

An American Grace: A Prayer by Rod Murphy

Hebrew 4:16 – Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Some think we call you Father out of some misplaced sense of patriarchal preference or gender superiority.

We call you Father because You are the Father of a Savior. For the world needs saving.

Has there ever been a time when no one called out Your name in the face of trouble or strife?

Many of us know the old story of how You saved the Israelites from Pharaoh's oppression and lead them across the Red Sea and Sinai Desert to the Promised Land, after an absence for over 400 years. Some consider this story to be a myth, or legend, or a fairy tale.

What is not a myth, or legend, or fairy tale, is that you led a similar exodus over 400 years ago, to this very continent.

Some came to seek political freedom from oppression. Others were brought like my ancestors in chains for slavery.

Some arrived to pursue wealth and power and fortune. Other arrived to live lives that were no better, or even worse, than the lands they departed.

Some landed here for the freedom to worship You boldly. Others came to worship other gods or no god at all.

Therefore, it may seem a mystery why a loving, benevolent God, would bestow prosperity and security over a nation of such contradictions.

Nevertheless, You brought our ancestors – who were remarkably and wonderfully made by You – without any prerequisite to this land. You did not judge and ask if they were good enough, or holy enough, or qualified enough, or righteous enough to come and live here as a nation. Nor was there any visible expectation from them that they would make the contributions leading to the creation of the greatest nation in history. Instead, they had an invisible expectation based upon faith. For faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen. And like the father of all nations, Abraham, who You lead out of Mesopotamia into the Promise Land, his faith was his justification.

Consequently, You brought our ancestors to a land of immense resources. However, there is one resource that was made here that is greater than all the gold of southern Africa, all the petroleum of Arabia, and all the forests of Siberia and Brazil.

That resource is a character. A particular character. An American character.

A character that is the summation of the qualities of the great cultures and nations that make our country. A character that can only be refined by numerous God-given trials and tribulations, wars and depressions and challenges, justified by our triumphs and repudiated by our failures.

From this character, can only arise a leadership. A special leadership. An American leadership.

An American leadership that for over two hundred forty years of independence, has established such a high level of excellence, that the entire world anticipates nothing less. A leadership that recognizes the importance of setting an example not only to one's country, but to an observing world and a watchful God. A leadership that remembers the triumphs and mistakes of those who came before them, and who will fearlessly establish a foundation of decision making, intelligent government, and moral integrity that will not be sacrifice for expedient results in one's term or lifetime, but will endure for many lifetimes. For this, the whole world is thankful to you.

Therefore, Heavenly Father, we implore You today and tomorrow that You will bless our leadership, our nation, and all of our diverse citizens and aliens with a grace. A particular and special grace. An American Grace.

A Grace that is no different from the grace that You give all men and women through the ages, but responds to our needs as a nation. A grace that recognizes the character and leadership that You have molded and designed for good works. It is not determined neither by the mistakes and achievement of the pasts or the flaws and glories of the present. Instead, a grace that will encourage our leaders and citizens to uphold the values and principles that will gain us profit not only in this world, but the world to come. And what do you ask of us, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk in humility under our God. And with that foundation may we seek excellence in our works, words and deeds to glorify You.

A Grace that can only come from a forgiving, loving God. May You continue to sustain us with a Spirit of forgiveness, for there is forgiveness within you. A democratic republic cannot work without forgiveness. For if brothers and sisters are not able to find common purpose within their conflicting values and goals, then they are in peril to resolve through strife and wantonness.

With this grace comes the true freedom to make difficult choices. Choices that our leadership – in conducting this republic with its pluralistic culture – must weigh heavily upon the impact to a few or to a majority, with its grave consequences. However, we ask freely for Your abundant wisdom to be given readily to our leadership to govern effectively.

True righteousness comes from grace. For it does not assume that we are so perfect or holy, that we cannot reach to others regardless of their past stations. That is why Your Son Lord says "don't not judge, lest you be judged." The difference between the righteous man and the self-righteous man, is that the latter does not believe in grace, but unforgiveness and condemnations for those not like oneself. Therefore, Heavenly Father, may we be a nation under grace that is full of tolerance and unity. Not by what separates us, but by what makes us equal: that we all need hope and salvation, including our leadership and our president. This is the answer to the mystery of why You have sustained us.

Therefore, to elevate our nation and our leadership to new heights of accomplishment for Your glory, please grant us an American grace which parallels the one that you have given all of mankind, which can only come from One who is willing to take the penalty of sin upon us thru his death on the cross. For this, the whole world is thankful in Christ name, Amen.

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