



## A Call to the American Church

It is June, 2020. Much of America is in the throes of race riots, even as our country continues to contend with the coronavirus. Economically we are in deep distress with companies going bankrupt, accelerating unemployment and trillions of dollars being added to the national debt, all in the midst of ongoing trade wars and international upheaval. Because of supply chain difficulties, food shortages are starting to appear even as farmers and ranchers are being forced to destroy the fruits of their own labors. Politically we are fractured, and the cultural divide within our country grows ever larger.

In short, America is in big trouble. The reasons for this are many, but I believe they can be summed up in one sentence. ***Our nation has turned away from God.***

The Creator blessed this country because we – as a nation – chose to honor and obey Him. But as we became accustomed to the fruits of those blessings, we also became complacent in our reliance upon His divine providence. Instead, we have focused upon ourselves: our comfort, desires, importance, abilities, self-sufficiency, intellect, power, leisure and lusts. Our relationship with God became uncomfortable, then inconvenient, and finally irrelevant. Over time we have systematically removed Him from our schools, our workplaces, our government and even – in many cases – our churches. And now it appears that He, in turn, has removed His hand of blessing from our nation.

Having said that, I know that many thousands (if not millions) of people have been praying for our country and its leaders, and for revival in our land. Surely these prayers have been heard, but the church has yet to break through. How then should we pray?

It seems to me that our situation bears a number of striking similarities to the story recounted in the Old Testament book of Esther. We see an ungodly, decadent society; an impulsive ruler often lacking in basic decorum; a group of people with a history defined by racial oppression, discrimination and enslavement; and a defining moment when the conflict between righteousness and evil comes to a head. (If you aren't familiar with Esther, please read it. It is short, but you will be greatly blessed.)

In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Esther, we read:

*Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him. – Est 4:13-17*

Most of us are well familiar with Mordecai's suggestion that God had put Esther into the king's circle "***for such a time as this.***" But as I meditated on this passage, it dawned on me that the Jews of Susa, the capital

city, were likewise positioned for *their* role as intercessors on behalf of the queen. God had prepared the hearts of the Jews, and the Holy Spirit moved Esther to seek their prayer cover.

It is my personal belief that America is on the verge of destruction. I do not believe that we can spend or grow our way out of this predicament. I believe that we are reaping the whirlwind we have sown, and I do not believe that America's best days are ahead of us.

Rather, I fear that our country's days are numbered. That America is under the righteous judgment of God and that we stand guilty before Him. Whether or not this country can be saved, I do not know. But I do know that as David said in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 21:13, *"I am in great distress; please let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man."*

For these reasons, I believe it is time for the corporate Body of Christ to humble ourselves before God and submit to a three day Esther fast. It needs to be nation-wide, ecumenical and publicly declared (not by the government, but by our spiritual leaders). It should be open to all Americans regardless of their faith tradition, as it is God's business how He deals with individuals. Anyone who approaches Him in repentance and humility will receive of His grace and mercy. (Acts 2:21)

Perhaps God will hear our prayer and save our land. Perhaps it is too late. If we perish, we perish. But until the end comes, the true Church of God must persevere.

### **Details**

The fast will be held from sundown on Tuesday, June 30 to sundown on Friday, July 3, 2020 (three full days). Both Friday and Saturday are national holidays, so banks, the post office and many other places of business will be closed.

During the fast, those who are physically capable should refrain from all food and drink, including water. (Paul also performed this fast as we see in Acts 9:9.) This is a very difficult fast, but that is the point. If you are not physically able to participate at this level, prayerfully consider how God would have you join us. These are difficult times, and we need to be willing to sacrificially shoulder this burden. The enemy will present every reason, obstacle and justification not to participate, or to do it half-heartedly. Do not give him the victory!

That being said, pregnant women, nursing mothers, the infirm and children should not attempt a full Esther fast. If your job requires you to be outside during the heat of the day, you probably shouldn't abstain from water. A good guide would seem to be Paul's admonition (concerning giving) in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:7 – *Let everyone do just as he has purposed in his own heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* Consult your physician if in doubt.

Please spread the word to your church, family, friends and social media contacts. And be sure to read the following guide to fasting. It explains the various types of fasts along with important precautions and suggested guidelines. Additionally, you might consider using Zoom, FaceTime, Skype or a similar platform to encourage, support and pray with your friends throughout the fast.

<https://www.ihopkc.org/about/fasting-guidelines-and-information/>

***The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.  
A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.  
(Ps 51:17)***

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