**One nation under God in need of healing**

It’s no surprise our world, our country, our hearts have been in turmoil for months. In a month usually known for celebrations and parades of community pride, this July is plagued with a sense of mourning for the lives lost. First, for the thousands of individuals lost due to the coronavirus pandemic, a virus still not fully eradicated. More recently, for the lives lost due to acts of hatred and racism still existent in our country amidst protests and riots.

We all bleed. The death of Mr. George Floyd at the hands of a police officer while three others watched in broad daylight, is a despicable act that has reopened wounds of hatred and racism in this country. When we read our pledge of allegiance - *"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." –* and we watch the news, it certainly portraits two different realities.

We have a world in need of healing. We have a nation in need of healing. We have many hearts in need of emotional and spiritual healing. Where do we start? We need to start with God at the center; with His power as the source. We need to honestly search what’s in our hearts. We need to commit to intercession, to open dialogue and engage in the process for social reforms at all levels – from government and law enforcements to public and private institutions - to begin healing. It’s time for our society, to seek healing with solidarity of heart, mind, words, and action. The dictionary defines solidarity as “unity or agreement of feeling or action especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.” We are one humanity. God is creator of all.

For too long, our society has tried to remove God from the picture of humanity, a spiritual and emotional exile of sorts. However, this pandemic and acts of hatred, evidence over and over our minuteness and inadequacy to handle life without God. As a nation under God, from its moral foundation to this day, we need His healing power and grace to move forward. God is Jehovah-Rapha, the Great Physician.

Being a nation under God means we recognize His precepts as our foundation for holy living, both individually and collectively as community. He’s the creator, governor and preserver of all things. As our creator, we acknowledge He’s created us all equal in value and dignity. As our governor, His kingdom values are our guidelines for community living. As our preserver, we trust He continues to provide what will be needed for our wellbeing.

In the days of Jeremiah, the Israelites were no longer one nation. They were divided between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Judah was in a distressed state. They were broken by sin and division, much like our nation today. Jeremiah recorded the burden of God’s people who were hurting, him included. He declared that healing was available if people turned to God. He says ***“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?”*** (Jeremiah 8:22, NIV).

Gilead was known for being a region of many medicinal herbs, including a balm known for its healing properties. Jeremiah was crying out to God because of the extended and agonizing pain of God’s people from their brokenness in exile. More than a tantrum, the prophet was voicing the agony of the nation before God at the same time he was reminding the people then, and us now, that God is the one who can bring healing; that He is the balm of Gilead that can heal any hurt we’re experiencing.

The solution to our hurts individually and collectively is turning to God. Our actions must reflect our hearts - that they are aligned with God. Racism and acts of hatred are against God’s values. We can learn to see with God’s eyes. We can learn to feel with God’s heart and speak with Jesus’ love when we surrender our own prejudices wholeheartedly to the work of the Holy Spirit and when we commit to do our part to end social injustice. Jesus told the disciples we would be known by our love.

For the Israelites, the heart was at the core of thoughts and actions. The kingdom of Judah was destroyed by the Babylonians for their unwillingness to obey God and be healed. Let’s ask God to transform each of our hearts so that we become genuine agents of reconciliation and peace and not a source of further division. God has deep healing available for every hurt we have experienced.

We’re one humanity under the mighty hand of God. He sees us all as one. He desires our wholeness and healing: *“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for me?” (Jeremiah 32:27, NIV).*

Let’s kneel before Him, not with human agendas, but with humility and sincere hearts so that we all learn how to love one another and how to live as one nation under His care.

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Questions to help you explore further:

\*Can you identify with Jeremiah’s cry for Judah? Are there areas in your life in need of healing?

\*How would you categorize your solidarity of mind, words, and action against social injustice? What has this crisis revealed to you personally? How is it applicable to what we’re experiencing as a nation?

\*What is involved in the heart transformation (hearts of stone into hearts of flesh) mentioned in Ezekiel 11:18-20? Is your heart aligned with God’s?

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