

Responding Rightly

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Sermon Synopsis

In the shadow of the somber remnants of Auschwitz, Dr. Billy Wilson delivers a powerful message of hope and responsibility. Amidst the chilling reminders of the Holocaust's atrocity, where over a million Jews perished, he urges Christians to respond with compassion and understanding to the Jewish people. The sermon, steeped in historical context, begins with the roots of Zionism and traces the tumultuous path leading to the establishment of the State of Israel. The narrative of suffering and survival is a call to action for believers to embrace their Jewish brethren.

Dr. Wilson delves into the biblical and historical connections between Christianity and Judaism, emphasizing the Jewish contribution to the Christian faith. Drawing from Acts 15, he highlights the early church's struggle with integrating Gentile believers and the subsequent council that affirmed the inclusion of non-Jews without the need to adhere to Jewish customs. This pivotal moment in Christian history serves as a foundation for the sermon's core message: Christians are called to bless and honor the Jewish people, acknowledging their significant role as the root of the Christian faith.

The sermon outlines four critical responses Christians should adopt towards the Jewish community. First, to bless and honor them, recognizing the eternal covenant between God and Abraham. Second, to seek understanding, acknowledging the Jewish people's rich heritage and their longing for peace. Third, to pray fervently for their salvation and the peace of Jerusalem. And fourth, to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them, affirming that salvation is available to all, Jew and Gentile alike, through faith in Christ alone.

Dr. Wilson's message is a poignant reminder of the horrors of the Holocaust and the resilience of the Jewish people. He presents the Fountain of Tears, a powerful sculpture that juxtaposes the

crucifixion of Christ with the tragedy of the Holocaust. This artistic expression serves as a metaphor for the shared suffering and ultimate hope found in Jesus. The sermon concludes with a heartfelt invitation to Jewish viewers to embrace Jesus as their Messiah and to Christians to actively participate in healing, understanding, and evangelizing with love and respect.

Sermon Highlights

- Bless and honor the Jewish people, recognizing their significance in God's plan and the deep roots of Christianity in Jewish heritage, as established through the Abrahamic covenant where God promises blessings to those who bless Abraham's descendants (Genesis 12:1-3).
- Seek to understand the Jewish people, engaging with their rich history, enduring faith, family values, aspiration for peace, and distinct role in God's prophetic timeline, thereby fostering a genuine relationship founded on empathy and respect.
- Pray for the Jewish people, petitioning God for their salvation, the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6), and for revival in Israel, as Paul expresses his heartfelt desire for their salvation in Romans 10:1.
- Share Jesus with the Jewish people, communicating the exclusivity of salvation through Christ (John 14:6, Acts 4:12), and the growing number of Jewish people who are recognizing Jesus as their Messiah, indicating an awakening to faith in Him within the Jewish community.
- Encourage action among believers, calling for prayer, understanding, and the blessing of the Jewish people, and to spread the message of Jesus' sacrificial love and redemption to all, starting with the Jews, as He is the way, the truth, and the life for both Jews and Gentiles alike.

Scripture Verses

Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'

Acts 15:7-11

After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: 'Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy

Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.'

Romans 11:17-18

If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.

Psalm 122:6

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May those who love you be secure.'

Romans 10:1

Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

Romans 10:12-13

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

Romans 11:11-12

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

Quotes

- Our heritage, Our relationship with the Jewish people should be one of blessing and honor at all times. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- The Jews are the root of the Christian faith. And as Gentiles we are branches that have been grafted into this root. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- We should pray for revival in Israel and for the Jewish people. We should pray for their salvation and we should pray for God's peace for them. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- The only way for anyone to be saved in this time, in the moment in which we live, is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. He is the only way we can be saved. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- Join me in praying for Israel, praying for Jerusalem, and seeking to respond biblically to the Jewish people. - Dr. Billy Wilson

Bible Study

Objectives

- Understand our response as Christians to the Jewish people
- Learn the importance of blessing and honoring the Jewish heritage
- Seek to understand, pray for, and share the message of Jesus with Jewish people
- Reflect on the implications of the Holocaust for Christian witness

Reading and Reflections

- Genesis 12:1-3 — The call of Abraham and the blessings for those who bless his descendants
- Romans 11:17-18, 23-24 — The relationship between Jews and Gentiles as illustrated by the olive tree
- Psalm 122:6 — The command to pray for the peace of Jerusalem
- Romans 1:16, 10:1, 10:12-13 — The universality of the gospel for both Jews and Gentiles

Key Observations

- The Holocaust stands as a grim reminder of the depths of human depravity and the urgent need for the love of Christ to be evident in our world.
- Jewish people have a significant and enduring covenant relationship with God.
- The Christian faith is rooted in Judaism, as Jesus was born a Jew and fulfilled Jewish prophecies.
- Sharing the gospel with Jewish people should be done with sensitivity and respect, recognizing the historical and spiritual context.

Personal Reflections

- Reflect on how the history of the Jewish people impacts your understanding of the Christian faith.
- Consider ways in which you may have personally contributed to misunderstanding or prejudice against Jewish people, and how you can make amends.
- Meditate on the grace of God that is available equally to Jews and Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

Lessons for Daily Life

- Recognize and appreciate the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.
- Show love and respect towards Jewish individuals and their community.

- Be an advocate against anti-Semitism and all forms of racial and religious discrimination.

Practical Applications

- Be informed about Jewish customs, feasts, and traditions to foster understanding and respect.
- Regularly pray for the salvation of Jewish people and for the peace of Jerusalem.
- Support ministries and organizations that responsibly share the love of Jesus with Jewish communities.

Challenges for the Week

- Read a book or article about Jewish-Christian relations to broaden your understanding.
- Find a Messianic Jewish congregation to visit and experience a service.
- Dedicate specific time each day to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and the salvation of Jewish people.

Further Study

- Study the history of Israel and the journey of the Jewish people as God's chosen nation.
- Reflect on the lives of key Jewish figures in the Bible and their role in salvation history.
- Delve into Messianic prophecies and their fulfillment in the New Testament.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You humbled by the history and the pain that our Jewish brethren have endured. We ask for Your guidance as we seek to bless and honor them, as You commanded in Your Word. May our hearts be filled with love and understanding, and our actions directed towards building bridges and sharing the hope found in You. Empower us to be instruments of Your peace, praying fervently for Jerusalem and for all Your people. Help us to always stand against injustice and be proponents of Your truth. Grant us the wisdom to share the gospel with humility, respecting the unique path each soul takes to find You. We ask these things in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Daily Devotionals

Day 1

Scripture Verse

Romans 11:17-18 (NIV) - 'If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.'

Reflection

As we reflect on the horrors of Auschwitz and the plight of the Jewish people - our hearts break for the tragedy they endured. This Scripture from Romans reminds us deeply of our roots, our heritage as believers in Christ. We are reminded that our faith is intricately connected to the Jewish people, from whom the message of salvation first sprung forth. As we tread on sacred grounds of history, let us not forget that the Jewish people have provided us with the foundation of our belief – the Holy Scriptures and the lineage of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The roots of our faith are soaked with the sacrifices of those who came before us, and in humbleness, we must acknowledge this legacy. To honor and bless the Jewish people is not just a call, it's our heritage and our duty as believers. The apostle Paul's words sternly warn us not to boast but to be grateful. Just as a wild olive shoot thrives when grafted onto a cultivated tree, so too have we flourished through our grafting into the rich heritage of the Jewish people. To honor them is to honor the very root that nourishes our faith.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank You for the rich heritage of the Jewish people. Help me to honor and cherish the roots of my faith, and to always remember the profound spiritual lineage I am grafted into through Your mercy and grace. Amen.

Day 2

Scripture Verse

Psalm 122:6 (NIV) - 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May those who love you be secure.'

Reflection

In the shadow of Auschwitz's gates - a stark reminder of the depths of human depravity - let our hearts be moved to genuine intercession for the peace of Jerusalem and all Israel. The Psalmist exhorts us to pray for this ancient city that has withstood the test of time and turmoil, and for the people who have clung to the hope of peace through the ages. The security that we pray for Jerusalem is not only physical but spiritual as well. Many have endeavored for peace in this storied land, yet it remains elusive. Yet, we as believers hold a key in our prayers, for our prayers move the heart of God. We are called to spiritual warfare, to fight not with weapons of this world but with earnest prayer for those who stand at the forefront of historical and prophetic fulfillment. Let us today take up the mantle of intercessors, praying for the salvation of the Jewish people, for the peace of Jerusalem, and for the fulfillment of God's covenants. May we be the bearers of the Prince of Peace's message and embody the security that only He can provide.

Prayer

Lord God, I lift up Jerusalem to You, praying for peace within its walls and prosperity within its palaces. May Your peace reign in the hearts of those who call Jerusalem home, and may Your salvation be revealed to all Israel. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3

Scripture Verse

Romans 1:16 (NIV) - 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.'

Reflection

Standing amidst the vestiges of unspeakable atrocities, one cannot help but grapple with the weight of history. Yet in the gospel, we find an unshakable truth - it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. This power, potent and pure, was first offered to the Jewish people and then to the Gentile world. Our calling as bearers of the gospel is clear, we are to stand unashamed of its truth, its power, and the hope it carries. We are to share it with love and respect, mindful of the sacred heritage of those to whom it was first given - the Jewish people. Just as God extended His grace to them through the Messiah, so too must we extend His love to all people, including the Jewish community, with humility and understanding. Reflect today on the responsibility and privilege you carry: to be a witness of the life-changing power of the gospel. As you contemplate your own faith journey, consider how you can lovingly and respectfully share the good news with the Jewish people in your life and community.

Prayer

Eternal God, grant me the courage and wisdom to share the gospel unashamedly with all people, remembering that it was first given to Your chosen people, Israel. May Your Spirit lead me in truth and love as I bear witness to Your salvation. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

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