

Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

November 8, 2016

For starters, just in case you've missed it, today is election day in these United States, and if you haven't voted yet, please don't fail to exercise this right, purchased with much blood.

Please VOTE. NOW would be good.

It is certainly an understatement to say that the last 18 months have been contentious around our land, and whatever happens today, the fractiousness is unlikely to subside anytime soon. So it was that on Sunday we pondered what it means to be the "watchers on the wall" who "stand in the gap" for the land.



[30] And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

Ezekiel 22:30 KJV

We were reminded that God would have been willing to spare even Sodom and Gomorrah had so many as ten righteous people have been found in those cities who wept over the sins of their neighbors, city, and land. And we reminded ourselves of God's promise that *"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their*

wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Along that same line, my Bible reading for this morning included these verses:

"Have you seen this, son of man?" he asked. "Is it nothing to the people of [your land] that they commit these detestable sins, leading the whole nation into violence, thumbing their noses at me, and provoking my anger? Therefore, I will respond in fury. I will neither pity nor spare them. And though they cry for mercy, I will not listen" (Ezekiel 8:17-18).

"Walk through the streets of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of all who weep and sigh because of the detestable sins being committed in their city" (Ezekiel 9:4).

Then he said to me, "The sins of the people . . . are very, very great. The entire land is full of murder; the city is filled with injustice. They are saying, 'The LORD doesn't see it! The LORD has abandoned the land!' So I will not spare them or have any pity on them. I will fully repay them for all they have done" (Ezekiel 9:9-10).



And as I read those warnings, I wondered whether there were any prophetic messages that we believe were delivered in November. The only thing I found was that Zechariah's prophecies appear to have been delivered in October-November of the year 520 B.C. As you may know, Zechariah's prophecies include

both warning and Hope, with a very large number of Messianic prophecies to be found in his words. I commend that (fairly) short book to you on this election day.

But the real challenge, I think, will come in the days ahead, when we will all have to deal with the poison already in our common well. How will we be or how shall we become One Nation, Under God, once more?

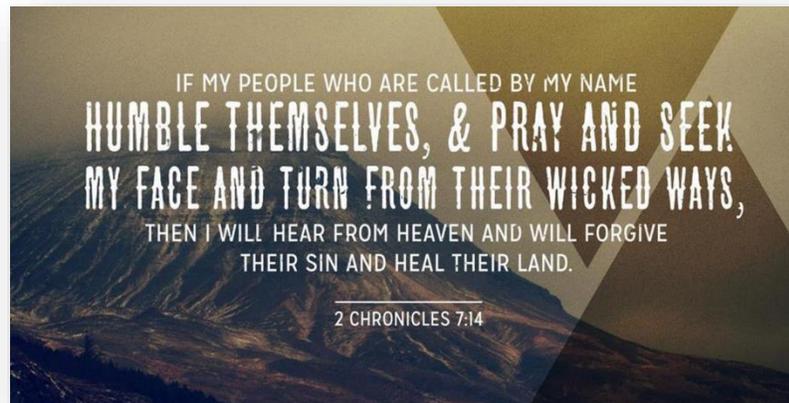


At the very least, **we who follow Jesus should show the way. We should demonstrate among ourselves and in our community what Hope and forgiveness look like.** And such work is not for the faint of heart.

As Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin famously put it not long before his assassination, "**Peace is not made with friends. Peace is made with enemies.**"¹ And Rick Warren reminds us that Christian community "is a place of grace, where mistakes aren't rubbed in but rubbed out. *Fellowship happens when mercy wins over justice.*"²

So, in the days ahead, let us covenant together to be peacemakers in the land. We can be sure that this is God's purpose, and God will help us do it.

Dave



P.S. Thanks for your participation in our 2017 pictorial directory! Now we enter the work of post-production, with *many* thanks to Felicia Turk, our Directory Coordinator!



¹ *Newsweek*, September 13, 1993, cited in *Christianity Today*, Vol. 37, no. 12.

² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Zondervan, 2002), p. 142.

Surprise

And THANK YOU for Sunday's SURPRISE CELEBRATION of the fifth anniversary of your invitation and our acceptance of the joyful journey of becoming pastor and people! **I was completely surprised, and I am humbled by your very kind and affirming expressions of love and support.**

I've served seven churches over what is now approaching 40 years of ordained ministry.³ Each of those churches was special in its own way, and I still stay in touch with friends in most of them. The journey has been a good one, and I am grateful.

At the same time, I join with your previous pastors here at CBF in saying that while I've always enjoyed my work, **I've never had so much fun as I continue to have among you.** I give thanks for you each and every day, and that's the truth.



While it's certainly the case that I am no longer "a spring chicken" (and Tom Hawk pointed out yesterday that we're not even "summer chickens" any more ;) I continue to be very grateful for the privilege of shepherding a small part of our Lord's flock. I am also grateful beyond words for my sweetheart, who has loved me far more than I have ever deserved to be loved since we were both "spring chickens" (#43 coming up soon).

We are journeying through some very important months and years in the life of our congregation, and we go forward with our eyes, ears, minds, and hearts focused on Him who is our Hope.

Thanks for being you. I love you.

Dave



³ I have been the music director in two churches, pastoral counselor in one, associate pastor in one, and pastor of three.