

IT'S IN THE TURNING

TEXT: (II Chronicles 7:13-14, NIV)

¹³ "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, 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 I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

INTRODUCTION

1. "If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the LORD would not have listened" (Psalm 66:18, NLT).
2. "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:22, NIV).
3. "I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes" (Psalm 119:59, NIV).
4. "I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands" (Psalm 119:60, NIV).

I. TURNING TO GOD IN PRAYER IS MORE THAN AN EXERCISE

1. "For bodily exercise profiteth [a] little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8, KJV).
2. "When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it" (II Chronicles 7:1-2, NIV).

A. History Has Been Made and Changed by Turning to God in Prayer

1. "When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes" (I Chronicles 34:19, NIV).
2. "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 I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14, NIV).

B. The People in Jehoshaphat's Day turned to the LORD

1. II Chronicles 20:1-30

C. Nineveh Turned to the LORD

1. "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened" (Jonah 3:10, NIV).

D. We Must Turn to God in Prayer

1. "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you" (I Samuel 12:23, NIV).
2. "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD" (Ezekiel 22:30-31, NIV).

II. THE STATE AND THE FATE OF THE ONE WHO TURNED AWAY

A. Lured by the Lust of the Human Nature

1. "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4, ESV).

B. Six Steps Downward

1. Selfishness—"The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me'" (Luke 15:13, MSG).
2. Separation—"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land" (Luke 15:13, NLT).
4. Sensuality—"There wasted all his money on parties and prostitutes" (Luke 15:13, TLB). "There, undisciplined and dissipated (self-indulgent, immoral, intemperate) he wasted everything he had" (Luke 15:13, MSG)
5. Spiritual destitution—"About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve" (Luke 15:14, NLT). "After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt" (Luke 15:14, MSG).
6. Self-abasement—"He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs" (Luke 15:15, MSG).
7. Starvation—"He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any" (Luke 15:16, MSG).

III. A RIGHT TURN AT A RIGHT TIME

A. He Came to Himself

1. "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant"' (Luke 15:17-19, NLT).

B. Seven Steps Back Up

1. Realization—"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!'" (Luke 15:17, NIV).
2. Resolution—"I'm going back to my father" (Luke 15:18, MSG).
3. Repentance—"I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand" (Luke 15:19, MSG).
4. Return—"So he got up and went to his father" (Luke 15:20, NIV).
5. Reconciliation—"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20, NIV).
6. Re-clothing—"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet'" (Luke 15:22, NIV).
7. Rejoicing—"Kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began" (Luke 15:23-24, NLT).

CONCLUSION

1. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20, NIV).
2. "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 I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14, NIV).