

*Remarks for the  
Prayer Rally  
May 2, 2002*

What a blessing to be here today...

It's been nearly nine months since the last prayer rally we held on this spot, a rally to bring us together as a state and as a nation, and to offer the strength to handle the tragedies of September 11.

On that day, I said that we live in the greatest nation on earth, a nation built on principles of freedom and tolerance. We cannot and will not allow those principles to be undermined.

Among those principles we hold so dear is the freedom to worship – a freedom we celebrate today. We're here to pray for our state, our nation, and our world.

We're here to pray for each other.

There are so many challenges before us. It is my earnest prayer that we will have the wisdom, the patience, and the courage to take on those challenges and make a positive difference for the people of Mississippi.

The theme for this day of prayer comes from the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm: “God is our refuge and strength; an ever-present help in trouble.”

I believe God wants us to burden him with the things that burden us. Prayer is the means by which we make that transfer.

With him in the picture, with the knowledge that he is ready to take on our burdens, the work we are called to do becomes clearer.

I pray every day for the strength and the wisdom to do this job, a job that I love. I would ask for your prayers as well – not just for myself, but for all in public service – that we might do work that serves our people and serves God.

That work includes doing everything we can to come together not just as Mississippians but as creations of God – made in His image, blessed by His grace, and saved by His son.

It is my pleasure to proclaim today as a National Day of Prayer in Mississippi, and I call on all Mississippians to take just a minute to give thanks for our blessings, to ask forgiveness for our sins, and to offer praise to our Lord and Creator.

And my own prayer today is for a new and collective hope for Mississippi, a hope we all share, a hope for the realization of our promise and our potential.

God bless Mississippi, and may God bless  
America.