

The War Prayer by Mark Twain

Posted on September 18, 2018

Mark Twain, also referred to as Samuel Clemens, is the author of “The War Prayer.” The story “The War Prayer” talks of a small town that prays for soldiers’ victory against their foes. A messenger who comes from God comes to reveal to the people of the town that they are brutal and selfish, which are in favor of their wishes (“The War Prayer”).

He declares that the prayer made that the soldiers will have to “crush the enemies,” although signifying victory to their wishes for bloody deaths and violence for those who oppose. The Congregation Messenger, “an aged Man,” explains to the people that he was there to talk aloud on the second part of the prayers for the conquest. This is the part that they had indirectly wished for and not allowed for themselves, actually the payer for the devastation of their foes. What comes after this is a gruesome depiction in full of hardship that imposed on the war-torn nation-states by their captors. After all, the stranger “messenger” is finally ignored by the congregation, and they opt to settle on their own objectives towards the prayers.

To start with “The War Prayer” deeply, Mark Twain’s statement on hidden antiwar sentiment is highly felt. In this case, the influence of other countries, imperialism, and its consequences as one of the American problems by use of military force is highly expressed by Mark Twain. Ironically, the church was the place used for peace prayers previously, but later, some meetings were held to plan for the destruction of the enemy, hence pronouncing war. Surprisingly enough, this story never made up for the high popularity list. Indeed, the patriotic interpretations of America being held great above most of the period as the country hence could differentiate some of the serious views that Twain talks about in “The War .”ayer.”

Mark Twain’s “The War Prayer” redirects about the conditions and time of the Philippine-American War. In his work, Mark Twain puts the priest alongside the stranger, who is unsuspectingly important to the reader. The story surprises with high spirit about the patriotic appearance of the American best. Patriotism festivities were performed in the town through the parade and fireworks in a victorious and joyous mood. Mark Twain discusses this in a positive perspective in order to direct the reader in a positive direction so that the reader may stay positive rather than take it negatively, hence a more serious turn. Therefore, from the reading, Twain is seen to disguise the true aspect of the story through the creation of some false sense to secure the comfort of the story (Twain). Thus, patriotism continues to church just from the streets where the “prayer” starts.

More so, the prayer’s tone was set just from the beginning, whereby everything starts with “God the all terrible.” The prayer went ahead with the purpose of blessing the soldiers as they were heading for battle, hence staying active and invincible. The primary objective of the prayer is to guide them and assist them in winning over their enemies. At this point, the stranger moves ahead to the podium, and the story takes an entirely different direction. The stranger disrupts the priest by tapping his soldier.

Suddenly, the payer tops and the priest is given a chance to take over by the priest. Actually, the ease with which the stranger takes over the entire scenario appears to recommend the risky reputation of what he has to say. The congregation gets mixed up and unusually views the stranger due to the interruption and negative statements that do not favor them as made by the stranger.

As he begins, the stranger asks, "Is it one payer?" "One person answered, "No, it is two," while the other one answered, "Not". This indicates that every side is in prayer for victory over the enemy, which is against one another (Fishkin and Tatsumi). Indeed, who is the right party to receive the prayer for rooting the battle? Mark Twain expresses that there is no winner from the war. It's only the aftermath and Bloody carnage. The stranger, therefore, portrays the picture of the battle in a vivid description, which he showed upon the prayer he made. He ends the prayer out and silences for the result with the gathering, and then states, "Yes have prayed for it; if yes still wish for it, talk! The Most-High waits for messenger waits". This states that if you are in need of it, just move forward and pray (Twain). Therefore, Mark Twain can be said to have planted the war effect seed in the mind of the reader.

In conclusion, "The War Prayer" still today rings on the war today even though it was written over a century ago. However, at some point, it may not receive the desired attention required since it is built on a provocative landscape of the story. Indeed, today, it's obviously un-American, being anti-patriotic and anti-war. This indicates that the story would fall beneath examination and not met with the best purposes. Unlike those days, so many things have changed according to the perception of the various states, more so the Americans. Therefore, it gives a different understanding of whether "The war prayer" was to be made in the current world, more so in patriotic and religious favor. The best phenomenon that one would think of is a question: if this story could be an essential aspect of American History as Tom Sawyer, how would American views be different? Hence, a question is worth pondering.

Work Cited

Fishkin, Shelly Fisher and Takayuki Tatsumi. "Editors' Introduction: New Perspectives on 'The War-Prayer'." *Journal of Transnational American Studies* (2009).

"The War Prayer." *The War Prayer*. N.p., 2018. Web. 26 Feb. 2018.

Twain, Mark. "The War Prayer, By Mark Twain." *Antiwar.com*. N.p., 1994. Web. 26 Feb. 2018.

Zehr, Martin. "The Vision Of The Other In Mark Twain's 'War-Prayer'." *Escholarship.org*. N.p., 2018. Web. 26 Feb. 2018.