your frustrations and He sees your pain! He's moved with compassion for you. He sees the sleepless nights and tormented thoughts

Hear, forgive, and heal. Those are God's promises for you today.

But those who are paying attention have noticed that this is a conditional promise. God asks something from us:

4 Conditions of Revival: Humble – Pray – Seek – Turn

These build on each other

2 Chronicles 7: 13 (NIV) ¹³ “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people

When things start to go bad. When the rain we rely on is gone, our crops destroyed and our bodies wracked with sickness. When times are tough, where do we go?

God is talking to Solomon after the dedication of the temple. This is a 7-day feast that represents 7 years of hard labor after about 400 years of God establishing the nation.

This was the peak of the mountain of success that they had been climbing.

- During the journey they've been warned to stick close to God, to trust and obey
- But often success leads to complacency, to pride, and pride always comes before a fall.
- We start to think we know better. Or that the rules don't apply.
 - Adam and Eve. Cain and Abel, the tower of Babel, Abraham lies about his wife, Moses kills a man, Sampson takes whatever he wants, the people cry

out for a king, Saul desperately tries to hold onto his power, David takes another man's wife.

- We get in trouble when we stop listening to God and do things on our own.
- The heavens are shut, the crops are destroyed, our bodies start to fail, and in those moments we finally turn back to God. Why??? Why is this happening?

God, in His infinite grace and compassion and patience tells us that we need to humble ourselves.

- It's not thinking less of ourselves, it's thinking about ourselves less
- It's going to God's feet in an attitude of repentance, recognizing where we fall short
- Fast forward a few hundred years and the Pharisees have turned repentance into an art. (Luke 18: 9-14). He says, "God, thank-you that I'm not a sinner like this guy." Compare to the tax collector, "God, have mercy on me, and sinner." Jesus says that one of them receives forgiveness. Which one do you think?
- Humble yourself and pray. They were both praying, but only one from a position of humility. And God only heard one of them. Will you humble yourself?

2. Pray

- a. We pray according to God's will and in His timing, but we ask boldly for the things we care about, and we believe God that He will answer.
- b. We are going to be diligent in prayer that God would change things and bring the answers we are looking for.

3. Seek God's Face

- a. But we don't just pray to get needs answered, we pray because it brings us closer to our Father in Heaven.
- b. Allow Him to speak to you
- c. He's not far off, but we do need to seek Him
- d. We will seek Him and find Him, but only if we seek with ALL our heart.
Pride locks away areas of our hearts from God. "I've got this part covered."

4. Turn from your wicked ways

- a. When God says, you don't have X because Y, then change the Y.
- b. Whether it's pride, greed, lust, anger, idolatry, laziness, gluttony, deceit, when God reveals it to you, it's got to go.

You **[Worship Team]**

Then God will hear – forgive – heal

God says this promise is available to those who know Him, who have been called according to His name. Do you know Him today? [Altar Call]
If not, I want to give you an opportunity right now.

This brings us to our last point, the first word of the verse:

[IMAGE] IF (Everyone say it together)

He says WHEN the hard times come, I WILL respond(!) **IF** you are humble, you pray, seek His face and turn.

God's not going to fill a place that's already full of me. He says IF, and lays the decision at our feet.

If. That's our challenge today. If. And it comes with a promise. Will you be part of what God wants to do? If you humble yourself, pray and seek His face, and turn from your wicked ways, He will hear from heaven, forgive your sins, and heal your land.

We are going to open the altars and give us all a chance to humble ourselves and come forward, believing that God has more for us!

Altar