

## A Prayer of Lament, Repentance, and Hope

by Scotty Smith

Dear praying friends, Wednesday was one of the most disturbing, heartbreaking days in my 70 years of life as a Christian with American citizenship. With no further commentary on the events that took place in Washington, D.C., I simply want to pray the Scriptures with you today. 1 Peter was written to help believers live as citizens of heaven in the secular world of Rome. These words apply to Christians in every generation and nation. God have mercy on us all. Grace and Peace, Scotty

**1 Pet. 2:1**—Rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. **Lord Jesus**, we praise, bless, and adore you for being our perfect Savior and reigning King. You are our peace, and you have called us to a life of peace-making and neighbor-loving. We're not to be passive, but passionately yours—serving you with thoughts, words, and actions becoming the Gospel. In these coming hours, days, and months, fill our hearts with your grace and Spirit, that we might rid ourselves of our unbelief, malice, and sin.

**1 Pet. 2:9** — You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. **More so than** any flag we wave, or passport we carry, or tribe we cherish... you have declared us to be uniquely yours—chosen, beloved, a holy nation; a people called to bring light into the darkness, and your praise among the nations. The only unshakable, lasting Kingdom is yours, Lord Jesus—a Bride you are redeeming from every nation, tribe, people, and language (Rev. 7:9).

**1 Pet 2:12** — Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. **Free us** in these coming days to live good lives, godly lives among our neighbors. May our words and works of grace make the Gospel beautiful and believable to everyone. And if we are persecuted, may it not be because of our obnoxiousness, but your righteousness. May the two most important days on our calendars be today, and the Day of your return. We want to live in light of eternity, and love whoever you place in front of us today.

**1 Pet. 2:16-17** — Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor. **Lord Jesus**, thank you for setting us free from sin, death, and judgment. May we use our freedom for your glory, and our neighbors good. Show us how to live respectfully, faithfully, and expectantly... until the Day you return to finish making all things new. So very Amen we pray, in your most loving and glorious name.



January 10, 2021

10:30 A.M.

## God's Design for Government

# EXILES ON MISSION

How Christians Can Thrive in a Post-Christian World



# Order of Service

Announcements

Welcome

Faithlife Giving

Preparation for Worship

Hymn

“Oh, Lord You’re Beautiful”. . . . . Keith Green

----- God’s Greatness -----

Call to Worship

Hymn of Adoration: “Holy, Holy, Holy”. . . . . Heber/Dykes

Prayer of Invocation

Song: “Lord Have Mercy”. . . . . Steve Merkel

Children are Dismissed to Sunday School

----- God’s Renewal -----

Scripture Warning

Public Confession

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon and Comfort: Titus 3:3-5

Song of Renewal

“Lord I Need You”. . . Reeves/Stamfill/Maher/Nockels/Carson

----- God’s Grace -----

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 2:9-17

Sermon

“God’s Design for Government”

Prayer: 1 Tim 2:1-7

Celebration of the Lord’s Supper\*

Hymn: “The Cause of Christ”. . . . . Jobe/Hastings/Fowler

Prayer of Approach

Words of Institution: 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (ESV)

----- God’s Blessing -----

Parting Hymn: “God of This City”

. . . . . McCann/Boyd/Jordan/Comfort/Kernaghan/Beakley

Benediction

## God’s Gracious Provision 1/3/2021

Offering: \$982.37

Attendance: 38

Your offering may be placed in the box at the Welcome Table.

***Our whole disposition of freedom and joy and fearlessness and radical otherness from this world is rooted in our belonging to God—which in one sense is slavery (because his authority over us is absolute) but in another sense is glorious freedom (because he changes our hearts so that we love doing what he gives us to do). —John Piper***

The Progression of Honor

1 Peter 2:17 (ESV)

*Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

“Honor all, love the brotherhood, fear God . . .”

And then honor the emperor. He is not to be feared and he need not be loved as Christians are loved. But he must be honored. First comes our absolute allegiance to God. Next comes our affectionate love for other believers. Then comes our honor to the king and other unbelievers. The king is not God. Only God is God.

**No matter who the President is we are called to honor**

We find a way to express our dismay at some of his views and some of his behavior while also communicating a basic respect for him as a person and a respect for his office which is ordained by God. “Honor all men . . . honor the king.”

**We are called to be people of humility.** This text, with the whole Bible, calls us to humble ourselves first before God, who has absolute authority and absolute rights over us, as the potter over the clay, and then, for his sake, to humble ourselves before any institution that God tells us to.

**It is not our job to save America from anarchy.** Our job is to live to God in all of life—including the social and political parts of life—so that others may turn to him and be saved and give him glory. But in that process, leaders are honored, and civil discourse is purged of cynicism, and the rebellious spirit is humbled, and the moral foundation of law is strengthened. And this in turn reveals, for those who have eyes to see, that living unto God is good for the world.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup>Piper, J. (2007). *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)*. Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God.

When Peter calls disciples “aliens and strangers,” he means that we are never fully at home in this world. Strangers have no permanent residence. Aliens rarely hold positions of power and privilege. Indeed, there is no sign that Peter’s people ever held special rank.

***We neither flee nor avoid “the world.” We believe we should critique the culture, engage the culture, and even “make culture.”***

#### Be Subject

*1 Peter 2:13–14 (ESV)*

*Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,<sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.*

Governments do not save; they are to maintain external order in a world seething with evil so the saving message of the gospel can run and triumph on its own power. That is why Paul urged us in 1 Timothy 2:1–4 to pray for kings and those in authority—because he desires that the gospel not be hindered by upheaval, so that more people can be saved.

#### The Will of God

*1 Peter 2:15 (ESV)*

*For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.*

***We are to get our bearings in a pagan culture from the will of God (1 Peter 4:2). We are aliens and strangers. We consult our true Sovereign how to live. He tells us what is right and what is wrong through his book—our ultimate charter and constitution.***

#### As Servants of God

*1 Peter 2:16 (ESV)*

*Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.*

We belong to God and not the American government. We are slaves of God and not man (1 Corinthians 7:22–23). We do not submit to human institutions as slaves to those institutions but as God’s free people. We submit in freedom for his sake. Not in bondage for the king’s sake.

## Upcoming Events

Sunday, January 17 6:15–7:15 P.M.

GCC Prayer Gathering at the House of Prayer

1300 High Street, Pottstown, PA

All our church family and your friends are encouraged to attend.

Worship through song, reading Scripture, and praying.

The logo for the House of Prayer, featuring a stylized house icon above the text "HOUSE of PRAYER".

**\*A Word About Communion at Grace** This is a time for all people to seek the Lord. For Christians, Communion (also called The Lord’s Supper or The Eucharist, which means ‘thanksgiving’) is a time to meet with their Savior by faith, to be strengthened and renewed by Him as they eat bread and drink wine. All Christians who trust in Christ alone as their Savior and Lord, belong to a church that embraces the gospel, are at peace with their fellow neighbor, and seek strength and grace to live more faithfully to Christ, are invited to participate. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer and to consider more deeply your rela-

### \*Prayers for Those Not Communing

**Prayer of Searching for Truth:** Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth and the life. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

**Prayer of Believing on Jesus:** Lord, Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared to hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my savior. Amen.

**Prayer of Struggling Against Sin:** Lord, Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my needs, and may turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely to me, and run with perseverance the race that you have set before me, looking only to you, the pioneer and champion of my faith. Amen.

## Prayer/Praise. . . . . January 10, 2021

- Pray for the family of Ashley and Jeremy Adams. The whole family, except Jeremy, has COVID. Pray that their minor symptoms will not worsen and good health returns quickly.
- Pray for Matt Deichert, who tested positive for COVID and is quarantining for the next two weeks. Pray for his recovery and that his family remains symptom free.
- Pray for Rindy Lee's father and brother, who have tested positive for Covid. Rindy's father, who is 90 years old, is coughing and fatigued. Also, pray for Rindy's niece, nephew, and her brother's girlfriend.
- Pray for Dr. Hsu, Jill Aument's employer. Dr. Hsu's father and mother have Covid. Her father is in ICU. They are in Georgia, so it is difficult for travel. Please pray for God's healing Hand on them and peace for Dr. Hsu and direction on how to handle everything.
- Pray for Mandy's friend Dana's mom, Mrs. Mayo. Pray that she will be restored to full physical and mental health. Pray for peace for Dana and her sisters.
- Praise for Lisa Frame's friend, Katelyn, whose cancer is low risk and treatable. Continued prayers for wisdom for her doctors.
- Pray for Nic Collins, who will be going to Quito, Ecuador for a mission trip at the end of March. Pray for travel, safety, and no COVID. Pray for funds to be raised, as they will be helping in the capital with special needs children and teens.
- Pray for Debbie Breyer, friend of Donna Jenkins. Pray for wisdom for the doctors to find a solution to this recurring issue and continued healing for Debbie.
- Pray for Joe, the father of Dawn Fleetman's friend, Mike. Pray for continued healing for Joe.
- Pray for Jeremiah Mace, who is in a 9-month internship program. Please pray for continued healing for Koreen's family.
- Pray for Amanda and John, friends of Koreen Mace, that God will speak to them about their relationship and assurance of their salvation.
- Pray for Tyler and Kaci Yensan, as Kaci prepares to join Tyler in North Carolina.
- Pray for continued healing for Mandi Yensan's friend, Tammy.
- Pray for continued comfort and peace for Steve Simons and his family, for the loss of their Aunt Marie.
- Pray for Donna Plowfield's son-in-law, David, who is seeking employment in physical therapy.

## Message

### God's Design for Government

*1 Peter 2:9–17 (ESV)*

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup>Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. <sup>13</sup>Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup>or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup>For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup>Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup>Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

### We are Redeemed

*1 Peter 2:9–10 (ESV)*

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

***We belong to a Ruler who transcends this world's rulers and we follow him, so we inevitably experience a partial alienation from this age. Because Jesus is Lord (1:3), all earthly lords take second place.***

### Never Fully at Home

*1 Peter 2:11–12 (ESV)*

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup>Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*