**The State of Our Nation**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Psalms 9:1-19**

**Sunday Morning**

**January 22, 2023**

**Psalms 9:1-19**

1 I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. 2 I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. 3 When my enemies turn back, They shall fall and perish at Your presence.

4 For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness. 5 You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever. 6 O enemy, destructions are finished forever! And you have destroyed cities; Even their memory has perished.

7 But the LORD shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment. 8 He shall judge the world in righteousness, And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness. 9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble. 10 And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion! Declare His deeds among the people. 12 When He avenges blood, He remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the humble. 13 Have mercy on me, O LORD! Consider my trouble from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death, 14 That I may tell of all Your praise In the gates of the daughter of Zion. I will rejoice in Your salvation.

15 The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made; In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught. 16 The LORD is known by the judgment He executes; The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Meditation. Selah

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God. 18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten; The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever. 19 Arise, O LORD, Do not let man prevail; Let the nations be judged in Your sight. 20 Put them in fear, O LORD, That the nations may know themselves to be but men.

**The greatest privilege in life is to know God, The Lord Jesus Christ**

Through the natural world, our conscience, the life of Jesus Christ, and the written Word of God, we can know who God is. Amazingly, He even invites us to boast about it.

Saints, unfortunately, sometimes we allow sin to influence our understanding of God and His ways.

When we choose to turn away from the truth we know about the Lord, there will always be spiritual consequences.

**Jeremiah 9:23-24**

23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul explained that humans often deny the obvious proof of God’s existence and thus become spiritually blind:

**Romans 1:20-21**

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

**Our Heavenly Father has given us knowledge of Himself**

Let’s look at four of the ways God communicates about who He is:

**1. Natural Revelation**

Creation itself declares that there is an intelligent and infinitely powerful Designer of the universe.

**Hebrews 11:3**

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Saints, things like the seasons, the incredible variety of fruits and vegetables, and the diverse types of animals all point to a thoughtful, wise Creator.

Even the heavens, full of stars and galaxies, declare God’s glory, His power, and His perfect order.

**Psalm 19:1**

“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork”

Saints, in his evangelistic sermons, Paul referred to God as the Creator to help his audiences relate to God’s message of the need for repentance through Christ.

**Acts 14:15**

and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them…”

Saints, even apart from the Bible, people have no reason to doubt God exists—creation is adequate testimony.

**2. Our Conscience**

Saints, God has given each person an internal sense that He exists!

**Romans 1:19**

“because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them”

Saints, even people who have never been taught God’s law instinctively know what is right.

**Romans 2:14-15**

14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them…

Saints, for example, it’s common across cultures to forbid murder, rape, and stealing. Our hearts confirm that certain behaviors are morally wrong.

**3. The Lord Jesus Christ**

Creation and human conscience can testify that there is a God, but they can never give a complete picture of who He is or how He interacts with us.

God’s best revelation of Himself is through Jesus. In Him, God took on human flesh and walked among humanity. Jesus perfectly revealed the character and nature of the Father.

**John 14:7-10**

7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

Saints, He loved unconditionally, forgave sins, healed disease, taught His disciples how to live, and assured them of eternal life. He’s the same today, and we can experience an intimate friendship with Him.

**Hebrews 8:12-13**

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." 13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

**Isaiah 43:25**

"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

**Psalm 103:8-14**

8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

**4. The Word of God Our Bible**

The best way for us to discover who God is, is to open the Scriptures, His divine revelation.

This Book shows us the Lord’s will, and tells us of His attributes that aren’t easily seen in nature, such as His holiness or mercy. The stories of the Old Testament inspire and challenge us.

In the gospels, we learn about Jesus Christ. The book of Acts and the letters from the early church leaders, such as Paul, explain salvation and life as believers.

The Bible is a gift that clarifies who God is and how He operates in this world.

**Hebrews 4:12**

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Matthew 4:1-4**

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

**John 17:17**

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth…

**Man has turned away from the Knowledge of God**

Every human being has basic knowledge of the existence of God.

**Romans 1:20**

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse”

Saints, but when individuals, churches, organizations, or societies stop acknowledging the sovereign rule of God over their lives, they begin a path to destruction.

In the past, many people acknowledged the Lord and had respect for Him and the Bible, even if they didn’t have a personal relationship with Him.

But now, fewer people even agree God exists, much less that He should be honored.

Such changes don’t happen instantaneously. Four stages progressively take a person or nation downhill, from knowledge of God to complete depravity.

**1. Intelligence**

Everyone begins with a partial knowledge of God through their conscience and the witness of creation. Although people have the capacity to understand that He exists, they often close their eyes to the truth so they can avoid changing their behavior.

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4**

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

**2. Ignorance**

When people begin to suppress the truth in their minds, they dishonor God, and He gives them over to darkness of heart.

**Romans 1:21-22**

21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools…

Saints, those who deny the truth eventually come to the point where they are spiritually blind and can’t recognize right from wrong. The apostle John put it this way,

**John 3:19**

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”

**3. Indulgence**

Searching for something to fill the void caused by refusing to acknowledge God, people freely engage in earthly pleasures.

When we willfully choose to worship idols—whether that’s popularity, or money, or some other poor choice—God will give us over to the lusts of our hearts (Rom. 1:23-24).

**Romans 1:23-24**

23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves…

Saints, sin eventually leads to nothing but more emptiness and sorrow. Earthly pleasures can’t satisfy our God-given hunger for a fulfilling relationship with the Savior.

**4. An Impenitent Heart**

Saints, eventually, as people move further away from God, He gives them over to a depraved mind.

**Romans 1:26-32**

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,

30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful…

Saints, some people’s judgment becomes impaired because they have suppressed spiritual truth to the max with God

These people are so immoral that they not only deny God’s laws for themselves, but they also heartily approve of others who openly rebel against God’s law.

**Romans 1:32**

“who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them”

Saints, thankfully, no one is beyond the reach of God’s redemption. No matter how far down the path of spiritual darkness someone is, there is always the hope of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

When we turn to God, we can be assured He will accept us into His spiritual family and give us assurance of eternal life.

**1. We can easily put other priorities and goals above our devotion to God. Ask the Lord, “Father, is there anything in my life that I am allowing to take Your place of honor in my life?**

**2. Is there anything I am devoting myself, my time, and my resources to, more than to You?”**

**3. How can we intercede for individuals or groups who are living in spiritual darkness?**

**4. Ask God to break through their ignorance and reveal His love and goodness to them.**

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**