

On God and Country

Text - PROVERBS 14:34

Introduction: The date was JUNE 17, 1963. That was the date the United States Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to have prayer in public schools. Many Christians point to the events of that day as the turning point in America. The day America turned her back on God.

But for just a moment, let's back up exactly 100 years before the ban on prayer in our public schools. The date was APRIL 30, 1863. It was on that date, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation for a National Day of Prayer and Fasting. In that proclamation, President Lincoln said.....

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us.

And we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace.

We have become too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

When Abraham Lincoln spoke those words 146 years ago it is obvious he was already seeing the early warning signs that America was turning her back on God.

I love AMERICA! I love our AMERICAN FLAG! Other nations have beautiful brightly colored flags, but to me none are as beautiful as the Red, White and Blue flag of the United States of America. The flag we affectionately call "Old Glory."

And I love our NATIONAL ANTHEM. Every time there is an Olympic Games and I hear our national anthem being played as the American Flag is being hoisted to honor one of our American athletes, I get a lump in my throat the size of Texas. And when I hear the National Anthem of another nation playing, none seems to have the pomp and majesty of our national anthem.

Yes, I love AMERICA! But I don't LOVE what has happened to America!

At one time the United States of America was looked up to as the greatest nation on earth. We were like a glistening diamond in a backdrop of darkness. "The Crown has Fallen!"--Lam. 5:16

As we think about GOD AND COUNTRY this morning, I would like to answer THREE VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

I. What Made America Great?----RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. Our scripture text says, *Righteousness exalts a nation..... RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTS A NATION!!!*

illustration: Many years ago a South American President was asked to explain the difference between North America and South America.

He said, "South America was settled by men seeking GOLD.... while North America was settled by men seeking GOD. "

2. Right now we are seeing liberal educators and politicians do everything possible to distance us from our spiritual roots. But no matter how hard they try to re-write history they cannot change this truth that AMERICA was established by RIGHTEOUS men who believed in Almighty God.

As the Declaration of Independence was being signed, SAMUEL ADAMS declared:

"We have this day restored the Sovereign Lord to Whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting sun. Let His kingdom come!"

At the first Constitutional Convention on June 28, 1787
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN said.....

"In the beginning of our contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, sirs, were heard and graciously answered. We have been assured in the sacred writings that except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

In the will of PATRICK HENRY who made the famous speech on "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" he wrote:

"I have now disposed of all my property to my family. There is one thing more that I wish I could give to them. That is the Christian religion. If that had that and I had not one shilling, they would have been rich; and if they had not that and I had given them the world they would have been poor."

President Woodrow Wilson said in 1923:

"Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it is redeemed spiritually. It can be saved only by becoming permeated by the Spirit of Christ and being made free and happy by the practices that spring out of that Spirit.

3. Let me tell you some things about America you probably didn't know.

*Did you know in 1776, eleven of the thirteen original colonies required one to be a CHRISTIAN in order to run for any political office?

*Did you know in 1777, the Continental Congress voted to spend \$300,000not on a BAIL OUT.....but to purchase Bibles to be distributed across the country?

*Did you know 94% of the writings of our nation's Founding Fathers contain direct quotes from the Bible?

*Did you know the State Constitutions of all 50 States mention God?

*Did you know the Liberty Bell has part of Leviticus 25:10 inscribed on it? It reads, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

*And did you know the words of our scripture text in Proverbs 14:34 are etched in stone above the entrance door to City Hall in of all places, Los Angeles, California?

4. Brothers and sisters, they can re-write the history books. They can burn all the historical documents that contain references to God.

But nothing will erase the truth that America became the greatest nation on earth because of RIGHTEOUSNESS. *Righteousness Exalts A Nation!!!*

II. What Has Cost America Her Greatness?---SIN

Look again at our scripture text.....*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

1. To say that our nation has not moved a long way from her righteous foundation is to ignore reality!

America is ROLLING in LUXURY.....REVELING in EXCESS.....and ROTTING in SIN!!!

We are now living in a country that no longer values LIFE..... MORALITY..... THE FAMILY..... or our CHRISTIAN HERITAGE.

2. On November 30, 1998, Joe Wright, who is a minister in Wichita, Kansas, was asked to offer the invocation at the beginning session of the Kansas State Legislature.

Brother Wright prayed.....

Heavenly Father, We come before You today to ask Your forgiveness and to seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your word says, "Woe unto those who call evil good," that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.

We confessWe have ridiculed absolute truth and called it pluralism. We have worshiped other gods and called it multi-culturalism. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn babies and called it a choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have abused power and called it political savvy. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition.

We have polluted the air-waves with profanity and called it the freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us O God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent to direct us to the center of Your

will. I ask it in the Name of Your Son, the living Savior, Jesus Christ.

---AMEN

THE RESPONSE was immediate. Many of the Kansas legislators got up and walked out during the prayer. But in the six weeks that followed, the Church where Brother Wright ministers, received over 5,000 telephone calls, and only 47 of those were negative.

3. SIN is destroying AMERICA!

In our lifetime we have seen America go from the pinnacle of glory to the pit of despair. And it is all because of SIN!

How can we even ask God to bless America when we have kicked Him out of our schools.....mocked Him in our media
.....blasphemed Him in our Movies and Television Shows
..... and profaned His Holy Name in our every day conversations?

4. Many people believe AMERICA is still the Number One nation in the world. We are!!!

-We are number one in MURDERS.
-We are number one in VIOLENT CRIMES.
-We are number one in ABORTIONS.
-We are the number one producer of PORNOGRAPHY.
-We are number one in IMPRISONMENTS.
-We are number one in DIVORCES.
-We are number one in SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES.
-We are number one in TEEN SUICIDES.
-And we are number one in COCAINE CONSUMPTION

5. Right now America is engaged in the greatest war she has ever fought and that is the WAR OF HER OWN SURVIVAL!

6. We have lost our GLORY in the world! We have become a by-word among the nations!

AND IT IS ALL BECAUSE OF OUR SINS!

What Made America Great? RIGHTEOUSNESS - For righteousness exalts a nation.

What Costs America Her Greatness? SIN - For sin is a reproach to any people.

III. What Can We Do To Restore America's Greatness?

REPENT - Turn with me to I PETER 4:17-19

1. America's future doesn't depend on who is in the White House.

America's future doesn't depend on electing all the right Senators and Congressmen.

America's future doesn't depend on who gets appointed to the Supreme Court.

America's future doesn't depend on Republicans or Democrats.....Liberals or Conservatives or Libertarians.

2. America's future rests squarely upon the shoulders of every Christian.

Judgment begins in the family of God!

3. We are all familiar with that passage in **II Chronicles 7:14** -- that is God's prescription for healing a sin-sick nation.

God tells us to do four things.....

First, we must HUMBLE OURSELVES.

It is time that our Churches humbled themselves before God and admit we "dropped the ball." If our Churches were what they ought to be then our country might not be what it has turned out to be. If our churches were doing what we should be doing maybe our country would NOT be doing things SHE SHOULD NOT be doing!

Second, we must PRAY.

Pray for what? We must pray for God's forgiveness. We must pray for God to change our hearts and our attitudes. We must pray for our nation's leaders. Simply put, we must become a PRAYING PEOPLE once again!

Third, we must SEEK GOD'S FACE.

We have become a proud people. We love our independence so much that we make our decisions without seeking God's wisdom. And about the only time we truly seek God's face is when we have made a mess out of our lives and need God to straighten it out for us.

And we must TURN FROM OUR WICKED WAYS.

That means we must REPENT. REPENTANCE is a change of heart that is followed by a change of action.

If righteousness brought us glory.....and sin costs us our glory, then we must forsake SIN and go back to RIGHTEOUSNESS!!

AND IF WE DO THESE THINGS, GOD PROMISES HE WILL HEAR OUR PRAYERS.....HE WILL FORGIVE OUR SIN.....AND HE WILL HEAL OUR LAND.

The healing of America begins right here in Ludowici, GA. It begins with you and it begins with me. Every man, every woman, every young person getting serious about GOD!

CONCLUSION: At this time of year when we celebrate our nation's independence, may we all be reminded not to take our freedom for granted.

Proverbs 14:34

Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.