

CALL to PRAYER Lord's Prayer / Model Prayer "...Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done..."

Intro - It is my intention for the foreseeable future to focus on topical sermons. We spent a year in Ephesians and before we begin another long series, I thought it would be good to address a variety of topics. What is the purpose of gathered assembly? We are to glorify God by being, and by making, disciples. We are not a *seeker-sensitive church* we are *believer-sensitive church*. The church is for the redeemed. The church meets to grow in our most holy faith so we will be encouraged to *live it out* and *speak it out* in the world. We have a discipleship responsibility to teach and equip believers. Imbedded in this is an evangelistic & prophetic responsibility to our community & our country. The church has a responsibility to speak to society by declaring the will of God to a wicked world. The next two messages will be in this prophetic vein. I am not a prophet, but God gave us a book full of prophetic words which we should give heed & herald to our world. The title of today's message is *Societal Mess & Societal Mercy*. God has been kind to our nation. He has not treated us as our sins deserve. This is a great mercy with a great opportunity - it is a reprieve that gives us time to repent. There is a renewed optimism in our land, but we shouldn't let this optimism harden us in our paganism. Today I want to acknowledge God's kindness & mercy to us, but I also want to warn us not to neglect (or overlook/leave) the mess.

Romans 2:4 - Societal Mess & Societal Mercy

SOCIETAL MERCY

- God is kind, tolerant and patient. Rom. 2:4
 - Luke 6:35-36 The record of history is the record of God's mercy, patience & kindness. God is kind to ungrateful and evil men - longsuffering
 - Psalm 145:8-13 the church should praise God's common grace
- God's kindness to society is often treated lightly or completely ignored - Rom. 2:4
 - Society rarely considers God's daily kindness. Quick to complain or blame but not praise
 - Matt. 5:45 Lam. 3:22-23 even in the mess of life we can see God's mercy in life
- God has been very kind to our country (Ezra 9:13)
 - Tumultuous timeframe....sprinting toward decline & decadence
 - Going in a bad direction with a choice between Jezebel or Jehu to lead us.
 - God was kind to give us the lesser of two evils. When Providence smiles we should be grateful
- God's kindness should lead us to repentance Rom. 2:4
 - Just because we avoided the bigger mess doesn't mean we should ignore the present mess. God's kindness is a reprieve to give us time to repent.
 - If we are complacent there will be a compound payment. Rom. 2:4-5
 - Let us be thankful but let us not be neglectful of our duty to turn from our wicked ways.

SOCIETAL MESS

- A Prophetic Pronouncement Hosea 4:1-6
 - 4:1 - there is an accusation....a charge...a case brought against the culture
 - God is the prosecuting attorney going after societal sin/crime
 - Threefold accusation - 1] No faithfulness or truth 2] No kindness /mercy 3] No knowledge of God ignorance of the Eternal / Biblically illiterate / practical atheism

- **4:2** – the 3rd, 9th, 6th, 8th, 7th ... breaking the commandments breaks a culture and a country
 - When we do sin, sin does us. brings decay, death & destruction
- **4:3** "...the land mourns..."
 - Sin brings sadness to people...to animals...and to the earth
 - Sin pollutes society – Is. 24:4-6 It is an environmental hazard – Lev. 20:22
- **4:4-5** the blame game no one is accepting responsibility
 - "It's not my fault" will lead to a land falling
- **4:6** the priests quit preaching God's law and God's attributes
 - Isaiah 30:9-11 Jer. 5:30-31
- **4:6c** the next generation is lost because they forgot God Law.
 - "Don't teach kids the 10 Commandments" (what percentage of church kids chunk the faith?)

➤ **An Apostolic Assessment**

- Romans 1:18-32 chronicles the process of cultural corruption and destruction
 - This is a well-worn pattern
- **1:18** Ungodliness & unrighteousness is initially expressed by suppression of truth. What is real & true becomes controversial. Truth as a controlled substance.
- **1:19-20** suppression of truth about God (obvious truth ignored/denied)
 - Natural revelation from creation is shunned
- **1:21-22** willful ignorance in ignoring God - society dishonors and is ungrateful to God
 - There was a joke told last week at awards show - everyone thanked but Almighty God the Creator
 - This disgrace leads to a darkened mind & to fools who think they're wise.
- **1:23** society exchanges the invisible God for visible images
 - They re-make God in their own image or preferred image. Visual religion
- **1:24** God removes His restraining grace- He gives them more rope
 - Materialism and hedonism rule the day - a society enslaved by greed & immorality
- **1:25** Truth is sold to buy the lie.
 - Creatures are worshipped instead of the Creator.
 - Animals are elevated while God is denigrated. Mother Earth is honored instead of Father God
- **1:26-27** this unnatural exchange leads to even more unnatural exchanges
 - God gives women over to lesbianism
 - God gives men over to homosexuality
 - Why is the rainbow cult such a powerful religion in our culture?
- **1:28** God removes a societies ability to think straight
 - A crooked society is the result of crooked thoughts
 - Loving sin gets you more sin - Ezekiel 35:6
- **1:29-31** a snapshot of our society
- **1:32** a corrupt culture celebrates the corruption
 - Psalm 12:8 Isaiah 3:9 Jer. 6:15 Phil. 3:19
 - Is. 5:20-21 a society that celebrates the lie and suppresses the truth is in serious trouble

➤ I am thankful for God's recent societal mercy, but we still have the same societal mess.

- God's kindness should lead us to repentance. Given a reprieve so we might repent
- Let us pray that this renewed optimism does not harden us in our paganism. We must address the mess
- !! - What we learn about in here we are live it out and speak it out...out there