



LIVING IN SODOM

RESTORATION
CHURCH of CHRIST

AUGUST 29, 2021 -SIX SINS OF SODOM: PRIDE; GLUTTONY; LAZINESS; NEGLECT OF POOR/NEEDY; HAUGHTINESS; AND AN "ABOMINATION"

COMMUNION: We serve the Lord's Super each Sunday as was the pattern of the New Testament Church. Immersed believers are encouraged to partake to remember what Jesus did for them on the cross.

INVITATION: If you desire to make a decision for Christ today, come forward during the closing. Someone will greet you and lead you each step of the way. Call Faron if you want to set up an appointment to talk.

YOUTH CHURCH – Grades 1-6 – Youth Center
SUNDAY SCHOOL – Begins at 10 AM – Social Hall
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY – 7 PM – Social Hall

MEN'S DISCIPLESHIP GROUP – A group of men meet in the youth center each Monday night. We would love to have you join us. John Taormina is leading this group. Please contact him with questions: 724-472-7788 or jtptpkmba@gmailcom.

TEACHERS NEEDED – Nursery (0-2) and Pre-School (3-5) needs teachers. We are preparing to start KidMin soon. Will you help in this ministry? If you are interested at all, please see Jessica Wallace today. She can answer any questions. **We Need Help!**

LET EVERYTHING THAT HAS BREATH
Praise the Lord
Psalm 150:6

FRIEND SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH



On Sunday September 12th we are asking you to invite your friends to church. The sermon will deal with friendship and we

want you to take this opportunity to express how much your friends mean to you by inviting them to share in the service with us.



Can you feed these folks in the social hall after the revival service one evening? There are sign-up sheets in the foyer for you.

HOMECOMING SUNDAY CELEBRATING 8 YEARS OF MINISTRY ON SEPTEMBER 19TH



Carry-In Dinner Homecoming Sunday

This meal is one of the highlights of the day. We hope you will stay after our morning service and share in this great fellowship. Invite your friends and family. Bring some food to share as we celebrate 8 Years!

	8/29/2021	9/05/2021	FRIEND SUNDAY	HOMECOMING	9/26/21
Front Door Greeters	Sierra Erkkila	Becky Lissoto	Joan Black	Sue Toal	Bert Wingertsahn
Worship Center Greeters	Ty Miley	Lynn Thomas	Marci Wix	Ashley Toal	Lynda Wiseman
Youth Church	Lara Franks	Lara Franks	Lara Franks	Lara Franks	Lara Franks
PowerPoint	Kathy Hanze	Kathy Hanze	Kathy Hanze	Kathy Hanze	Kathy Hanze
Video Recording	Nathan Wallace	Nathan Wallace	Nathan Wallace	Nathan Wallace	Nathan Wallace
Communion Preparation	Pat Stavish Danielle Lardo	Gloria Leonard	Gloria Leonard	Gloria Leonard	Gloria Leonard
Communion Meditation	Jim Donaldson	Jim Thomas	Joe Hadden	Bob Wix	Robert Albright
Cleaning Team This Week	Lynn Thomas	Trinity Kutchmark	Coleen Glozzer	Barb Schultz	Karen Cox
Nursery	Rebecca Lisotto	Sierra Erkkila	Cindi Freeman	Jessica Wallace	Jessica Wallace

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42



YOU WANT ME TO DO WHAT?

The fall of Afghanistan flashes across every television screen across the world. Headlines, in bold print, shout out the news: "The Taliban forces regain control over the country they lost two decades ago." While we don't know for sure what the future will bring, we can be certain that Afghan Christians face grave danger in the days to come. This is personal to me. My son, Ryan, once considered beginning his mission work in Afghanistan.

Christians there are left with a choice: flee the country or be killed. How those faithful to the Lord will daily survive—only God knows. One Christian I saw on TV sighed and lamented, "We are tired of all the death around us."

Followers of Christ will not be the only ones to suffer in Afghanistan. Girls and women will also suffer. Also, those who helped Western forces for the past 20 years. What is the church to do as we watch this unfold before our eyes? We need to diligently pray for the ones that will suffer at the Taliban's hands, and petition God to protect them from the suffering that is coming to them.

But there is another group Jesus tells us we need to pray for—the Taliban.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: "*You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. . .*" (Matthew 5:43-45).

When Jesus gave the command to love and pray for our enemies, He knew it would one day require praying for Islamic extremist groups, like the Taliban, who murder His bride. Praying for the Taliban is not something we would voluntarily choose, but it is what Jesus has commanded.

Here are three specific ways we can pray for those who would murder our brothers and sisters on the other side of the world:

Pray For The Conversion Of The Taliban

There are two primary reasons we don't pray for the conversion of Islamic extremists like the Taliban. The first reason is that we believe it's absurd to think they will ever become followers of Christ. The second reason is that we fear they might actually convert.

The first reason we think is a long jump to reality; we might think it is a useless prayer. We recognize the spiritual truth that God can do for

them what He did for us. I mean God can provide the gift of grace that they too might be saved (**Ephesians 2:8**), Scripture tells us so. But we look at the situation *realistically* and tell ourselves that the probability of their true conversion is so close to zero that it would be a waste of our time--both ours and God's--to even bother to ask.

No doubt such conversions are unlikely and rare. Yet we should pray for their conversion anyway. If we truly love our enemy, how could we not at least petition God to change their hearts by bringing them people to share the Gospel message?

Another, more obvious, reason we don't pray for their conversion is we fear they may actually repent. Like Jonah in the land of Nineveh, we want our enemies to receive *what is coming to them*, not mercy and forgiveness.

During the Second World War, I am sure there were many Christians who faithfully followed Jesus's command and prayed for the Nazis. How would those prayer warriors have felt if they discovered that Hitler, in the final hours of his life, had truly repented and was baptized for the remission of his sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit and was forgiven by God? If they were honest, many would have felt cheated, as if it was unfair of God to forgive such horrific crimes. They would likely want to complain, as Jonah did when God spared the Ninevites, "*I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity*" (**Jonah 4:2**)?

We need to remember, it is precisely because our God is a gracious and compassionate God, that we need to pray for the conversion of our enemies. How could we do anything less than ask God to show our enemies the same grace He showed us? Remember, we were once His enemies too!

Pray The Taliban Will Be Restrained From Doing Evil

There is nothing wrong in praying for the evil actions of our enemies to be restrained. It is for the good of the Taliban persecutors, as well as to the Christians being persecuted, that they be prevented from committing more evil.

For the past 20 years, the protection of innocent people has required that governments—including the United States—take military action to prevent the Taliban from persecuting the men, women, and children of Afghanistan. We were warranted in supporting the just use of force in restraining such evil, and we should pray that God will once again provide such a restraining force. However, we should be careful and examine our

motives for this type of prayer. While the death of the Taliban forces may be the only effective way to restrain the death and suffering they cause, we should not rejoice in their suffering or death (**Proverbs 24:17**).

Pray The Taliban Will Receive Divine Justice

Just as we petition elected governmental authorities to deliver earthly justice, we can petition our holy God to deliver divine justice. There is nothing wrong with calling out to God for divine vengeance in extreme circumstances against hardened, deceitful, violent, immoral, unjust individuals doing ungodly things.

Again, in asking that divine justice be done, we should be careful to guard our motives. Praying for divine justice can be a way to skirt our duty to love our enemy. While we must leave vengeance to God, we must not forget God commanded of us to love our enemies. As Paul writes in **Romans 12:19-21**:

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

For us to deliver a prayer asking God to give divine justice, it should be done as the *last resort* option. This prayer is a last-ditch plea before God to give justice for those who will neither turn to God or turn away from doing evil.

David prayed a prayer like this in **Psalm 109:6-15** about his enemies; He gets pretty graphic in verse 6. I have learned that if you must pray a prayer like this you must give the vengeance to the Lord. If left to us to give justice, we would tend to give more than what the offense deserves. The truth of the matter is that we don't just get even, we go one better, don't we? God's justice, however, is perfectly fair. In the end, He will repay the wicked according to what they deserve—no more, no less. That is why we are called to not take revenge ourselves and to instead "*leave room for God's wrath*" (**Romans 12:19**).

As former enemies of God, we should be gracious and grateful that we are allowed to pray for our enemies. We should be thankful enough for the grace of God that we want even the Taliban to receive His mercy. But if they refuse and harden their hearts against the One who would spare them, then we must ask they receive the divine retribution due everyone apart from Jesus Christ. -FF