

MAY GOD'S GLORY SPREAD ACROSS AMERICA

Announcements: April 26, 2020

All indications are that the Governor's stay-at-home order will be loosened after the end of this month and that churches will be permitted to gather again.

With that in mind, we are currently working on plans for a men's breakfast next Saturday, May 2nd and a worship gathering next Sunday, May 3rd. As part of that planning process, we will be implementing the required protocols to minimize the risk of exposure to and spreading of COVID-19.

As soon as the Governor finalizes his decision, we will communicate that to you via email and through our HVWC FB page.

So, stay tuned. I know that many of you are eager to connect in person again and I am certainly looking forward to it as well.

Introduction

In 1952 an act of Congress established the first Thursday in May as a National Day of Prayer. Each year, the President also signs a proclamation encouraging all Americans to pray for our nation on this day.

Thursday, May 7th is the date of this year's observance.

Normally, there are thousands of public gatherings across the United States where people will pray for the key spheres of our society including government, business, education, media, the military, churches and families. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, many observances will be conducted online.

In Bonner County, our observance will be livestreamed at noon on the Pray 7B Facebook page and on the pray7b.org website.

Each year the National Day of Prayer Task Force identifies a theme. This year that theme is "Pray God's Glory Across the Earth" which is taken from Habakkuk 2:14 (NIV):

***For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.***

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Background

In order understand this theme, I believe it is helpful to understand the context of the verse.

Habakkuk was a prophet to the Southern Kingdom of Judah after the fall of the Assyrian Empire in 612 BC and during the rise of the Babylonian Empire prior to their capture of Jerusalem in 597 BC and the nation's 70-year exile in Babylon. Habakkuk was a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Nahum.

Habakkuk struggled with the problem of injustice and evil in the world. He didn't understand how God could tolerate wrongdoing. In this book of the OT Habakkuk records His dialog with God in which he questions Him on behalf of the people. God was about to execute judgment on the injustice and evil in Judah, but He was going to do this through the Babylonians (also called Chaldeans). He questioned God as to why He would use an even more wicked and ruthless nation to punish His own people for their wrongdoings.

God answers Habakkuk by revealing that the Babylonians will be judged for their wickedness as well. However, God will preserve a righteous remnant from among His people. That remnant will be comprised of those who live by faith; those who demonstrate total dependence and dependability in their sovereign God.

Ultimately, as a result of God's judgment upon the injustice and evil present in Judah and Babylon, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord would fill the earth to same degree that the waters cover the sea. Frequently in the OT and in our key verse (Habakkuk 2:14), glory refers to God's powerful, manifest presence. Thus, the fruit of God executing judgment would be a knowledge of His powerful, manifest presence throughout the earth.

This is the thrust of the theme for the National Day of Prayer: that the knowledge of His powerful manifest presence would be made known throughout our nation in all spheres of society – government, business, education, media, the military, churches and families.

So, why pray for America?

For many of you this may be self-evident but here is what the National Day of Prayer Task Force wrote in response to this question.

God is the only hope for America. Our hope does not rest in our economics, elections, or even education. It is only by the grace of God that He inclines His ear to hear our prayers. Philippians 4:16, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything let your requests be made known to God."

In these days where anxious thoughts, words and deeds darken our nation we can rejoice that God never changes. God is not shaken but shines in the darkness as He "is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." 2 Cor 4:6

Prayer taps into God's wisdom, strength, protection and peace. He stands ready to respond to our needs when we humbly ask for divine intervention in the affairs of men. His glory shines and is spread across America as we humble ourselves in prayer and exalt Him in praise.

In humble prayer we turn from sin to seek God's face and the promises in 2 Chronicles 7:14, knowing that change, healing and transformation only comes through prayer!

How Can We Apply the Theme Verse in Prayer to each Sphere of Society?

The NDP Task Force has created a theme prayer guide that is available for download on their website (nationaldayofprayer.org). This guide provides Bible verses and prayer points for each sphere of society which can be prayed not only on the National Day of Prayer, but also throughout the year. So, I encourage you to obtain a guide and to use it in your daily time of prayer and devotion.

I am going to share the key verse and prayer point identified for two spheres of society to illustrate how the theme "Pray God's Glory to Across the Earth" can be applied as you pray for our nation.

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Church:

1 Kings 8:10-11 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰ When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. ¹¹ And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple.

Jesus, we pray that your church would be saturated with your glory.

We plead that your Presence would fill the churches so that people will be drawn into and saturated in the experience of your Presence in your Church. That your Word would be clearly and courageously taught and obeyed. We pray that our lives will be a faithful testimony of your goodness and would be known by our love as we live to give you glory.

Government:

Psalm 102:15 New International Version (NIV)

The nations will fear the name of the Lord,
all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.

Lord God we pray your glory would break out like the dawn in and through our government.

We seek to live under your authority as well as your blessings and so we pray that America would bless you with our leaders, laws, and lives. Please reveal your Presence and power to every person who serves in our local, state and federal governments. Show them your glory and goodness, guide them in your ways so that our nation would give you glory.

Closing Invitation & Challenge

I invite each of you to participate in the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 7th. If your schedule permits, join the livestream at noon on the 7B Facebook page or the pray7B.org website.

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This nationwide event reminds us of the need for and the importance of prayer for all facets of society. Our nation is in desperate need of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

As Christians, we all serve in the front lines of God's army and prayer is one of our primary weapons of warfare.

So, my challenge to you today is, will you pray for our nation – for our churches, government, families, educational institutions, businesses, the military and the media?

I am going to close by praying a portion of the 2020 National Prayer:

We pray that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will spread across our nation and the entire earth as we seek Your Kingdom and righteousness; as we walk in obedience to You, and in humble unity, love one another. Jesus, the Bible says that You are "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."

We pray that Your grace and glory would spread to bring hope to the hopeless, and love to where there is hurt and hate. God, use us as we pray Your promise, that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Amen!