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ONE NATION UNDER GOD Devotional

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Focusing on God in Discomfort

After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Acts 16:23-30 (NIV)

Reflections

When we find Paul and Silas in prison, we do not see them in despair, complaining about how inconvenient the situation was, or even asking God to change their situation. We find them sitting in a prison cell, praying and singing hymns. They are refusing to focus on their own struggles and difficulties and instead are focusing on the goodness of God. Even after God opens the doors and removes the chains, Paul and Silas do not rush out the door to enjoy the freedom God has miraculously provided, but they stay to minister to the prison guard.

Seeking the face of God is something that many people desire to do, but we try to put limitations on when and how we do it. As long as it happens in a convenient and comfortable way, we are all for encountering the presence of God, but as soon as things become inconvenient or uncomfortable, we begin to question. After all, if the air conditioning goes out in our church, are our thoughts still focused on the presence of God or on how hot and uncomfortable it is for us?

When Jesus is teaching his followers to pray (Matthew 6), He includes an important line: “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (verse 10).” If we are truly going to pray for God’s will to take priority over our own desires, then we must be able to not only seek His face and see His goodness in the midst of hardship, but we also must reach a point when we can give thanks to God for the pain and the opportunities it

Challenge

Seeking the presence of God is something that we desire to do, but are we willing to accept it when God’s presence takes us into uncomfortable and inconvenient places in our lives?

For Discussion

What types of inconveniences distract you from seeking God’s will and knowing His presence?

What are some times when you were able to continue to praise God and know His presence in the midst of hardship?



may create for God to be glorified and for us to share His good news with others.

Prayer

Dear Lord, let Your will be the priority of my life and the desire of my heart. Help us to know Your goodness, love, and presence, as we seek You out in the blessings and the struggles.

Bishop Helsley is a husband, a father of two, and an Ordained minister of the Gospel ministry. Having served in ministry in a multitude of different environments, settings, and circumstances, Bishop has spent the last fifteen years devoted to preaching and teaching the Gospel, and serving people with the truth of God's Word. Working both inside and outside of the church, Bishop takes a different perspective to faith and ministry, putting a great emphasis on counseling skills and communication. Bishop has a Bachelor degree from Baylor University and a Master degree from Logsdon Seminary at Hardin-Simmons University, and has a passion for sharing the Gospel and evangelism that he desires to share with other believers and the world.

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