



MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
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Welcome. My name is Doctor David Thorne, and this week's sermon is titled, "Bring Our Country Back to God".

This weeks scripture comes from Lamentations Chapter 5 verse 21, which reads, "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His Word.

Beloved, it does not take a scholar, an economist, or a military expert to see that our country is in trouble.

Serious trouble. We hear of crushing debt, financial uncertainty, bankrupt businesses, lost jobs, high prices, division in our streets, and soldiers in foreign lands.

These are heavy burdens. But no matter how much difficulty a nation gets into, difficulty itself need not be the end of the story.

The greatest need of our country is not first political, economic, or military, it is spiritual. Our greatest need is to get back to God.

And if we do not, we must remember the warning of Scripture: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish", as we see in in Isaiah Chapter 60 verse 12.

In Lamentations Chapter 5 verse 21, where Jeremiah prays a prayer that every Christian and every church ought to pray in our day...

"Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old." Jeremiah had watched his nation drift from God.

He had seen the golden days of faith give way to unbelief and idolatry. And he cried out for God to turn His people back and to renew them.

That is our prayer today, Bring our country back to God. But we must understand that this is not merely a patriotic slogan. It is a prayer of repentance.

It is a call for God to do what only God can do. We cannot renew a nation by our own strength; we must begin with humbled hearts, bended knees, and faith in Jesus Christ.

First, we must remember what has been lost. Our text tells of Israel leaving the golden days of following God, and unbelief and idol worship began to set in.

Jeremiah cried out, in effect, "Bring back those glorious years when Israel served God gladly!" He prayed, "O God, renew our days as of old."

Our country also has a Christian heritage. The settling colonies were deeply influenced by Christian faith. Many colonial charters were shaped by the Bible and by the fear of God. Even in the days of the War for Independence, God was acknowledged. In 1777, the Continental Congress ordered a day of thanksgiving to God.

During the Civil War, in 1863, the United States Senate paused to ask God for help. Our founding fathers were not all atheists or skeptics; many acknowledged the providence of Almighty God.

But since those days, all manner of beliefs and unbeliefs have sprung up in our land. Today there are more churches than ever before, but not stronger churches.

Many leaders refuse to recognize Jesus Christ. Religious groups that once spoke for Christ are now silent. Churches have fine buildings and interesting programs, but too often Jesus Christ is absent. Atheistic organizations have pushed prayer, Bible reading, and Christian influence out of public schools and public places.

The very nation founded upon God and His Word now often denies Him.

We need to cry out as Jeremiah did: "O God, renew our days as of old."

An America not ashamed of God and Jesus Christ.

An America where Sunday was a day when the entire family worshipped Almighty God.

An America where men of God did not compromise the Word of God.

An America where homes had devoted mothers and fathers, parents aware of their responsibilities to God and to their children.

An America where children were obedient and respectful.

An America where God and Jesus Christ were regular members of the home.

A leader of a great country once said words that ought to shake us: "We need God. We have ignored the ringing of church bells for worship, and now we ring them to warn of war.

We left our churches half empty, and now they are in ruins. The money we would not give to God is now being given for higher prices and taxes.

The food for which we forgot to say thanks is almost gone. Nights we would not spend in prayer are spent in air raid shelters. We used our automobiles to take us away from God's house. Now we have no automobiles or cannot afford to use them. We did not send enough missionaries, now we must send soldiers.

We have not trained our youth for Christ, now we must train them for war."

That is a solemn picture. But we do not remember the past merely to mourn. We remember so that we will return.

Second, we must return to God in repentance and prayer. Jeremiah realized that without God, he would not be heard. So he prayed,

"Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned." You see, true revival begins with God turning us. We cannot manufacture revival by our own effort.

We must humble ourselves.

We must do more than shout, "Keep America Christian!" We must live it. Let every person find strength to speak out for the Lord God.

Let every preacher preach as God moves, not as people dictate. Take the lead! Do not wait for some non-Christian to do what the church is called to do.

Speak out against sin and evil, not with hatred, but with truth and love.

We need to get back on bended knee. We need to bow our heads once again in prayer. We need to pray for our homes, our churches, our communities, our towns and cities, and most of all, our country. The Scripture says, "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", as we see in Second Chronicles seven fourteen. Jeremiah's prayer is our prayer: "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD." Lord, turn us from self-reliance. Turn us from silence. Turn us from compromise. Turn us from prayerlessness. Turn us from sin. Turn us back to You.

Third, we must not only remember and return...we must be renewed. Jeremiah prayed, "Renew our days as of old." That means God must do a fresh work in us. We cannot preserve a Christian heritage simply by building monuments to the past. We must live out the faith in the present and pass it on to the next generation. That means our homes must be places where Christ is honored. Our churches must be places where Jesus is present, where the Word is preached without compromise, and where prayer is not an afterthought. Our witness must be clear. Our children must be taught the Scriptures. Our lives must be marked by holiness, humility, and courage. We must bring back and preserve our Christian heritage...not by trusting in a political party or in human wisdom, but by trusting in Jesus Christ. Let the Christian turn to Jesus Christ for help. Let the lost turn to Jesus Christ for salvation. Let our country turn to Jesus Christ for guidance. And do not let anyone or anything keep you from turning to Jesus Christ. May God help our country to come back to Him. But revival must begin with us.

What should we do in light of this? First, examine your own heart. Have you drifted from God? Have you become silent about Christ? Have you neglected prayer, the Word, and the fellowship of the church? Repent and return to the Lord today. Second, make your home a place of prayer and worship. Read the Bible with your family. Teach your children to love God. Let your speech and your habits show that Jesus Christ is Lord. Third, pray for our country, not only with anger or fear, but with tears and faith. Pray for leaders, for churches, for families, for schools, and for the next generation. And then live as salt and light. Speak the truth in love. Stand for righteousness. Do not wait for someone else to take the lead.

The altar is open. If you are here today without Jesus Christ, come to Him. He is the only Savior. He died for your sins and rose again. Turn from sin and trust Him. Let the lost turn to Jesus Christ for salvation. Christian, if you have wandered, come back to your first love. If you have been silent, come and ask God for courage. If your home needs renewal, come and seek the Lord. If your church needs revival, come and pray. Do not let anyone or anything keep you from turning to Jesus Christ. Come to the altar. Come to the Lord. May God help our country to come back to Him—beginning with us.

Please bow your heads as we pray.

Father in Heaven, we come before You in humility. We confess that we have often drifted from You. We have neglected prayer. We have been silent when we should have spoken. We have trusted in ourselves when we should have trusted in You. Lord, forgive us. Turn us unto Yourself, and we shall be turned.

We pray for our country. We pray for our leaders, our churches, our homes, and our children. Bring us back to You. Renew our days as of old.

Give us courage to live for Jesus Christ and to proclaim His name without shame.

Save the lost. Restore the backslidden. Revive Your church. Guide our nation. Let revival begin in our hearts and in our homes.

We ask this in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed. For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed.

Thank you for watching and listening and we will see you all next week.

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