

America

This past Friday was the 4th of July! Independence Day! A time for celebrating our freedom as a Nation; celebrating America's political birthday! **I love America**; I truly do! I am proud to be an American! Even though there are some things taking place in our nation which deeply concern me, & grieves me, still I am proud to be an American. And so I speak from my heart this morning on the subject of **America**! There are three things I want us to consider together: first, the **Greatness of America**; secondly, the **God of America**; & third, the **Guilt of America**.

Psalm 33:12 says: "**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord**; & the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance." That Bible verse is just as true as John 3:16. "**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord**." I'm afraid our leaders in this country, generally speaking, have forgotten the truth of this important verse. The way to greatness is not found in the avenues we are pursuing; it is found in the simple truth of this statement: "**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord**."

1. First let's look at **the Greatness of America**!

God has given us in America **wonderful natural resources**! Practically every commodity that man uses can be found right here in America. In the fields of America every crop is grown. From the trees of America every fruit & wood is secured. From the mines of America every mineral that man uses is dug. And upon the prairies of America is every meat that is good for food. I only wish we would use our **own resources of oil**, rather than to be so dependent upon the OPEC Nations for our oil.

God has also given us **bountiful natural beauties**! Every type of scenery that can be found in the world is seen in America. When people talk about the beautiful coast of the Mediterranean, or the Sea of Cortez, we can point them to the Atlantic coast, the Pacific & Gulf shores. When they talk about the beautiful rivers of Europe, we can tell them of the beautiful Ohio, the St. Lawrence, the Hudson, the mighty Mississippi, the Missouri, & the Colorado. When they talk about the mountains of Switzerland, we can point them to the Alleghenies, the Smokeys, the Rockies, & others. When they talk about the interesting spots in the world, we can tell them about Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park, the Redwood Forest, & on & on.

When I was a boy there was a slogan that said: "See America first." It was good advice then, & it's still good advice! You can put all the scenery of all the world together, & in my opinion, we can match it right here in the beautiful United States of America. And a lot of it can be enjoyed right here in the State of Arizona!

God has blessed us as a Nation, with wonderful natural **resources**, & He has blessed us bountifully with natural **beauty**. But God has also given us a good form of **government**! We have a free democracy! The Declaration of Independence & the Constitution still guards our liberties. God has given us the **freedom of speech & freedom of press**. God has given us **religious freedom**. God has given us **separation of church & state**. Some people do not understand what is meant by that expression. It means that no particular church is accepted as the "state church." Citizens of the country are not forced to pay taxes to support what is known as the "state church." That is what separation of church & state really means. The "separation of church & state" does **not** mean that Christians are not to have interest, or be involved, in politics. **We all have a God-given right & responsibility to vote**. Every Christian should exercise his/her God-given right, very prayerfully, seeing that the right men are put in office in this country. In fact, I pray that God will give us even more born-again believers, who have a moral backbone to fill positions of leadership in our government. Thank God for those in the church who are involved in governmental leadership! Pray that God will give them courage!

Furthermore, God has given us a country **where everyone has a chance**! Henry Ford once said to a group of young men: "**There is no such thing as no chance**." In America any poor young man/lady, who has a dream, can be something, if they set their minds to it! Yes, in America everybody has a chance! **Everybody**! No matter who you are; no matter what your educational, or sociological background, if you mean business, you have a chance here in America.

America! America, what a land of opportunity! Say what you will about it, I love this land of ours! **I am proud to be an American!** When I hear *The Star-Spangled Banner* sung, I still stand straight & tall;- & something wells up in my heart, as I salute the flag!
**America! America! God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea.**

What a country we've got! We ought to love it, stand up for it, & do what we can to help preserve the freedom we have in America!

2. Now let me say a word about **the God of America**!

If America is great, it is because in the beginning, God has been given His rightful place in America. A South American president once said: "South America was founded by men who were seeking **gold**, but North America was founded by men who were seeking **God**." Someone else put it this way: "The Spaniards came here for **gold**; the French came here for **gain**; but the original colonist came here for **God**."

The Creeks built a civilization upon culture, & it failed. The Romans built a civilization upon power, & it failed. Our forefathers founded our nation upon the Christian faith, & America will live as long as the Lord is still her God, & not one bit longer! Psalm 33:12 is still in the Bible! "**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord**." When we give God His rightful place again, we will see America blessed, once again! Our pledge still says, "To the United States of America ... one nation, **under God**!" Oh, let's keep it that way! Not only in our Pledge of Allegiance, but in our hearts!

When was the last time you prayed for those in government? When was the last time you prayed for a genuine spiritual revival & renewal for America? At times, I want to go across this land of ours & scream, "**Wake up! Turn to God Almighty! Wake up!**" Let's give God His rightful place in America! We sing, "God Bless America -- Land that I love," but my friends, it is only as America blesses God, that God can bless America! When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, they knelt down upon the shores, & thanked God for giving them this new country. The church was at the center of every new settlement in this land.

Most people are unaware that our **Declaration of Independence** did not come into being until **after** a day of **prayer & fasting** had been observed. When the Continental Congress faced great problems & difficulties, & knew not which way to turn, Benjamin Franklin called upon the members of Congress to fall upon their knees & pray! Such a day of prayer was appointed by the Continental Congress, & was kept by all the colonies on May 17, 1776. Then just a few weeks later, on July 4, 1776, the final draft of the Declaration of Independence was adopted by all the 13 colonies.

3. We have looked at the **Greatness** of America & at the **God** of America, now a word about **the Guilt of America!**

The prophet Isaiah said of Israel, "They parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it" (Isaiah 3:9 NIV). Those very words **also** describe America right now! "They parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it." Today in America, rather than being ashamed of our sins, we go on television & brag about them! Or we write a book & tell about them! Our nation has **sinned** just like Sodom & Gomorrah did! We've become a society where any ungodly act can take place without a trace of shame! I believe America has come to the **very brink** of the depths! If God spares America much longer, He is going to have to apologize to Sodom & Gomorrah!

Even **worldly** people agree that things have gone too far. In a newspaper report recently, **rock stars** who had become famous **years ago** for their immoral acts on **MTV**, were being quoted. Today, these same performers are **aghast** at the horrible filth being spewed on America. They say the immorality taking place is the worst they've ever seen! Just a few years ago, these same performers took pride in ushering immorality to new heights. Now -- now, they shake their heads in disgust at what **they** themselves see. They admit, "Even we can't handle what's going on today." In their own words, they say: "This country has totally stepped over the line."

Furthermore, the gay community has been promoting an "in your face" agenda upon our society! My friends, such acts of sinfulness are **not** escaping the attention of a holy & righteous God! I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but I believe America is in great danger today! I am not a preacher of doom, but I am deeply, deeply concerned! **What more will it take for God to get our attention?** How long will it take for the Lord to respond to our shamelessness?

One of the great sins of America today is **indifference**, just plain old indifference. We have said: "Well, I'm only one. I can't do anything." And we have allowed the devil to take us further & further & further down the road of ruin. It is time for us to shake off our indifference -- rise up & do something!

America is **also** guilty, I believe, of **ingratitude**. Instead of thanking God for what we have, we want more! It's "Give me more, Lord! Give me more! More income, bigger pensions, more welfare, more handouts." **Ingratitude!** Never stopping to **thank God**; just taking, taking, taking. The guilt of shamelessness, the guilt of immorality, the guilt of homosexuality, the guilt of indifference, the guilt of ingratitude, & the guilt of iniquity! **Just plain sin!** Oh, **the guilt of America!**

On September 11, 2001, the twin towers in NYC were bombed by airplanes flying into them, & thousands of people were killed! It was a great tragedy! A very, very sad day for America. The next week a newspaper reported that more people went to church the Sunday following the events of Sept. 11, than at any other time in the history of America! Americans were in great peril, & they went to church. Let bombs start falling on America, & we will suddenly become more religious! The churches will be filled to overflowing!

My friends, **America needs God!** America needs God in her government! America needs God in its business! America needs God in her homes! America needs God in her schools! And America needs God even in her churches! Oh, how badly we need Him!

Conclusion: The good news is that there's still time; **there is still hope!** God is a God of **mercy**, & He is listening for our prayers of **repentance**. Keep on praying! Keep on reading the Bible! Keep the altar of personal devotions alive in your heart! Keep on teaching Bible verses to the children. Keep on telling them its wrong to smoke, to do drugs, to cuss & to lie. Keep on teaching them about morality; about godliness! Keep on teaching the truth of the Bible! **There is still hope!**

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." America needs God! America is guilty of many sins, but the guilt of America is our personal guilt. If America gets right with God, it will be when we as individuals get right with God. I ask you this morning, "Is your heart right with God?"

Valley Forge in Eastern Pennsylvania was the Winter Encampment of George Washington's Continental Army in the Winter of 1777-78. It was there that 11,000 ragged men camped for the winter, following a bitter defeat at the Battle of Germantown; a mob of cold, hungry, tired & discouraged men. The retreating army under Washington's command found only frozen, snow-covered fields, & a few homes. George Washington was saddened by the suffering of his men, **& he turned to God in prayer!** **I love that picture of Washington kneeling in prayer at Valley Forge!**

In February 1778, an important event occurred when Baron von Steuben, a Prussian military expert, arrived with a letter of introduction from Benjamin Franklin. **He was the answer to Washington's prayer!** Von Steuben took 100 of Washington's hand-picked men, & drilled & trained them into well-disciplined soldiers. They, in turn, trained the rest of the men, & the ragged band that retreated to Valley Forge in December 1777, marched out a well trained army in June 1778.

They were greeted with the news that France recognized the American government, & sympathized with their cause. A prominent Frenchman, the Marquis de Lafayette, became General Washington's aide. **And history was made!**

George Washington, Lafayette, John Paul Jones, George Rogers Clark & others, all fought bravely, courageously & unceasingly. These brave men kept striving, kept fighting, kept hoping! But why? Was it just unfair taxes & tyranny that kept them going? **No**; it was more, much more! The colonists were fighting for freedom of spirit, mind & soul! They had a vision; they wanted freedom to build a nation where men could pursue their individual destinies. But, my friends, **the fight continues!** Each generation, each individual, must carry it on!

Years ago I saw a cartoon where **Uncle Sam** was pictured on his knees praying. But if Uncle Sam ever gets on his knees to pray, it will be when the individual citizens of America are on their knees. If we want to help this great country, then every one of us should be sure that we are **thoroughly right with God!** Every sin should be confessed & each of us should make every effort to live the best possible Christian life. The Bible says: **"Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Proverbs 14:34). America can only be righteous when its citizens are righteous! The Bible says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." But God is Lord of the nation as He is Lord of the individual life. Question: **Is He Lord of your life today?**

God Bless America, Land that I love. Stand beside her, & guide her
Thru the night with a light from above. From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam God bless America, My home sweet home.

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