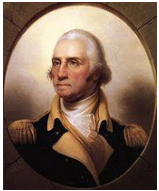




## The Story

The year was 1775 and our country was just about to face their greatest battle on American soil, it was the beginning of the American Revolution. At that time the British (the most powerful military in the world) was occupying Boston and problems in the colonies were rising.



George Washington wanted to intercept incoming British ships with supplies; however, the popular vote in Philadelphia

disagreed with anything to do with upsetting the king, especially after the Boston Tea Party.

Our General decided to take it upon himself behind closed doors to commission six privately owned schooners and start his own navy, (rumored to be at his own expense) it was to be called "Washington's Secret Navy" and all boats were to have "An Appeal to Heaven" flags upon them.



## Introduction

### I. Enemies abound.

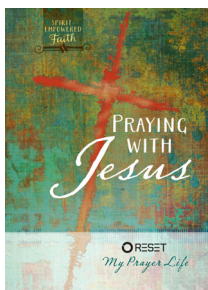
*"A great multitude is coming against you" (2 Chronicles 20:12).*

Just as with Jeshoshaphat, we in our day are surrounded by enemies of all types.

Our twentieth century culture is in serious trouble, and many of the solutions offered by society are only compounding the problem.

- Over the past few decades, the rise of secularization, humanistic ideals, and the subtle redefinition of "tolerance" to embrace every imaginable evil have pushed Western culture and indeed, the world, toward complete social recession.
- In 20th century America, vain imaginations have replaced moral absolutes. Permissiveness and tolerance have been lifted up as moral ideals. The definition of tolerance (correctly defined as respect for other people without necessarily sharing their ideals, beliefs, and practices) has been twisted to mean that all individual beliefs, values, lifestyles, and "truths" are equal in value.
- Relativism has also become "politically correct," and with each step away from the security and certainty of God's absolute truth, comes captivity.

We've become a culture addicted to our own self-indulgences, blinded to the discrepancies in our own espoused "values," and numb to the guilt pangs of our own transgressions.



The article entitled "It's Time" by Doug Stringer provides an added resource. (Click Here)



**L-3** Experiencing God as He really is through deepened intimacy with Him

Colossians 3:16 Moment:

**"Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you . . ." (Col. 3:16).**

**Pastor/Teacher:** Share your heart response as you meditate on the invitation of Jesus from Matthew 11:28-30.

## II. Help is available—so we must humble ourselves.

*"Power and might are in thy hand so that no one can stand against thee" (2 Chronicles 20:6).*

Humility is our first step into deliverance and victory. It is the foundation of our appeal to heaven.

- If My people—"humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).
- Humble yourselves—"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Peter 5:6).
- He who humbles himself—"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

*Your heavenly Father knows what you need—Matthew 6:32*

In Matthew 6, Jesus explains that even though the lilies of the field do not labor or sew garments, they are beautifully dressed. Since we are more valuable than lilies, will not our heavenly Father meet our needs? The lilies declare their dependency by simply receiving God's provision of sunshine, water, and air. Our humility can prompt similar faith as we look "up" for God to meet our needs.

Humility is premised on our "neediness" and the Father's caring notice. His help and provision are available to the humble. Man's sacred design shows us that we are born with physical needs (air, food, water, sleep), intimacy needs (comfort, attention, affection), and spiritual needs (forgiveness, peace).

This "neediness factor" serves as a constant reminder of our finiteness and our dependency on God. Every breath we take reminds us that we are the "created" in need of the Creator and His provision. Our neediness can serve to create in us an attitude of humble dependency.

To deny our neediness leads to prideful self-sufficiency, the attitude that plagued the Laodicean church, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing."

Acknowledging our neediness prompts humility, and God moves to support the humble but resists the proud (James 4:6).

Our blinding self-reliance sidelines faith, prolongs the agony, and ensures defeat. But in our "weariness," we can come to Jesus, the One who is humble and gentle (Matthew 11:28–30).

### ***Encounter Jesus***

*"Come unto Me . . . I am humble and gentle . . ." (Matthew 11:29).*

Pause to meditate on the image of Jesus who spoke these words. Imagine that Christ stands before you. He has heard your prayers for help. He has seen your concern and confusion over the desperate situations and enemies facing our world. Now imagine His response. The Savior doesn't offer you advice. He doesn't look at you sternly or with indifference. Instead, the one person who can bring victory and who can direct our steps toward freedom and blessing makes this declaration: "Come to Me. I am here for you as your humble and gentle teacher."



The pine tree image in the *Appeal to Heaven* flag is also known as the “Tree of Peace.” It has been sacred by the Iroquois Indians for over a 1000 years in America. At a very troubling time in their history, a peacemaker united six great tribes from the Great Lake areas and established unity. This great treaty was symbolized by burying their weapons under a pine tree (this is where “bury the hatchet” came from) and this tree was to be guarded by a bald eagle at its peak clutching six arrows, representing the six tribes...sound familiar? Our eagle has thirteen.

Colossians 3:16 Moment:

“Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you . . .” (Col. 3:16).

**Pastor/Teacher:** Share your own story of taking one more step of faith.

*I remember facing \_\_\_\_\_  
and God prompted me to \_\_\_\_\_*



**W-10** Implicit, unwavering trust that His Word will never fail

Allow the Holy Spirit to draw your heart into responding to Jesus, who is available, who is inviting you to come to Him.

*Jesus, my heart is moved with \_\_\_\_\_ as I reflect on your offer of caring support.*

### III. Faith directed “heavenward” is critical.

“...For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

Faith has been described as “walking up to the edge of all the light you have and taking one more step!” In this one more step into what may seem like darkness, we encounter His caring notice.

“... for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things” (Matthew 6:32).

It’s important to understand that we are needy, but it’s equally important to realize that God knows our needs. He knows and cares. And when our neediness is expressed to Him, through the measure of faith given to every man (Romans 12:3), our humble trust calls forth God’s gracious provision. As we, by faith, humbly express our needs, God, who “is love” (1 John 4:8), is allowed to demonstrate His love for us. Our exercise of faith also “pleases God” (Hebrews 11:6) and testifies of His work within us for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). The connection between human need and trusting faith is seen in many of the gospel stories:

- Jesus saw in Zacchaeus, not only sinful behavior (he was a thief and a liar), but a person who had needs. Therefore He said, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today” (Luke 19:1–9). As Zacchaeus responded to Jesus’ initiative with trusting faith, his life was radically changed.
- When Jesus saw a man who had been an invalid for 38 years, He had compassion on him and said, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk” (John 5:1–8).  
The man obeyed and became the recipient of divine provision.
- When ten lepers cried out, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” (Luke 17:13–14), He did! Their acknowledged neediness prompted trusting faith and Jesus responded.

### *Experience Scripture*

... Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone (Ephesians 2:20).

Christ is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly realms. Imagine yourself kneeling before the One who has all things placed under His feet; He has been appointed as the cornerstone of the world. Picture the King on His throne, and as you sit at His feet, He begins to remind you of where you are. You have the ability to talk and relate to the One who has the power to do anything He wants—the One who has the ability to change everything with just one word.



The phrase “An Appeal to Heaven” was created by John Locke from England in the mid 1600’s. Locke was one of the great

philosophers of his time, he like other English philosophers were also influenced by the Iroquois in America. “An Appeal to Heaven” comes from his studies on “Natural Laws”, a system of right or justice common to all humankind and derived from nature rather than from the rules of society and the only judge is that of our creator. It is in these laws where our unalienable rights come from and the foundation on which this country was formed. The phrase “An Appeal to Heaven” connotes that when all resources and justices on earth are exhausted that only “An Appeal to Heaven” remains. And so is the example of our country when our rights were taken away by the tyrannical acts of King George that we as nation after countless attempts to resolve, appealed to heaven as our final judge before breaking ties with the crown.

Colossians 3:16 Moment:

**“Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you . . .” (Col. 3:16).**

**Pastor/Teacher:** Share a story of victory – a time of struggle when yielding in faith brought victory.

*I remember the challenge of \_\_\_\_\_ but God \_\_\_\_\_*

Picture the face of Jesus as He says to you, “Dear one, I am both the God of all comfort and the Lord God Almighty. I am the God of grace, and I’m the Lord of all. It may seem difficult to imagine, but I can’t wait for you to call upon Me and trust Me. Your faith actually brings Me pleasure. In fact, without faith it’s impossible to please Me.”

Spend a few moments meditating on this fact. In what area of your life do you need to trust Him more? In what new way can you depend upon Him and, by faith, wait for Him to act on your behalf?

*Lord Jesus, I sometimes struggle to trust you with \_\_\_\_\_ . I yield to Your Spirit’s work to deepen my walk of faith that You might be pleased.*

#### IV. Victory and blessings are available.

*“When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed” (2 Chronicles 20:12).*

The Valley of Beracah—“Then on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the LORD. Therefore they have named that place ‘The Valley of Beracah’ until today” (2 Chronicles 20:26).

In the face of your enemies, what is it you need? As you may feel “surrounded on all sides,” what is your specific appeal to heaven?

Notice again how “personal” is the promise of Matthew 6:3: “. . . for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.” His caring notice is intimately aware of you and your needs.

What do you need? It’s one thing for the birds of the air to need food and the lilies to need raiment, but humans need much more! Unlike the rest of God’s creation, we need much more than air, food, and water; we need intimate relationships with our Creator and others. Because God created humankind needy, it’s not sinful to be needy. In fact, a heightened sense of need, when accompanied by humble faith, brings forth a grateful constraining love, which prompts righteous living.

Our sin nature often prompts us to respond to our neediness apart from humility and faith. Selfish “taking” replaces trusting faith, prideful self-reliance replaces humble dependence, and self-condemnation undermines the goodness of God’s grace.

The Father, knowing our need for forgiveness, sent Christ as an offering for our sin that the potential for intimacy in relationship with Him might be enjoyed. “And this is eternal life . . .” (John 17:3); “That My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:11).



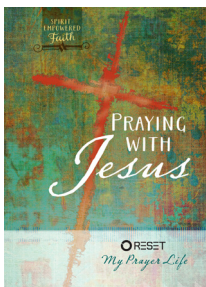


**W-1** Frequently being led by the Spirit into deeper love for the One who wrote the Word



And lastly is our very own “Declaration of Independence”... Our most prized possession, is America’s “Appeal to Heaven” publicly declared. Thomas Jefferson who wrote the declaration was for a long time highly influenced by John Locke’s work, and if you read The Declaration of Independence (especially the last paragraph), you can see it is by all means the true definition of An Appeal to Heaven in its format.

And so the pine tree...it will always be a symbol of world peace and the strength of the people...and “Appeal to Heaven”...not only guided us in the founding of our freedom, but still resides patiently waiting as the greatest insurance policy ever, the genius in the preservation of our country and liberty.



Steve Gaines’ article entitled “Pray Like It Matters” provides an added resource. ([Click Here](#))

## Engage Community

*What sorrow awaits those who argue with their Creator? (Isaiah 45:9).*

Consider some of the recent circumstances and struggles you face. Are you making the choice to rest in faith or are you quarreling or arguing with God about them? The prophet Isaiah reminds us that quarreling with our Creator will only bring us sorrow. But if quarreling with the Creator only brings sorrow, then how should we respond? We can gain insight into this question by looking at how Jesus responded to the Father in the midst of His pain and suffering. Jesus’ response was to yield.

His commitment to yield was so strong that He described it as His very nourishment: “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work” (John 4:34 ).

One of the ways we can express our love to the Father is to yield to His will and to His ways even in the face of enemies and struggles. Great love is expressed when we yield ourselves to the Creator of all things—even before we know His plan for us. One of the simplest ways to love God is to say, “Yes, Lord, now what would You have me do?”

Spend some time with one or two others in prayer, expressing your yielded heart to the Lord. Declare your faith.

*“Lord, I acknowledge Your work in my life, and I yield to you in the face of all obstacles. Continue Your Spirit’s work in me so that I would never quarrel with You over what is best for my life. I trust what You are doing is according to Your perfect plan for me. Help me to trust You when I doubt, Lord. Help me to trust You in the midst of life’s struggles.”*