TOPIC: CANADA 150

Let us pray diligently (with great thanksgiving!) for God's continued favour and blessing upon our nation.

KEY POINTS

- Psalm 72 was written by King David for his son Solomon and was possibly sung at his coronation ceremony. And although it was written for a man, it contains principles that can easily go beyond individual application and apply nationally to a country like Canada.
- David's prayer at the beginning of this chapter is for his son's reign to be marked by righteousness and justice for the poor. Solomon himself said in his collection of proverbs: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34 NKJV).
- David also prayed and prophesied that during Solomon's reign there would be an "abundance of peace" (v.7).
- So here we have three characteristics of a great and godly nation: righteousness, justice and peace.
- In addition, David said Solomon would help and deliver those who were poor and needy and he would be called "blessed" by the surrounding nations.
- So as we enjoy the abundant blessings of the Lord upon our land, we need to be righteous, just and peaceable and provide a place of refuge for those in need.
- We are well aware that there is no such thing as a perfect country, workplace, school, marriage, home, church, or individual. Canada has had its fair share of failures, beginning with its dealings with its indigenous peoples. There are still many deep and painful wounds that need to be healed.
- Many have personally experienced hateful/hurtful acts at the hands of those with the power to abuse others with impunity.
- Yet we knew that the racial prejudice we faced was from unenlightened individuals, not from the country itself.
- And in spite of the problems we faced, many of us had a wonderful childhood and are very happy to be in Canada (at least between April and December)!
- Yes, it would be very easy to dwell on the negative history and failings that have characterized much of Canada's past, but as we continue to celebrate Canada's sesquicentennial anniversary, let's take time to look at the other side.
- First of all, in this congregation, people from at least 27 nations have emigrated to this big Canadian village!
- In 1967, 225,000 immigrants arrived in Canada – a big centennial anniversary influx. Now, in our sesquicentennial year, another 300,000 immigrants is anticipated.
- A story has often been told of Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley, one of the 33 "Fathers of Confederation". As the "Fathers" discussed the terms of the British North America Act, suggestions were made as to the name of this new national entity.
- One morning, as Tilley read from Psalm 72:8, he was inspired to suggest that the nation be called the "Dominion of Canada", which was accepted by the company of negotiators.
- Today there is a plaque in Province House, P.E.I., outside the doors of the Confederation Chamber, which reads:

  "In the hearts of the delegates who assembled in this room on September 1, 1864, was born the Dominion of Canada. Providence being their guide, they builded better than they knew."

KEY SCRIPTURES

Psalm 72:1-8, 12-19; Proverbs 14:34

- Although some of the details of this account have been debated, the intent of our founders is witnessed by the engraving on one of the arches of the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill in Ottawa:
  HE • SHALL • HAVE • DOMINION • ALSO • FROM • SEA • TO • SEA.
- Many Canadian universities were founded with strong religious affiliations (Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Roman Catholic, etc.) and the list of Canadian contributions to the world is long and distinguished.
- But the most important achievement of our nation and the most important blessing we enjoy is that we have freedom to worship God -- to assemble without fear to sing, pray and hear the Word of the Lord.
- We are a blessed people and we need to be appropriately thankful.
- We must never cease to pray that God will establish His dominion from sea to sea in our nation and, more personally, in the heart of each and every Canadian.
- As King Solomon stated, exaltation only comes as a result of righteousness, and it is our desire to see Canada exalted.
- We pray for every citizen, permanent resident or refugee that has come here for shelter.
- We pray for every institution of government, education, healthcare and commerce.
- We pray for every adult, child, parent, spouse, household and individual, that the Lord will draw them to Himself and send revival throughout our land.
- Happy Birthday, Canada! May God continue to bless you.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Canada has no official state religion. Do you think having/not having a state religion affects how God thinks about/deals with a country? Explain.
2. Does God favour democracy over other forms of government? What is God's "ideal" governmental system? Give scriptural support for your answers.
3. How should we pray for Canada? (See I Timothy 2:1-4; Jeremiah 29:7; II Chronicles 7:14; Job 12:23-25; Matthew 23:37; Psalm 122:6; Ephesians 6:12; 1 Peter 2:9; Isaiah 6:5-8 and related scriptures.)
4. In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus speaks directly to specific cities. If God were to speak to Canada right now, what do you think He would say?
5. Pray for Canada, for this province and for your city. Pray in faith, believing God will answer.

Prayer Time

God, keep our land (its governments and its people) glorious and free, righteous, just, peaceful and generous to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

L.G. ice-Breaker: In what country were you born? What are your most and least favourite things about Canada and/or your motherland (if not Canada)?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, JULY 2, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS