

PRAYER JOURNAL

January 12, 2021

*"Do not be overcome
by evil, but
overcome evil
with good"*

Romans 12:21



Chapter Ten

Fighting for the Nation and the Church

God can overcome evil in either of two ways. He can eradicate wickedness with destructive judgments, as

in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, or He can overcome evil with good. When the Lord determines to act in the way of destructive judgments, it is as a last

resort. God's first choice is always to move in mercy. In the heart of God, *"mercy triumphs over judgment"* (James 2:13).

Highland Village Church

Prayer and Fasting 2021

Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). Evil can be overcome with good, but to do so God must use the Church. Since the very nature of God is love, redemptive mercy is the ultimate motive behind all His actions. If we will truly please God, this must become our motive as well.

" 'Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,' declares the Lord God, 'rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?' " (Ezek. 18:23).

Even in the most severe judgments, the mercy of God always seems to be revealed in miraculous ways. Although calamities will become more devastating before the return of Christ, we must be assured of this: even in His wrath God is always remembering mercy. (See *Habakkuk 3:2.*)

The first choice of God, however, is to bring mercy *before* destructive judgments fall. His vehicle of mercy is the body of Christ. It is with this motive in His mind that the Holy Spirit desires to build the house of the Lord. The righteousness and sanctification that the living Church produces in a society can literally preserve that society from much of the evil that might otherwise destroy it.

If we do not rise to this hour, I believe terrible consequences are inevitable. Far more than our worst fears will be realized. We cannot imagine what life will be like when

plagues come and gangs of lawless, starving individuals rampage through cities, destroying whatever remains of stability. I am not an alarmist, but multitudes are experiencing the beginnings of these things even now in our large inner cities. The breakdown of law and order is already at hand. Many districts have become war zones. There is only one answer, and that is the Church. We are at war, and to win this war we must be united.

Those Who Know Their God

In Matthew 24 Jesus speaks of the last days. So terrible is this period that He warns, *"Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved" (v. 22).* The seriousness of this final hour is a dividing line that finds Christians encamped on either side: some believing in a pretribulation rapture and others leaning toward a posttribulation rapture. After listening to arguments on both sides and seeing the sincerity (yet inflexibility) of many in both camps, my conclusion is that I should focus on the bigger picture: we are not preparing merely for *what* is going to happen but also for *who* is coming. The bride is not making herself ready for a "date" but a marriage. If we are fully given to knowing Christ intimately, not only will we enjoy His presence, but we will also gain spiritual strength for whatever the future holds!

The key, therefore, to living victoriously in the last days is not

knowing only timetables but also knowing God. Daniel foretold that, in the midst of worldwide distress, those who *"know their God will display strength and take action"* (Dan. 11:32). From a position of knowing the heart and nature of God, in the midst of great difficulties we will *"display strength and take action."*

When we consider the wrath of God, it is right that destructive images come to our minds, for such must come upon the whole world. However, Isaiah 61 gives us clear insight into the purpose of *"the day of vengeance of our God."* It is to *"comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes ... the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting"* (vv. 2-3).

The first phase of God's "vengeance" upon the world is aimed at releasing His elect from oppression. But God does not stop there. His grace continues. Taking these very individuals who were fainting under their enemies' oppression, He raises them up to spiritual maturity. *"So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified"* (v. 3).

You see, as God's anger is released against His spiritual enemies, I believe we will see days of great deliverance and release for the people of God.

I believe that where they have suffered most from personal defeat, in those very areas God will enable people to walk in victory. Ultimately these oaks of righteousness will advance the very power of redemption that the Holy Spirit worked in them to people around them, even transforming cities!

"Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations, and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations" (v. 4).

For everyone who shares a true yearning for the righteousness of God, and for each soul who earnestly desires to be like Jesus, the day of God's vengeance is your hour of fulfillment! Are we in a time of anointed release of the Church to see the "ancient ruins" of God's house rebuilt and the "ruined cities," the "desolations of many generations," repaired?

Whether this is that unique time or not remains to be seen, but I would like to remind you that in difficult times the Church has consistently been God's tool to bring healing to the nations. It has always been *through the elect* that the Lord has impacted and transformed society. The issue need not even be End Time events; today the need is great enough to call the elect of God to *"display strength and take action."*

Who are the elect? The elect have been, at various times, Jews, Romans, Germans, Englishmen, Americans, Chinese—persons of any nationality who heard the heart of God, overcame the unbelief and discouragement of those around them, and literally moved their world toward heaven.

Remember this: the Lord's first choice is always to extend mercy to our cities and turn them from the path of ruin; mercy triumphs over judgment. To do so He needs us. The answer to the present condition in our nation is not new government programs or new policies, but it is New Testament Christianity—oaks of righteousness that are empowered with the redemptive mercy of God.

My Prayer of Application

God, I know that You prefer to send mercy, not judgment. Let us hear Your heart and intercede for our cities, standing as oaks of righteousness to extend Your mercy. In Jesus name, Amen.