

Principles Of A Solemn Assembly

by Douglas Small

This sermon delves into the principles of solemn assembly, drawing from Joel chapters 1 and 2, and Psalms 80. It highlights the need for repentance, revival, and seeking God's intervention in times of national crisis, paralleling the historical sermon preached in 1775 at the Continental Congress. The speaker emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God, seeking unity, compassion, and a return to the nation's Christian roots.

Scripture: Joel 1:14, Psalms 80:14, Joel 2:12, Psalms 80:3, Joel 2:17, Psalms 80:18, Joel 2:13, Psalms 80:19, Joel 2:14

Topics: "Repentance", "National Revival"

Description

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Transcript

Grab a notepad. We're going to go very fast, but I'm going to focus on Joel chapter 1 and chapter 2 and then Psalm 80. I want to work through some principles regarding solemn assembly, and then I want to take you to a sermon that was preached in Philadelphia at Christ Church with the Continental Congress sitting there, a day of national fasting and prayer on July the 20th, 1775.

This is a fascinating sermon because it shows the nation at a crossroads, and it's a call for solemn assembly. And I think in a sense we're right back in July of 1775. So grab a Bible.

We'll first go to Joel chapter 1, chapter 2, then we'll pop over to where this sermon is rooted in Psalm 80. If you can be a part of this for the next 90 minutes or so, I welcome you. I'm going to teach for a while and then pray and then pray and then teach for a while and pray and teach for a while.

Tonight, Kevin Jessup, you don't want to miss Kevin Jessup. He was the principal driver behind the return in Washington DC. Jonathan Cahn joined him for that effort.

And then my dear friend Carter Conlin from Times Square Church in New York that always has a real passion for repentance and revival. And then tomorrow, Dan is back and David Ford, a wonderful young Southern Baptist evangelist who's just given his life to the Lord and links to people like Richard Owen

Roberts. And now the names escape me, but if I call them out, you would know extraordinary, extraordinary names and a real passion.

God used him in a signal way a few years ago at Liberty University for a campus revival. Now, Father, you know what? You have crowded into my heart. And really, this is something I've never shared before.

And I'm asking you to help me with recall and to follow the scribbled notes that I have and to make this clear. And most of all, I'm asking for the compelling voice of the Holy Spirit. I'm praying for somebody who might catch this, who might watch it even later, who will be exposed to principles and ideas that they've never thought about before, and they'll be moved to do something beyond what perhaps I could do or even what Dan could do, because we're at a point in the nation where only divine intervention can save us.

We pray this for your glory in Jesus' name. Amen. If you open your Bible to Joel chapter 1, here's what you find, verse 2. You find this, Hear this, you elders, and give ear all the inhabitants of the land, because nothing like this has ever happened before.

We have never been where we are now. Go back, he said, even the days of your fathers in generations. He said, I'm not just talking about something that's unique to our times.

I'm talking about something that's unique across the generational continuum. We are at a national crossroads, arguably at the greatest crisis of our national life, perhaps as great as the months and years leading up to, yes, the Civil War. We've never been here before.

He said, you're going to tell your children about this, and they're going to tell their children about this. Generations will hear about this. Now, this means that this is one of the times in history where we dare not miss our moment, where we dare not miss God, where we have to buckle down and turn up our radio and say, God, we need to hear from you clearly.

This is what I'm praying for every day, that I would hear clearly the voice of God. God, what are you saying to me? What are you saying about my responsibility to the churches that I minister to, the people that I minister to, and even the nation itself? Joel 1, verse 3, he says, there is a natural calamity that is coming. This natural calamity is actually an invasion of locusts.

It's agricultural. It's environmental, if you will. He said, it's so severe, you're going to talk about it for generations.

That's going to affect the supply and demand of commodities. But there's a second thing that's happening. A nation has come up against our land, strong and mighty.

So this is an international crisis that is perhaps the most formidable crisis they've faced in a long, long time. But there's a third thing that's involved here. The house of the Lord has been affected, and it's been affected in two ways.

Number one, it's been affected by the grain offering. If you don't know the code here, you missed this. Now, what is that grain offering all about? Well, it's an offering of consecration.

Here's what he's saying. My people are no longer consecrating themselves to me. The grain offering specifically was the consecration of talents.

It was the consecration of labor. It was the work in the harvest field. It was the bringing back from the fruits of our labor and giving them to God.

It was, in a sense, the involvement of God in the vocation of our life and the recognition that God worked in our work, whether we worked at the church, the priesthood, the temple, or whether we worked in the field. This invitation, this integration of God into daily life, this is what has stopped. And then the drink offering, what's the drink offering? The drink offering is the life poured out before God.

So let's just stop and repent. Let's just repent that we segregated our lives. Father, we see it so clearly.

We see the secular sacred divide, even among your people. We see the lack of integration of faith into the property and the very essence of our life itself. Father, we see I've got grandchildren with me and I thought I had them quarantined downstairs, but obviously one has escaped and joined me up here.

They're wandering through the house. We'll keep praying here. Father, we just repent that we've not poured out the energy of our lives before you and for your work that we've segregated our lives into the sacred and the secular, into the 10 percent and the 90 percent, into the Sunday and the Monday.

And we just pray, Lord, for a reordering of our own personal priorities. And here's what the Bible says. The Bible says because of this diminishment of energy into the Lord's work, and you see that everywhere in America because of this diminishment of investment in the Lord's work, the priests are mourning.

In the 1950s, church attendance was above 50 percent in America, above 50 percent in the early 50s and in the early 60s. Now, before COVID, it was down to 17 percent. More than four out of five Americans were not in church on any Sunday and over an eight-week period, only one out of four were in any kind of church service.

We now, with COVID, are well under 10 percent and we probably, we may some say, never rise above that again. We're in a crisis in terms of our investing in the Lord's house and the Lord's work. And here's what the Bible says.

The Bible says the priest, and in this case, I think it's best translated because of the priest and the laity division in the Old Testament, which is true in the New, but nevertheless, because of that, I think it's better to understand this as pastors. The pastors mourn. And then he says the land mourns.

And then he says the people, the vinedressers, the workers, the laborers in the field mourn. Paul says in Romans 8 that creation is groaning. He says that the spirit is groaning.

And then he says we groan, but we are not. We are not groaning. Even in COVID, even after almost a year of quarantine, there's no lament in the church.

There's no repentance in the church. There's no brokenness in the church. There's a lot of anger.

There's a lot of frustration with the government. There's a lot of pushback against the restrictions, but there's no brokenness in the church. Pastors tend to want to get back to the way things were before.

Everyone wants to go back to the way things were before. And God is saying to us, I don't want you to go back to the way things were before. So let's just pray.

Father, we pray for a spirit of lament. We pray for a spirit of brokenness. We pray, Lord, that we would read the signs of our times.

We pray that we would discern the voice of the spirit and the fact that the Holy Spirit is Himself lamenting and He's inviting us to join us in intercessory lament. We're not doing that now. We need the touch of the Holy Spirit upon our life to pray like we have never prayed before.

We pray that pastors would lead the way in brokenness before you. We ask this in the name of Jesus. I want you to see an interesting thing here.

In verse 12 of Joel chapter 1, he talks about the vine and the fig tree and the pomegranate tree and the palm tree and the apple tree and all the trees of the field. What's he talking about? The Garden of Eden. And he's saying that the land has become almost like the Garden of Eden again.

And now that garden is being lost just as the first garden was lost because of sin. And so we should wail because Israel is about to be shut out of her own garden again. Just as Adam and Eve were shut out of that garden, they're about to be shut out again.

And here's the word of the Lord to the people. Gird yourselves and lament and wail before God. I can tell you with the happy music we have in their churches, we are not wailing.

We have made no room. 40% of the Psalms are laments. We make no room in our modern triumphal praise and worship narrative to be broken before God.

We're uncomfortable with it. I'm telling you people. I'm telling you church.

I'm telling you pastors. We need to lament. Here's five quick things.

Number one, here's what God is saying. It is time to wail. And we take intercessors to wail.

And there are a few of them. And we put them over to the side. We don't even admit them to our own prayer meetings because it's just too uncomfortable.

The sound is too uncomfortable. It's too wrenching for us. But they are giving voice to the heartbreak of God himself over what's happening in his relationship with us and what's happening in his relationship with this nation.

It's time for tears. It's time for brokenness. And brokenness, if it is genuine, it demands tears.

It's the recognition something is not right. It is in fact broken. The church is broken.

I tell you. The nation is broken. Christianity as we know it and perceive it to be is broken.

The idea that you are a good person and if you remain good and pray your prayers and do this and that, you're going to go to heaven. When you die, 70 to 80% of Americans believe that. That is not the gospel.

That is not the gospel at all. Every parent around Christmas, you remember the times when you got the toys and the kids are feverishly playing with the toys inside or out and then inevitably on Christmas day or a day or two after, you hear tears. And some child is bringing you a broken toy.

Now, maybe you can fix it, but they come to you expecting you to fix the toy. And sometimes you can't fix it. Sometimes you can't be the parent healer who can fix this.

Sometimes you can't glue it back together. Sometimes you can't tape it back together. Sometimes it cannot be fixed.

You've given them a gift. You maybe can fix it and you admonish them a little bit about taking care of the gift. And this is really what this is all about.

We've been given the gift. We've been given the gift of a land. We've been given the gift of a blessing and now it's broken and we have not taken care of it.

And we come back to God, but this may not be fixed so quickly. God doesn't always work magic. This may not be fixed so easily.

This may be broken in a way and at a degree that we've never considered before. This extraordinary gift, this nation, this republic, this opportunity to be a free self-governed people with no king, a government of the people, by the people, it's broken and we broke it. And we come to God and we want him to just magically fix it and make it go away.

The problems of this nation go away as if we're not willing to accept the responsibility of our lack of stewardship. It's time for tears. It's time to weep and wail because this has happened on our watch.

Would you just stop and pray with me? God, I give you permission to break my heart. I give you permission to let me weep. If you have not wept over the state of this nation, then pray this with me again.

God, I give you permission. I ask you, break my heart. Let me weep over this nation, this broken nation.

Let me weep over this broken nation. Have mercy on us, O God. And yet, God, we pray not just for the thing itself, for the nation itself.

We pray for us and our brokenness as stewards of righteousness and holiness. Change us, God. Begin with us, God, in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name.

Number two, it's not only time for tears. This may sound like the same thing, but it's not. It's time to lament.

Now, lament is a particular genre of literature in the Old Testament. It's a protest. It's legal.

It's offered in the courtroom of heaven in terms of being a protest against the way things are. It is a radical, emotional, desperate plea entered in the courtroom of heaven, a prayer that says, God, things cannot continue the way they are. You must intervene.

You must come down. And it is a protest that acknowledges we can't fix the thing. We can't heal the thing.

And perhaps we've made our appropriate appeals here, and now we make our appeal to heaven because we cannot get justice. We cannot get help. There is no remedy on this earth.

And so we enter the courtroom of heaven and we protest the way things are. And we may be offering a protest against ourselves. We may be revolted at our own behavior and deeply involved in repentance before God, asking him to change us.

So let's just stop. Let's offer a protest. God, things cannot continue as they are.

We can't continue with the brand of politics that doesn't have room for you. We cannot continue with the brand of politics that sees pluralism as acceptable to the fate of our fathers. We can't continue with the brand of politics that sees all marriage as equally acceptable and reverent and sacred and justifiable as that of a man and woman.

We cannot continue with the brand of politics that stamps approval upon sexual perversion and aberrance. We can't continue with a brand of politics that isn't for life and that allows and champions even abortion. We cannot continue with a brand of politics that sees drugs as merely recreational.

Prostitution has merely a, we can't continue like this, God. We can't continue like this. And right now, the only hope that we see is not in Washington or in our state it is in you.

And we protest, God. We protest things the way they are. And we ask for a divine intervention from heaven itself.

Number three, there must be tears. Number two, we have to go to court and file a protest against the way things are. And in that sense, listen to me, in that sense, we invite God.

We open the door. We've been given jurisdiction down here. We've been given jurisdiction in terms of positional authority.

We've been given jurisdiction in terms of relational authority. And so we want to invite God to come to the earth. We'll welcome him.

It's not that he couldn't come. He can kick the doors down, but we don't want him to come like that. We want him to be invited.

He comes where he is invited. We want to invite him to welcome him to come and march through our streets and champion the causes for which the earth is twice his. He redeemed it.

He created it and he redeemed it. And so, Lord, we're asking you now to reclaim it. We're asking you now to assert your rule in this place and that place where there are people who are ready to steward the influx of your glory and your grace, we pray, that you would come and assert yourself and reclaim the land and the territory.

We ask this for your glory. It's time for tears. It's time to lament.

It's time for passionate prayer, not casual prayer, not customary prayer, not just a little talk with Jesus praying. It's time for passionate prayer from the heart. Prayer that sometimes is more tears than talk.

Prayer that is full of passion. It can't always express itself because it's just so full of the life and angst of what we are feeling. And number four, it's time to fast.

It's time to consecrate a fast. It's time to give priority to the spiritual. You know, you notice the nation, I mean, we can quarantine people from going to church, but we're going to have our sports if we have to play in empty stadiums.

We are going to have our entertainment. We've not flipped. We've not switched back to the spiritual.

We're very much focused on the carnal, on the entertainment, on the worldly, its pleasures, all of those things. And I'm not, please don't, I'm not approved. I'm not against your sports team or whatever, but it has to be in its place.

It can't be at the top of your list. And number five, here's the call for a solemn assembly. This is a call for corporate prayer.

Gather the elders into the house of the Lord, gather them into the temple, and gather the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord and cry out to God. Don't just pray. Cry out to God.

This is desperate prayer. This is God is our only hope prayer. Priests, pastors, ministers, servants, elders, people, every class is to be gathered.

Why? Because the day of the Lord is at hand and it will come as destruction from the Almighty. Now, let me give you a little theology here. Up until Joel, the day of the Lord is good news for the of God and bad news for everybody else.

But Joel turns the day of the Lord on its head. It's going to be a bad day for Israel because he puts Israel in the crosshairs of judgment. And he's giving them a warning.

This day of judgment is approaching. It is almost, it is near. Now, nobody wants to hear that.

Nobody wants to believe that. Nobody wants to listen to Joel. Nobody wanted to listen to Jeremiah when he said the Babylonians are going to come destroy the city and the temple.

They put him in jail. They wouldn't put him on television. They shut his Facebook account down.

They didn't want to listen to him. We don't want to hear that. We want to hear positive prophets.

And there were plenty of positive prophets. And there are plenty of positive prophets today. Most of them are speaking about the political scene or this or that or whatever else.

Very few are speaking to the church. And almost none are saying this could be the judgment of God upon our nation. And we could experience shortages of staples of every day of every day things.

And we could experience drought and not even be able to produce our crops. And we could experience shortages of food supplies. And then he mentions destructive fires.

And all you have to do is look at California and see the ravaged trees and the forest and the pastures and the brooks that are dry. This is what Joel is talking about. And at least in part, this is what we're experiencing.

The fires, he said, have already destroyed, devoured our pastures. So blow the trumpet in Zion. This is a prophetic call to solemn assembly, to prayers.

Sound an alarm in my holy mountain and let the inhabitants of the land tremble. I would suggest to you that there are no tears. And I would suggest to you that there's no trembling, no fear of God.

And you see, my friend, if you don't take heed, if you don't hear the warning, if you haven't heard the trumpet, if you don't hear the warning, you'll run right into the wall. We're already on the warning track. There's no doubt about it.

How close we are to the edge, how close we are to the wall, how close we are to the destruction of the judge, I don't know that. But we're already on the warning track. And we don't realize, even the church, even pastors, they don't realize that we're on a warning track.

And so what happens is the intensity grows. And what was a warning is now a watch. He calls for a watch.

The day of the Lord is coming. And so he calls for a watch to be vigilant. Turn to me, he says.

Turn with fasting and prayer and weeping and mourning. And he calls for us to set up a watch. Now the intensity is greater than it was before.

This is vigilant prayer. This is prayer in the night. This is 24-7 prayer.

This is not nice, sweet prayer. This is agonizing, tearful prayer for the nation. Let's pray again.

Father, we are hearing prayers, but we're not hearing agonizing prayers. And we just pray for agonizing prayers, for travail, for weeping, God. And we pray, Lord, for a different kind of prayer.

And we pray, Lord, that we would heed the warning and move to the watch. We pray that churches would launch 24-7 prayer. We pray that churches would be open seven days a week for people to come in and just find a place to pray.

Forget about the value of the electronic equipment. My goodness gracious, open the church and make it a house of prayer for the nations. God, we just pray that people would be stationed there, that we walk in the church and Wednesday afternoon scriptures would be playing on the wall and soft music would be playing and we'd hear a sound and over there someone's on their face, that over there someone's on their face and they're praying.

And when they leave, others slip in until the church again becomes a house of prayer, a house of prayer for the nations. Until we're praying 24 hours, seven days a week, God. God, we just pray for the spirit of prayer and travail to grip your church.

What must we do? Here's what Joel says. Number one, you blow the trumpet. Now listen carefully.

This is a metaphor for the spirit. On the back of the table of showbread, the golden table that had the 12 cakes or loaves, were places to hang the two silver trumpets. So the table, the bread, the word, the trumpets are bound together.

The trumpets represent the voice of the spirit bringing to us the word of the Lord. So they are a metaphor. When a prophetic voice is heard in the land, the greater need is not for a prophetic voice.

The greater need is for us to hear the voice of God. And indeed, the prophetic voice is never the final voice. It's a call to hear God.

When you hear a true prophetic voice, what you want to do is wait, listen, watch, wait, wait. Because what God is about to do is he is about to speak by the spirit into the hearts of his people. You don't want to go on the word of a prophet.

You want to go on the word of the Lord that's confirmed by a prophet or in the mouth of two or three or two or three witnesses. The question we have to be asking now is what is God saying to this nation? And I

believe God wants to talk to us as a nation. And we need to listen.

And we need to hear what he might be saying. In fact, let's just stop and pray right now. God, there just seems to be a vacuum of what you are saying to us, your people, and what you're saying to the nation.

There's all kind of voices that have political messages. But what we're lacking is the voice that calls your people and speaks to your people and centers your people and directs your people. That's what we're lacking.

Lord, the clearest voice that I've heard is David Jeremiah's word that when God shuts a people away, he does it for a season in order that he might prepare them for something and that he speaks and that he acts and he moves with them and calls them to move with him. And I do sense, God, that you've quarantined us for a season for a reason and that you're trying to prepare our hearts. But I fear that we are not preparing ourselves.

I fear that we're not readying ourselves. I fear that we are not hearing you. I fear that we're not hiding away with you.

I fear that we are not taking the time to pray. And I pray that you would speak to us, O God. What must we do? Number one, we've got to blow the trumpet and hear the voice of the trumpet, the voice of the spirit.

Number two, we need to watch. That means we have to pray. Here's why.

Because there are additional signs. There are additional signs that come. Here's what Joel mentions.

He mentions earthquakes. He mentions uncommon eclipses, signs in the stars. He mentions irregular constellations.

The earth quakes before them, he says. The heavens tremble. The sun and the moon grow dark.

And that's either a partial eclipse or something that happens that affects the level of light. The stars diminish their brightness. And the Lord gives voice before he acts to execute his word.

Number one, stop. God wants to talk to us. Number two, set up a watch.

Start praying more than you're praying. And don't think that prayer is talking. It's hearing from God.

And begin to look at the signs. Where is God moving? What are the indicators that God is breaking in? Number three, turn. Now, therefore, says the Lord, turn to me with all your heart.

This can't be rote. It can't be routine. It can't be casual.

It has to be the complete reorientation of our life. It has to be a recentering of our values. I don't know who I'm talking to.

You may have just stopped pausing this on Facebook. But here's the word of the Lord to you. God is calling you out of ordinariness.

And he's calling you to extraordinariness. That may not even be a word, but you know what it means. God is calling you to break out of your rut, out of the routine, and seek for him, search for him.

You may have just gone through a job change in COVID. You may have just gone through some kind of shift or something. You may have gone through something that was good for you or bad for you.

But God, in the process of that change, is telling you he wants more than that from you. God is calling all of us to change. Turn.

I want you to change your behavior. This recentering of your values. Number four, I want you to fast.

Turn with fasting. And what fasting does is it demonstrates my altered priorities and appetites. And it moves from giving the natural or the flesh priority to giving the spirit priority.

And here's what begins to happen. When you pray and fast and fast and pray, your ability to hear God heightens. Your ability to hear God just goes to a completely different level.

Here's number five. Weep. Be broken before God.

Turn with fasting and with weeping and with mourning. There has to be passion. There has to be brokenness.

This cannot be merely intellectual. It cannot be rational left brain praying. It has to be holy desperation before God.

Because there's a perceived sense of loss here. Something, again, is broken. We are broken.

And we have to mourn. That's an indication of grief. And grief is a love word.

And so I've lost something. And I want to get back to it. We love the nation.

And we're about to lose it. You say, that couldn't happen. I'm not so sure.

We love life the way it was when we grew up, 50s, 60s, 70s, not bad times, even in the 80s. But we want it back. Grief is a love word.

Something has been lost. Something has been stolen. Our innocence has been stolen.

Our safety has been stolen. Our sense of security has been stolen. Our sense of global dominance has been stolen.

All of these things have been stolen. So Joel is pouring out his heart. And I think what he is saying is relevant to us.

I want to ask you a question. You think the folks in Joel's day got this? I'm telling you, only the deprivation, only the signs, only the approaching army seemed to awaken them. And then it seems that they heard and paid some attention to the voice of a prophet.

I don't know what it will take to wake us up. But we have to pray, whatever that is, God, would you wake up this nation? And again, I remind you that this is the way Jeremiah's generation treated him. They locked him in jail because he was not politically correct.

And they didn't want to hear the message that the nation itself was at peril. Here's number six. Rend your heart and not just your garment.

This is a willingness to change at our very core, a willingness to shift our values and recenter ourselves and change the core beliefs and behavior of our life, to shred our life if need be, as it is, in order to get back to God. And then behavior. I tell you, I need faith.

Because for America to do this, I just don't know how. I don't know how it could happen. It would have to be a miracle.

Let's pray again. Father, we pray for the sound of the spirit to be heard across America among your people. And we pray for a prophetic voice, a baby of prophetic voices to be raised to you.

We pray for an intensification of prayer, 24-7 prayer. We pray that we might turn to you, that we might fast, that we might weep, that we might rend our heart, shred the core values that have kept us from being in a right relationship with you and change and alter our behavior. We pray for a miracle for America.

And here's the shocking thing. Here's the shocking thing. The expectation of Joel is that God is gracious, and he's merciful, and he's slow to anger, and he has great kindness, and he relents of judgment.

As Luther would say, judgment is his alien nature. Love is his native nature. But listen to me very carefully, and Joel makes it clear, the outcome is not guaranteed.

This is not a matter of repenting. If we don't repent today, we can repent tomorrow. And if it gets worse, we can have a prayer meeting at church.

And if it gets really bad, I mean, we could pray all night. And if it gets really, really, really bad, we could give up pizza or something. No, no, no.

You don't understand. You simply don't understand. Listen to me carefully.

I'm not a Calvinist, but God frames a window for repentance. And if you miss that window, like coming back in from outer space, there is that window. And if the astronauts don't hit it at the right angle, they don't reenter.

They're forever lost in space. There are windows of time. There are portals that God offers.

We're in a window. We're in a window. And you can't put this off.

You can't say tomorrow. You don't choose the time. God chooses the time.

And we are at one of those now or maybe never times. God is gracious. There's no doubt about it.

He's merciful. No doubt about it. He's slow to anger.

I mean, look how long this has been building. He's kind, greatly kind, graciously kind. And he often threatens judgment and then responds in a merciful way.

And then Joel says this, who knows if he will turn and relent and leave a blessing behind. Thomas Watson, the great Puritan writer said, said, repentance is the condition for the petitioner who comes to God asking for grace. Repentance is the condition, but it is not the cause.

That is, what happens in terms of revival, what happens in terms of spiritual awakening is not up to us, not completely up to us. There are conditions that God asks of us, his people, but we're not in charge of this. If

God spoke to us yesterday and we put it off and we just brushed him off and said, I'll come back to you.

Just stay where you are. I'll come back to you tomorrow. And we treat him in such a lighthearted manner.

We may come back to him and find that the window is closed. There are times, there are moments and you miss God and the moment may never come again. This is a solemn thing.

This is a, and I know those who come from a Calvinist point of view rejoiced in that. That's true, they say. And those who come from a more Armenian, Wesleyan point of view, they resist that idea.

I'm trying to find the balance. And I'm telling you, God is in charge. We're not in charge.

God is sovereign. We're not sovereign. We don't dictate the terms and we don't dictate the time.

He dictates the terms and he dictates the times. And if he offers us terms and time and we decide we want to negotiate with him and alter the contract, he's not always amenable to that because he's God. And that shows a lack of respect for his sovereignty.

And that attitude will seek to exploit him in some future thing. And that is not what he's wanting. He's wanting a heart that's broken.

He's wanting a heart that trusts him. He wants a heart that's dependent upon him. He wants a heart that's fully yielded to him.

That's why I said, we can't, we can't, we can't miss our time. Who knows if we do this? Maybe, maybe, maybe he will turn. Maybe he'll relent of the judgment that we deserve.

Indeed, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an offended God. And immediately, here's what Joel does. He moves to consecration.

And he again says, blow the trumpet in Zion. Send forth a prophetic call. This is a veiled plea, again I say, to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Consecrate a fast. Call a solemn assembly. Gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation. Gather the children. Gather the nursing babies.

Nobody is exempt. In fact, even in this moment, weddings themselves are, are canceled. And then he said, let the priest who minister weep between the porch and the altar.

This is the, this is the court of the priest that stood before the flat surfaced area before the altar. It's the approach to the altar. So in this approach to the altar, deep into the court of the Let the priest, the pastors, the leaders, weep.

Let them cry out to God. And so leaders are to lead in prayer. They're there to lead in weeping.

Here is open intercession. It's not intercession in the holy place. It's not intercession at the altar of, of incense.

It's in front of the public altar in full view of the people. And then, and then Joel asked this question. Joel asked this question.

Why should they say among the peoples, where is their God? And this is the greater cause, the cause of his glory. What happens to America if the whole world that is watching us sees us fall apart? What, what have they said to the last people? They've seen our cities go up in smoke. They've seen the rioting.

They've seen the, the, the looting. They hear the media. They hear the disdain for the leader of, of, of the democracy.

They, they, they, they see and maybe participate in some of them in, in the skewing of the election results. The whole nation is saying all the world, the nations of the world, where is their God? And so God, we just ask, we just ask that you would act in behalf of your own purposes. We ask, ask that you would move and intervene in behalf of your own purposes in Jesus name.

I, my heart is so full. I want to, I want to do a part two. I want to share with you the sermon from Jacob Douche, but I want, I want to step away for just a moment and give you a couple moments to pray.

I, I don't know how to say this because I don't know how to put this on, but I'm just going to give you a couple minutes to do some private praying and, and just ask God to break your heart. And then I want to come back and I want to share from a bit of our history and make another appeal to you to pray. Dan, I don't know if you are where you can help me here by putting a message on the screen that is a call to pray or not, but I just want, I want to take maybe two or three minutes and just do a call to, to pray.

Now, father, in the name of Jesus, I ask you on the basis of these principles in Joel to break our hearts for our nation in Jesus name. I'm going to give you a minute or two to pray and then I'll be right. I'll be right back.

Thank you. Thank you so much, Dan. Thank you so much.

I want to share a little bit of history with you. And, and I found this so incredible. And I've been looking at this for several weeks.

I've kept this in my Bible and you can Google this, um, Jacob Deuce, D-O-U-C-H-E, the American Vine, and you'll find all kinds of copies and you can print out your own copy, uh, online. The year is 1775. The next year will be the Declaration of Independence.

And, and two and a half million people, some say the estimates are as little as two million people, live in the 13 colonies. Half a million live in, uh, in, in, in Virginia. South Carolina is the most prosperous state.

New England is the poorest. Only 10% of the people live in towns or cities. The rest are country folk living on, uh, on, on farms.

There are already 400,000 slaves. The, the, the, the French and Indian War had lasted about nine years from 1754 to 1763, but the British troops had stayed and the colonies were occupied. And, and, and, and so in 1775, on July 20, the Continental Congress called a day of prayer and fasting and they gathered in the Old Christ Church in downtown Boston.

And during this day of fasting, Jacob Douche preached a sermon to them. And the name of that sermon was the American Vine. One year before, 1774, they knew they were on the brink of war with, with Britain.

Britain had passed the Intolerable Act. They had passed the Boston Port Act. They had passed the Administration of Justice Act.

They had set up special British courts in the colonies to administer justice in behalf of, skewed toward, toward, uh, uh, towards Britain for which colonialists had no, had no appeal. The justice administered in those courts was warped and far too, uh, speedy. Oppression was running high.

Trust was running low. The Boston Tea Party had taken place December 16, 1773, just, just about 18 months prior to this gathering of the Continental Congress. The Boston Massacre had taken place years before, March 5th, 1770.

But since that time, for five years, the tensions between the colonialists and, and the English and their troops had run, had run high. So on September the 4th, 1774, the first ever Constitutional Congress took place. And here's, here's what they were concerned about.

They were concerned about trade restrictions. They were concerned about the fact that you could only buy certain things from Britain and those items were heavily taxed. They were, they were concerned about an economy that was driven by a called mercantism, uh, which, which meant that it favored, it, it, it, it favored certain trading partners and it faded and it, it favored England.

They were concerned that there was no free market and there was a huge black market. And at times there were even raids on homes by British troops to see if they had contraband or goods that had been, been bought that were not approved by, uh, by, by Britain. And then there was the Quebec Act in June 22, 1774.

All these things are clustering. And that favored the Catholic church and it cast a shadow of doubt over Protestant liberty in the colonies. Would England act in a similar way? And then you have April 18, 1775, the midnight ride of Paul Revere and William Dawes to get to John Hancock and Samuel Adams and tell them about British troop movements in the colonies.

And the colonies began to expect military action against them. What followed was the Battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775. And, and, and so, and so, and so then with military action in May, 1775, you have the second Continental Congress.

And for the first time, the colonies raised a Continental Army and, and, and they're sensing that war may be imminent. On July the 5th, 1775, they offer what they call the Olive Branch Petition and Britain rejects it. The constant plea for representation is rejected.

No colonial representation in, in, in, in, in, in Parliament, in Parliament. The constant plea about taxes with no representation, about the occupation of English troops, about the fear of the overreach of the Church of England or Catholicism, depending upon which faith England favored at the time. The, the, the, the concern about home invasions and, and, and privacy issues and contraband and the growing black market and the strong arm of England and the political imbalance and the military tensions and the economic measures, all those things, all of those things.

And then the concern that maybe the real problem was that they lacked the favor of God. And so here you have the very names that are of the rich, a rich part of the heritage of our nation gathered together in a church for a day of prayer and a day of fasting. And Jacob Duche preaches.

And when he gets to the pulpit, he prays this prayer, God, eternal and exhaustless source of light and life and love in you, we live and move and have our being. Now listen to this idea, because I don't think we believe this anymore. He said, every moment of life, I'm, I'm, I'm extrapolating here.

I'm not quoting exactly, but every moment of life deals to us a portion of your bounty. And this is the idea that God is so pervasive in life. He, this is not merely that God intervenes when we ask him to intervene, but that, but that he is everywhere.

He is eminent. He is in everything. This is an important idea.

He said, such favor demands the tribute of our unceasing praise, because your name is love and love is the essence of your nature. And, and, and, and, and this faith that we have, he says, this Christian faith is a religion of love. It's the principle.

It's the end of all, all dispensations. You never send your judgment. You never allow your chastening hand to come upon a people, except that we have become insensitive to the endearing relation of love.

We fail to live in a way that honors your grace, your invisible grace, your favor, because it's by that grace that we stand. And so we violate the law of your love. And so this is really the principle of ingratitude.

It's the lack of praise to God. When you shut a school system down as we have for 60 years and say, you can't even mention the name of God. You can't even say your grace over, over prayers.

This is the kind of, very kind of thing that Jacob Douche is talking about. It is the lack of gratitude by a people, not only for the supernatural, obvious intervention of God, but for the fact that in him, we live and move and have our being. By him, all things consist, Paul said, all things are held together.

And Jacob said to all of these members of Congress, this Continental Congress, the American founders, he said to them, these punishments are because of our national guilt. We are blind, he said. Our hearts are hard if we don't see and feel in this present visitation, with all the stuff that's happening to us, and I'm not talking about 1775 now, I'm talking about 2020.

With all the stuff that's happening to us, if we don't see and hear and feel that we are under the visitation of God's judgment, of God's wrath, that these are the tokens of your displeasure. And let me tell you what, the tokens are not his judgment. The tokens are the wake-up call that says, so this prayer meeting that happened in 1775 was to reckon with the possible judgment of God upon the nation.

Oh God, we ask for your sake that you intervene, that you spare us, because he says we acknowledge that we are under a dark cloud of judgment. It hangs over our head, and we have sinned against you. Now I would say that this is not what you hear anywhere in the media.

This is not what you hear anywhere in church, that all of these things, though they may not have come from God, are used by God as wake-up calls and indicators that we are no longer experiencing the unfettered grace and mercy and blessing of God. These are national punishments, Jacob Deuce says, for our national guilt, because our prosperity has rendered us forgetful, and we have been inattentive to the precepts of your gospel, that is, the principles of your word of God, so spare us. Spare us of the Christian blood that's being shed.

Spare us of the blood that's on the streets. Spare us of the murders that are on the streets. This is what we would pray today, because now we've reached a point where only your providence can deliver us.

I'm quoting from Jacob Deuce. So help us, God, to take this seriously, to lay our heart, the great danger, the present unhappy divisions, and he speaks of hatred, and he speaks of anger, and he speaks of

bitterness, and he speaks of resentment, and he prays, God, help us to forgive our offending brothers, even as we ourselves look for forgiveness at the hands of our offended God, and he's praying for reconciliation. He's suggesting that the nation is coming apart, and indeed it was, because 25 to 30 percent, 20 to 30 percent, did not want to be free from England.

So that's right, and when the Revolutionary War was lost, they packed up most of them and went back home. On the other side, 20 to 30 percent less than what was on the other side wanted independence, and in the middle, 40 to 50 percent just didn't want war. So you have 20 to 30 percent, 40 to 50 percent, that's well 70 to 80 percent of the population that is against war, that says leave things the way they are.

This is where we are today. There is not a great cry for awakening. There's not a great cry for repentance.

There's a small minority that's hanging on and crying out to God. We are in, Jacob Deust says, great danger. You need to heal us because we are deeply divided as a nation, and so we would say, we would say the same thing today.

We have never been, it seems, more divided than we are today, and he prays, he prays, you alone can make us one mind in this house, one mind, a brotherly union, you alone, and then he begins to quote from the Apostle Paul because he knows that at the bottom of this, it's a faith, and it's the shared values of that faith. It's our being one body, one spirit, one hope, and our calling one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father, so that we can all be of one heart and one soul united in the holy bond of truth and peace and faith and love. He's calling them back to the very roots of their faith, the values that bound them, bound them together.

They were bound together in Christian faith. We left that 60 years ago, and we embraced pluralism, and only a great awakening can bring us back to the place where we embrace the faith of our Father. So, Father, we stop right now, and we pray for a great spiritual awakening, the lies that are told about the pilgrims, the lies that are told about our foundings, and God, on the other hand, the glossing over and the making of the founders into angels, we know that's not true on the other side either, but we pray for a balance to understand that in many cases, these were godly people who came to these shores seeking freedom and seeking a way to serve you in an unfettered, free way, to have your laws written on their heart and to live free and to worship you, and God, we pray that you would visit us again in this nation.

We pray that you would pour out your spirit upon us again. We pray that your hand would be upon us again. We pray that you would awaken us again to the true roots of our nation.

We ask, Jacob Douce says, through the merits of your well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, in and through whom we have the high and inestimable privilege of addressing you as God our Father. He goes on in this message, in this sermon, to talk about political turmoil, to talk about being able to discern the marks of sovereign intervention in God's working in our time. He talks about the rise and fall of empires and the fact that these don't happen but by his omnipotent hand.

And this is the line that Ben Franklin will hear, and he will repeat later, when Congress gets stuck. Jacob Douce says, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without your knowledge, and the very hairs of our head are numbered, how can an empire rise without your knowing it? You are behind the rise and fall of empires. And so we stop and pray again.

Father, do not let this nation fall. Do not let this nation collapse. Not for our sake, but for your glory, we pray, that you might move upon this nation.

Jacob Douce is preaching this sermon, 1775. We know, Lord, that a scene of disorder and ruin and desolation would be exhibited upon us if you were to withdraw your overruling influence. And so I think this is what we don't realize.

Things go along as they are. Everything works. Disneyland is open.

And we assume, because of this left-brain scientific idea that we have, we assume that God, if there is a God, he doesn't have anything to do with that. But Paul says, by him, Jesus Christ, all things consist. All things are held together.

That is, the operative glue that keeps things from together and the oil that keeps things running is the grace of God, the invisible hand of God. It's the invisible hand of God that makes the plants grow. It's the invisible hand of God that keeps the oxygen breathable.

It's the invisible hand of God that causes the trees to green up in the spring and turn gold in the fall. It's the invisible hand of God upon us that protects us in ways that we cannot see. And here's what Jacob Douce is saying.

When a nation sins, God not only brings a hand of judgment, but God withdraws grace. He withdraws his invisible hand. And then Jacob Douce says an amazing thing.

He says, men savage in some degree by nature and more savage by the growth of the indulgence of their evil lust and passions will soon fall upon themselves in violence and ferocity equal to beasts of prey. If you withdraw your grace even men who have not tasted your grace in a saving way but are nevertheless restrained by that grace, if you withdraw your grace, evil will grow in our hearts and we will begin to act like animals towards one another and we will begin to kill one another. There was a handful of murders, a few hundred in 1900.

The number I think this year will probably approach 20,000. And they're everywhere. And you know they're everywhere.

What is all, and you can't find the killers. What is all this bloodshed about? It's the hand of God, the invisible hand of God's grace withdrawing from us as a nation and a people because we're not grateful, because we're not repentant, because we don't pray, because we don't acknowledge him, because we don't seek him. Not only do we not acknowledge him, we deny him.

And atheism is fast becoming the national religion or agnosticism and even now pluralism reigns as the national religion. Jacob Douce says God now still reigns. He presides unseen in the councils of princes.

And that's what we pray now, Lord, that you would assert your reign, that you would aggressively intervene in behalf of this nation. And he says, happy are the people who have placed their confidence in the dependence upon the king of kings. God, that's not what we've done as a nation.

But God, we want to do it. We need to do it. At least your people need to do it.

Somehow in some glorious multi-million person way, some kind of national day of prayer in which the churches of this nation are open across this nation and people flood into those churches to pray and seek

your face. Some kind of nobody's in charge, but the Holy Spirit is in charge. We want to cry out to you.

Oh, that 10 million people on one particular day after the turn of the year would flood into the churches and pray and cry out to you. Oh, to God, that you would look down and see from the unruly Seattle to Miami, Florida, with its pantheon of gods right there at the coastline from Maine and Bangor and Portland all the way down to San Diego. Across this nation, God, we just pray.

In Hawaii and in Alaska and in Puerto Rico, we pray, God, that people would cry out to you. Here's what Jacob Deuce says, with the principles of God in our hearts on this day, we have entered the courts of the Lord's house and the trumpet is sounded in Zion. A fast has been proclaimed.

A solemn assembly has been convened and we are now prostrate. And he's talking about the leaders of the nation. We are now prostrate before the throne of God and we are praying, God, would you return to us? Would you return to us? It's not our returning to him.

We will see, Joel says, if he will do this. Would you return to us? We beseech you, Lord of the armies of heaven, that you would look down from heaven and behold and visit the vine. The American vine that you planted in 13 different places.

And, Jacob Deuce, say to the destroying angel, it is enough. Stay your hand. God, we just pray that you would stay your hand from judgment.

We pray that you would not bring judgment on this nation. I can't do the whole thing. Deuce says, these American colonies, they're a vineyard planted by the Lord and a city, Boston, now stands where less than a century ago, this was uncultivated wild desert, where there was ignorance and superstition and idolatry.

And then again, he makes the appeal. He said, this has happened so rapidly, the prosperity that has come. But now he said, the joy is gone.

And there's a night of heaviness and the hedges of liberty are broken down. And the vineyard, the walls of the vineyard are broken down. And the nations are plucking what they want.

And the people are plucking what they want from the vineyard. And we're asking you to lay your hands upon the nation and have mercy on the nation and bring us and draw us back to you. He talks about the thunder of judgment.

He talks about crying aloud unto the Lord. I would recommend that you go and look at this sermon and read it. I want to close with a couple of things and pray.

And I want to go back specifically to Psalm 80. In verse one, God is seen as the shepherd of the nation. And Jacob Deuce is drawing this analogy, that the real leader of the nation is God.

We're not a theocracy. That's not what I'm suggesting. We are a republic where the government is by the people for the people, but that government is informed and infused by godly values.

And the wall of separation, so-called never in the constitution, was to keep the government from imposing its values on the church that would be the heart and soul of the nation. And because God was their shepherd, God was guiding the nation. John Adams says this constitution was not for a godless people, only for a godless, godly, self-governed people.

In verse three, there's a plea that God would restore us, that he would send revival. And that plea is in verse three and verse seven and verse 19. Psalm 80.

This is the psalm from which Jacob is preaching. So let's stop and pray right now. God, would you help us again have a moment, a spiritual awakening, two to three years, three to four, five years, and would you move in such a powerful way in this nation, we again recognize that you are the shepherd.

Would you revive us? Would you restore us? Because now we know that your anger is against this nation. Verse four mentions tears. Verse five mentions conflicts with neighbors, enemies, not only foreign nations that are laughing, but enemies among us.

And then verse eight, here's the mention of the vine. God, you planted, you planted this nation, you started this nation. It took root, it filled up the land, and now the walls are broken down and everyone is plucking fruit from it.

Wild animals tear at its roots. Beasts devour it. We're out of control as a nation.

Verse 14, here's the plea. Look down. Visit the vine.

This is Jacob Deutch, 1775. Visit America. And we pray that prayer.

We echo that prayer. Visit the vine. Visit your vineyard.

Burn with fire. Verse 18, revive us. Restore us.

God, as I close my time, I pray for the government. However this election turns out, I pray for the government. I pray that you would visit the White House and visit the White House often.

I pray that you visit the Lincoln Bedroom. I don't know why I prayed for Obama to have an encounter with you in the Lincoln Bedroom. And I suppose it's because Lincoln fell from that bed and onto his knees and prayed.

And I pray for a president that will seek you and seek your face on their knees in the White House. I know you can change the heart of Donald Trump, and I know you can change the heart of Joe Biden. I know you can.

And help us to have faith that you can move in either way. We pray for our government. We pray for a godly government.

We pray for a government that acknowledges our Christian roots. We pray for the election. We pray for issues of integrity.

We've become so accustomed to shoplifting that we have detectors at the doors of the stores that go off if someone leaves. We've accepted theft as normal. We have become a nation of thieves, starting with little things to major things.

Stealing has become almost honorable if it's for a good cause. It's become a game we play. Cheating in high schools and colleges is epidemic.

Buying term papers is now an industry. Truth has been crucified for power. And truth even languishes in the church.

Only 60-62% of pastors believing in the resurrection. Only 6-9% of Americans who are now Bible Christians, really believing the Bible and taking it seriously. Truth languishes in the press.

We only have a narrative and in Congress and in the courts and in our colleges. We pray that we would be a nation that again cares. A culture that is more loving than this culture.

We've substituted tolerance for love. And now we're not even tolerant one of another. We are intolerant.

And conflict is normal. And identity politics not only identifies us, it polarizes us. And hate, recast as valor for some noble, idealized, isolated principle, has become the way in which we live.

Them, us prevails everywhere. The divisions are deep. Only you, God, can heal us.

Lord, we pray for our nation. We pray for the conflict and the strife that is normal, that breaks out in our streets now on a regular basis. As regular young people against older people.

Blacks and whites in conflict with one another. Republicans and Democrats. Foreigners and homebodies.

God, we pray. This is not the way it should be. We should not be overcome by such a partisan spirit, evident everywhere in the nation.

Flavors know it poisons everything. It poisons race. It poisons faith.

It poisons our views on the environment. It captures our views on abortion and life and marriage and family and even economic models, free capitalism or Marxist. We are divided everywhere we look.

Political models strike everywhere we look. We pray because we are no longer thinking people. We're programmed to the party line.

We memorize the party line. We speak the party line. And God, we just pray that we would be a free thinking, rational people.

That we would not succumb to peer pressure. And peer pressure would not be so great that it paralyzes us and keeps us from being bold to say what we really say and need to say and differentiate ourselves and stand all by ourselves as Patrick Henry did. As for me, give me liberty or give me death.

As Joshua said, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. We pray, Lord. We pray, Lord.

There in Continental Congress in 1775 in this prayer meeting, in this prayer meeting, before the decision was made for independence, the nation was in trouble. And the only salvation, the only hope was the Lord. And those leaders were together praying because they knew their only hope was the Lord.

And right now, Lord, that seems impossible. That seems absolutely impossible that that could happen in our day, in our time. But we take a moment and we pray.

And again, I pray that across the nation, that across the nation on one day, all throughout churches, all across the nation, people might gather and pray. Whether there's a formal service or not, they might seek your face and pray for a mighty move of God to come to this nation. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Deuce says you can't miss the marks of sovereignty. And I ask you to begin to watch for the marks of sovereignty because these marks of sovereignty, the fingerprints of God, are indicators that we need to

arise. The last thing that I would pray is that we would pray that we're no longer compassionate.

We're no longer tolerant of those with different values. We won't even talk with them. We won't meet with them.

We won't compromise at all. We don't like them. We're no longer colleagues with people who share a different feeling, no longer friends.

We are foes. We're enemies, one of another, and a nation cannot survive. That kind of nation will fall.

It will be conquered. It will be defeated. No country, no family, no people can so endure, not without compassion, not without empathy, not without a desire to at least dialogue and come to some terms one with another.

Otherwise, we've loosed a destructive dynamic on our nation, not the destroyer angel, but the demonic powers of hell itself. We need to learn the principle of the salt covenant of sitting down with enemies and building a covenant of salt, a conversation, a dialogue that says, could we not find common ground here? You see, until we love one another, until we love our enemies, until we love one another, we'll never be free because the greatest bondage is hate, and the greatest prison is unforgiveness. And so, God, would you help us? Would you change us? Because we Christians, we tend to be incalcerated in our views and unbending in our positions, and we stand on principle and the higher ground, and we don't know what it's like to wash dirty manure-infested feet of somebody who's going to betray us and dip in the salt with him and be loving.

We can't stop their behavior, but we can make an overture of grace. Give me the ability to do that. Give us the ability to do that.

And so, Father, again, I just keep saying, I'll just stop here. I know, again, I pray, God, I pray for your love in my life. I pray that we would be a thoughtful, deliberating people again.

I pray that we would embrace peace and not strife. Men and women, peace talks, inner city, outer city, the up and outers and the down and outers. I pray that we'd be patient to listen to one another.

I pray that we would speak, and when we speak, we would speak the truth in love. And I pray for your hand upon our nation, for your glory in Jesus' name. Amen, amen, and amen.

Joel 1 and 2, and then the sermon called the American Vine, I think it was called the American Vine by Jacob Douche, preached in the Continental Congress to members of the Continental Congress. If I started calling the names of those that were in that church on that July day in 1775, you would recognize those names. And despite what people might tell you about, they didn't believe in God.

They were atheists. They were deists. They were in that church, and they were praying, and they were praying for the intervention of God.

And no one stood up to rigidly, openly resist these notions of Jacob Douche. Why? Because this was the common understanding throughout the land we call the American colonies. By the way, the first flag would be a prayer flag.

It would be a green tree.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/EBEhREInf1l.mp4>
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