

Dear Members & Friends

JANUARY, 2023

It was last Tuesday that our family chose to take the winter light tour at the Cleveland Zoo. As you know I am not a spring chicken, but joined the family for the walk in winter cold. It was great until I came to the point where it would be a challenge for me to continue without some help. It was determined to be at the POINT OF NO RETURN so going back was not the choice for me. I hitched a ride on a cart and all ended well. The point of no return phrase kept going through my mind. Are we as a nation, Church, people, world, reaching that point possibly in our Christian faith, churches, morals, country, and our Constitution drafted by our Founding fathers? So I went to the dictionary and the Bible for some help in dealing with this struggle that I was having.

The latest Merriam-Webster Dictionary says the following: "a critical point at which turning back or reversal is not possible". We need to be at prayer for our country. The hymn we so often have sung is "God Bless America". In World War II I had five brothers in the service of our USA to fight for the freedoms that we cherish. We prayed every day for their safety. So many have fought and many gave their life to protect our beloved land with its freedoms. In surveying many young people, we see only dislike and disdain for America. So many see the Constitution as out of date and a useless document that needs to be changed into a socialistic form of government.

When I observe the great division of our government, the crime, hatred, abortion increase, immorality, the fear of WWII, War in the Ukraine, persecution of Christians, the Christian faith becoming a minority and our open borders, I sometimes feel we have reached the POINT OF NO RETURN in America. The nation will never return to a time when the majority pray and worship, act and live in a God-pleasing manner. I feel, at times, the America as we once knew it to be is gone. The next generation can only dream of a time in which there is freedom of speech and freedom of religion. The indoctrination of our schools and universities teach a way of life that is not one that follows God's will or way. The grand children will have to find their twenty-first century catacombs to gather for the worship of the Triune God. The early Christians worshiped in secret from the Roman Guards that persecuted and killed so many believers that trusted in Jesus as their Savior.

Wait a moment, Jonah felt the same way as I and so many others feel as to what is taking place in the USA. When God directed Jonah to Nineveh to preach repentance because of the wickedness of that people, Jonah thought they were beyond the point of no return. So what did Jonah do? He tried to run away from the Lord. He purchased a ticket and headed West. When God gives an assignment, He expects it to be done. You know the story and God used a great fish to serve as a Taxi. So Jonah, with the stomach acid on his face, preached REPENTANCE. Sure enough, the people of Nineveh repented of their sins, and the land was saved from destruction.

What example does the story of Jonah have for us in America? Maybe the Lord is saying to us that we have some work to do. It starts with prayer and moves on to the growth in knowledge of His Word. We need to be careful not to pull a Jonah and neglect our calling to tell the GOOD NEWS of Jesus to a straying world and nation. The signs are all there for us to follow. We have a new year to move on in faith to fulfill our calling, and in the respect of the Lord.

Pastor Walther P. Marcis.

*"... with God all things are possible."* Matthew 19:26

