

## **Sunday 29 March 2020-2 Chronicles 7: 11-16**

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Saviour. I can't remember a time in my life and in our beloved country that forced us to lock-down due to any disaster. As we have seen how many people in a short space of time has been infected with the Covid 19 pandemic, it drove many of us into fear.

After Solomon dedicated the temple, the Lord appeared to him and gave him some warnings and reassurances. **"The Lord appeared to him at night and said: 'I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices.' 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..( 2 Chronicles 7:12-13)**

These verses is tied up with Israel and the temple and the fact that from time to time God might send judgment upon the land in the form of drought, locusts or pestilence. In the next verse, we see God address His own:

**"My people, called by My Name!"**(V.14) People who have identified themselves with God and His work. He is speaking to people that we would call saved or Christians. Very hard words..

God had warned the people that their disobedience to His Word and commands would bring with it dire consequences, **v. 13, ..will devour the land and send a plague among my people.**” Now, He sets forth the conditions necessary to reverse His judgment and bring Renewal, restoration and healing. **“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.”( 2 Chronicles 7:14)**

Is the corona virus real? Yes. Is the regular flu real? Yes. Is the God of this universe, the First and the Last, real? Yes! A thousand times yes! The government and medical fraternity can help us physically through all the safety regulations, washing of hands, keeping distance, no handshakes, etc, but only God can help with the Physical and Spiritual healing.

**2 Chronicles 7:13-14 to our current crisis.** Notice the setting in verse 13. **"When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,** in our case the (COVID19), God says in verse 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."**

There is no command here to rebuke the devil. The command is to get right with God. **To humble ourselves, pray, seek God, and turn from our wicked ways.** The lack of these things is what opened the door for the problem in the first place. **It's like we opened the door by our wicked ways and neglect of relationship with God, then we closed the door by turning from our wicked ways and seeking God.**

**Humble ourselves** - This word has the idea of being "***under another***". When we humble ourselves to the Lord, we are acknowledging His Lordship and headship in our lives. We are admitting our weakness and reaching out for His power. We are saying I can't, but you can! To ***humble ourselves***"-it deals with the area of our pride. The word translated "***pride***" in the Old Testament means "***to rise or to swell up.***"It speaks of men thinking more of themselves and their abilities than they do of God. Pride says, "***I do not need God, I can make my own way. I know best. I call the shots in my life.***"

**A call to Pray** -It is, in essence, humility in action. The praying person sees his own inability and recognizes God's ability. Prayer says to God-"***I can't , but you can!***" Prayer

is an essential ingredient in the mystery of this Corona Virus! It's the first time in the new Democracy that I heard a President openly declare the name of God, to bless the country. Corona virus Pandemic has taught us a nation to pray in Unity to the Almighty God, who is able to heal our land. **Nkosi Sikelele Africa ! God bless Africa.** Prayerlessness is the first cousin to pride. Prayerlessness says, ***"I do not need to call on the Lord, I can make it just fine without His aid."*** Prayerlessness does not say, ***"He is all I need"; but "I am all I need."***

It is a fact that we can pray and not have healing; but we will never have a healing apart from prayer!

The third requirement is that of "***seeking His face***". This word means to "***desire something***". This idea here is that we come to the place where God is the number one priority and desire of our heart! Call to go back to the basics-Our First Love- ***"You don't love me as before"***(Rev.2:7).That is, nothing in life is more important, more precious or more needful to us than having God and all He has to offer. God's people are told to ***"seek His face"***. The word ***"seek"*** means ***"to search out by any method; especially by worship and prayer."*** The word ***"face"*** refers to ***"to encounter God and to turn towards His direction."*** A call for God's people to stop looking for

help and purpose elsewhere, consult God first..it will a sign that we hunger for Him more than for what He can do.

If you had to be really honest today, what is the number one priority in your life? Is it your job? Is it your bank accounts or retirement? Is it your family? Is it your church? Is it your spouse? Is it your hobby? Or, is it the Lord? When anything but God is the number, your spiritual priorities are out of balance.

When God is our first priority, the things He cares about are the things we will care about. When we are seeking His face, we will be able to see what has His attention. And, what has His attention is to be that which has our attention. He wants us to love what He loves, hate what He hates and do what He does. He wants us to be like him. Therefore the call for **repentance**.-"***Turn from their wicked ways***" is self explanatory! God wants His people to stop their sinning! We are to examine our lives, identify anything that does not please the Lord or line up with His Bible, and we are to eliminate that from our lives! It sounds harder than it is, because as we humble ourselves, pray and seek His face, our sin will become increasingly clear. That is, they are to forsake their sins and embrace holiness. While we are lock up, let reflect on where we have gone wrong:

Do we drink, do we steal, do we lie, do we cheat; do we commit adultery; do we engage in sexual activity outside of marriage; do we carry hate in our heart; do we walk in pride; do we walk in hypocrisy; do we drag the precious Name of Jesus through the mud? If we are guilty- let's repent and turn from our wicked ways. God cannot and will not bless a mess like that! We are saved by grace, but grace is never a license to sin! As we are in Lent and Lockdown, may this be our season of repentance.

### **God's Promise, if we meet His requirements:**

A. **God Will Hear Us** - Sin hinders prayer, **Psalm 66:18**-**"if I had sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened"**. However, when sin is taken care of, prayer can flow unhindered to and from the throne of God!

B. **God Will Help Us** - God also promises to "***forgive our sins***". This means that not only is the prayer line restored, but it means that we can be in close fellowship with Him. Nothing in this world compares with being able to have close communion with God Almighty!

C. **God Will Heal Us** -However, the Lord's promise to them is that repentance equals rain. If they will honor Him, He will honor them! If they will open their hearts, He will in turn open the heavens. In a sense, we are in the same situation today. Our repentance will equal

healing from the corona Virus. Our homes, communities and nation have been devastated through this Corona Virus and are in need of spiritual blessings and power from above.

The first step is submission to God. **James 4:7:**  
**“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”**

**Conclusion:** I am closing with a message I received during the week on how the author break down the word-

**LOCKDOWN:**

**L**-Listen to God’s voice and reflect (let Go and Let God)

**O**-Obey his Word and His teachings.

**C**-Call on Jesus’ Name and His teachings.

**K**-know what is the Purpose of all this.

**D**-dwell in His presence.

**O**-Offer a prayer for everyone’s safety.

**W**-Wait and be patient-This too shall pass.

**N**-Nurture our personal relationship with Him.

He promised Israel that He would **“*hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*”** That is exactly what we need now!