

Message: Carrying God's Heart For The Nations

Service: Go Church Centurion

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I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 2:6-8

⁶“Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. ⁷“I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. ⁸ Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.

This is a messianic Psalm which discloses the heart of God toward His own Son. This conversation introduces an amazing declaration that all the nations of the world are intended to come under the protection of His Son's rule. However, the qualifier is, ask. Jesus came to inherit the nations, not some, all. He came to possess the ends of the earth. To infiltrate power centres through His influence. To establish the Kingdom of heaven on this earth. To show that God has a personal interest in the in all the people groups of the earth.

John 17:17. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

Jesus made it very clear that part of His mission was to equip His disciples so that His message, the message of the Gospel would spread into the world.

Jesus' heart was that the world – the nations would know that He is the King, the Messiah, the Son of God and that every nation has a place in the Kingdom and plans of God.

John 17:20-23. ²⁰ “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that

they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Jesus saw His influence extending beyond the mission and work of His disciples. He knew that many would come to a knowledge of His truth as the Gospel of His message would spread. And here we are today, recipients of His message.

Acts 1:8. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The apostles were dispersed throughout the world. Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor, Scythia to Andrew, and Asia to John, who, after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus. Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion.

Matthew 28: 18-20. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Even today, disciples of all nations are being made. Many have become and are becoming disciplined followers of Christ. Many are being taught to observe the ways of Christ.

God has and will always have a multi-generational vision for the earth and the nations.

Psalms 90:4

A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

When God plans, He plans for generations. His vision is always long-term. He knows and sees what will happen 1000 years from now. He sees what we do not necessarily see. That is why, when we think about nations, it is in our best interests to trek with Him closely in the spirit and natural so that our prayers can be incisive, that we can be fully aligned to and with what He is seeing and doing. From time immemorial, His heart has been to:

Revelation 5:9b-10

And have redeemed us to God by Your blood. Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God and we shall reign on the earth.”

God heart is not for the select few. His heart for the tribes of the earth, different language groups, varied people groups and diverse nations. This is all the sole purpose make them priests and kings unto Him. To rule and reign on the earth. Infiltrating every domain with the power and influence of God in every domain – Church, government, business, economics, education, health, science and technology, Sports, Arts, Media, etc. To become priests, whose feet stand in the gap and whose hands build protective spiritual walls for these domains and power centres. Bringing His glory, His *Chabod*, weightiness, magnificence, honour, splendour, power, wealth authority, fame, dignity, riches and excellency. (WAPMSHGDREF).

II. EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE WHO PRAYED FOR THEIR NATIONS

1. Daniel

In Daniel's day, Israel had been living in captivity under the rule of Babylon. They had been in captivity for 70 years because of their disobedience to God. Daniels' nation had been torn apart and needed healing. His people needed to get back to Jerusalem and back into the plan of God. One day Daniel was reading the book of Jeremiah and came upon this passage:

Jeremiah 29:10-14

¹⁰ For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says

the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

Do you know what Daniel did when he read that promise of the Lord? Notice that Daniel didn't gather up a band of people and go lobby against the government leaders that had taken Israel captive. He didn't paint signs and picket the palace in Babylon. No, he prayed.

Daniel 9:3-4

³ Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. ⁴ And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments.

The prayer is answered:

Ezra 1:1-4

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ² Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. ³ Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. ⁴ And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.

This was absolutely a miracle! King Cyrus wasn't a godly man. He had no love in his heart for the Jews. Yet **because one man prayed**, God was able to turn the heart of that king so completely that he not only allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the temple, he commanded his own people to finance their efforts. This wasn't a unique event, either. Again and again, we see incidents in the Bible

where people prayed and God intervened not just in their individual lives, but also in their city or their nation.

God moves where people pray.

Pray for your nation, your leaders, and your government - regardless of how you feel about them. If God can get somebody, anybody to pray, he can invade a nation.

2. Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians: The Moravian 100 Year Prayer Movement!

Their story is truly one of the greatest in church history. God used these humble, simple believers to launch the first Protestant 24/7 prayer movement and one of the first Protestant missionary movements, taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. Today, God is using their story as the inspiration for 24/7 United Prayer.

When Zinzendorf was 27 years old, he took into his home a single Moravian refugee. Before long, Zinzendorf had 300 Moravian refugees living on his estate and he became their spiritual leader. They lived in a village called Herrnhut, Germany. Under Zinzendorf's leadership, they prayed together, studied God's Word together, and grew spiritually together.

On August 12, 1727, the Moravians conducted an all-night prayer meeting. The group decided to start a prayer vigil. They designated a place of prayer in the village, and they prayed in groups of two or three for one-hour increments.

There are 168 one-hour time slots in a week. The Moravians filled all 168-hour time slots with two to three people per hour. For 24 hours a day, seven days a week, two to three people were always praying in the place of prayer. This around the clock prayer meeting went on for 110 years!

Can you imagine the supernatural power that was unleashed by a group praying intentionally for 110 years?

The Moravians' hearts began to burn with the things that were on the heart of God. Their hearts began to burn for the unreached peoples of the world. Over a fifteen-year period, this small group of 300 Moravians sent out seventy missionaries who went and

lived among unreached people groups, learned their language and culture, then told them about Jesus Christ.

Voluntarily Becoming Slaves

One of the churches that the Moravians started sent out 200 missionaries. One of the Moravian missionary teams voluntarily sold themselves into slavery so that they could identify with slaves and share the gospel with them. They were so filled with the spirit of missions which is the spirit of Christ's self-sacrificing love. The Moravian Brethren, led by Zinzendorf, were responsible for some of the most inspiring and sacrificial stories of missions' history. The Moravians are credited with starting the modern missionary movement.

One historian estimates that the Moravians would be the largest denomination in the world except that, whenever they planted a new church, they gave it away to another denomination. Count Zinzendorf said, "I have but one passion — it is He, it is He alone. The world is the field and the field is the world; and henceforth that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ."

3. John Knox

Give Me Scotland, or I Die

Perhaps more than anything else, John Knox is known for his prayer "Give me Scotland, or I die." Knox's prayer was not an arrogant demand, but the passionate plea of a man willing to die for the sake of the pure preaching of the gospel and the salvation of his countrymen. Knox's greatness lay in his humble dependence on our sovereign God to save His people, revive a nation, and reform His church. As is evident from his preaching and prayer, Knox believed neither in the power of his preaching nor in the power of his prayer, but in the power of the gospel and the power of God, who sovereignly ordains preaching and prayer as secondary means in the salvation of His people.

Although Knox had been imprisoned and enslaved, and though he was often infirm and under threat of persecution, he consistently lived out his theology, believing that **"one man with God is always in the majority."** As such, the prayers of one man heard at the throne of God were a threat to the throne of Scotland. During the time of

the sixteenth-century Scottish Reformation, Knox's ministry of preaching and prayer were so well known that the Roman Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, is reputed to have said, **“I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”**

When Knox was near death, he asked his wife to read to him the High Priestly Prayer in [John 17](#) that our Lord Jesus prayed the night before He went to the cross. Knox called this passage “my first anchor.” For indeed, Christ is the captain of our souls and Christ's prayer is the anchor and only hope of the nations. Therefore, in light of so great an example of God's power working through one man, let each one of us pray with the same passion for our nation—and all nations—as Knox prayed for Scotland.

4. West Africa

Someone once said of a certain region in West Africa where a certain man of God had resided and prayed over for many years, that when he died it almost felt like the “prayer covering over that region lifted”. The more people we have praying for the nations, the more the certainty that the prayer cover over that nation will remain intact and does not have to be sustained by one person or just a few people.

III. A CALL TO PRAY FOR THE NATIONS - SOME PRINCIPLES

2 Chronicles 7:14

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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

1. Repentance for being inward- focused.

We live hectic and challenging lives and have so many personal issues that we prioritise when we pray. Fair-enough. However, God also encourages us to pray for other things and people outside our immediate frame of reference:

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

2. Start where you are.

God can use one committed person – don't feel overwhelmed. Daniel, John Knox, Count Zinzendorf.

Start somewhere:

2 Timothy 4:2. Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

Pray for your complex/estate/body corporate, suburb, community, city, nation. Driving in traffic/school drop-off prayer sessions with your kids.

3. Develop a culture/lifestyle of praying for the nations.

Decide as a family, cell group, group of friends – that this month as part of your family devotions, we will pray for 3 things concerning our nation. Or choose one nation, conduct some research on what is going on in that nation...pray for one or two aspects concerning that nation for the next month. Come up with your own personal or family prayer strategy for the nations. **Have your kids ever heard you pray for something outside your immediate personal or family's needs? Are you discipling your kids to pray for the nations:**

Acts 17:26-27

²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

You might think that I do not need to pray for the nations because I am going nowhere, I am set here in South Africa. Whilst that may be true, you don't know the trajectory that your children's life will take. Some may decide to live beyond our borders and marry spouses from other nationalities. Others have a future in other nations. So, it

should be in our interests to pray for the nations. Who knows your prayers may just change influence immigration laws that may turn out to be favourable for you or your kids. Your prayers may impact policies that will result in you or your children prospering in those nations. Have a map of the nations on the wall in your house/study to keep the notion of nations topical in your mind and family.

4. What happens in the nations particularly influential nations, often has an indirect impact on other nations.

Abortion/Civil rights laws – (Wade v Roe) other nations take cues from these nations.

Laws on sexuality.

Inflation, fluctuations in currencies. Stock exchange.

Laws on euthanasia, etc.

Nations at war/tension.

Psalms 46:9

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth. He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two. He burns the chariot in the fire.

5. God executes His purposes on the earth through His people.

Isaiah 6:8. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

Somebody has to pray. Irrespective of situation on the ground. Whether we feel like it or not. God moves where people pray.

6. Pray over the various domains.

Find your spot/sphere of influence. Church, Government & Politics, Education, Business/Economics. Health, Science and Technology, Media and Communications, Arts, Sports. Pray into these domains for our nation and whatever nation God places on your heart.

Pray for global/regional power centres: UN, UN – Security Council, Nato, EU, SADC, ECOWAS, WHO, IMF, World Bank etc.

7. Carry the heart of God when praying for the nations.

How is God feeling about this?

What are your thoughts on this specific nation Lord?

What do you want to see happen in that nation?

How should I pray?

What should be the disposition of my heart as I pray for the nations?

Ask for the Lord to give you a burden for the nations.

Jeremiah 29:4-9

⁴ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon:

⁵ Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. ⁶ Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. ⁷ And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace. ⁸ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. ⁹ For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD.

Team up with like-minded people.

Pray for the nations in your cell groups. When was the last time you prayed for your nation within your cell group?

8. Ask God what is your burden to carry.

What aspect of that nation should you be praying for?

Some burdens are seasonal and may lift after a period of time.

Leaders? Economy? The younger generation. Specific domain?

9. Be diligent – conduct the requisite research on the nations.

This is so that you can pray effectively.

Some people don't want to watch the news because they believe that there is too much negative news circulating. Fair enough. But on the other hand, how are you going to know what's going on in the nations at least in some form? Yes, it is important to exercise wisdom when it comes to how you decipher global news. Different news channels/media house may have their own biases and spread their own propaganda. Employ wisdom, choose what to chew and know which bones to spit out. Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

10. Craft prayers for the nation(s) that God has laid over your heart.

CONCLUSION

Crafted Prayer For South Africa

Father God, thank you for our nation South Africa. Thank you for the redemptive purpose of this nation. Thank you that you have made us a beautiful rainbow nation, with different languages and cultures. Teach us how to truly live in forgiveness, humility and unity as a nation. May we an example to the rest of the world of what true reconciliation and peace entails.

We pray for our President, Mr Ramaphosa, may you fill him with the spirit of God in wisdom, understanding and knowledge and in all manner of workmanship concerning what he has to do in order to run this nation efficiently. Surround him with godly counsellors, God fearing men and women to help and guide him.

We pray for his cabinet, the members of parliament, provincial and city leaders. May the spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of God be upon them. May they be selfless as they lead and govern. May they be integrous leaders who revere God.

We pray for all the domains represented in our country, the Church, government & politics, education, business/economics. health, science and technology, media and communications, arts, sports. Raise up godly men and women to speak into and influence these power centres.

We pray for the salvation of those who do not know you. May you send messengers of the Gospel to them. May they see their need for you. May they receive you as Lord and saviour and when saved, may you lead them to Christ-believing, bible-believing, discipleship-based and community/cell-based churches.

Lord pour out your mercy and grace on our nations. May you forever be exalted as the only true King and Lord over this nation.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.