

## INTRODUCTION

I am passionate about my love for this country and I wouldn’t live anywhere else. If I lived somewhere else, I’d try to get to this country as fast as I could. Yet as I announced in yesterday’s service, I have what may be called a “lover’s quarrel” with America, because I believe we have gone way too far from where we started as a nation when it comes to our spiritual principles and our morality.

Sometimes you’ll hear someone say, “I’m just lucky to be born in America.” You’re not lucky—you’re blessed. I remember reading a classified in the newspaper that read:

LOST: ONE DOG. BROWN HAIR WITH SEVERAL BALD SPOTS;  
RIGHT LEG BROKEN FROM BEING RUN OVER BY CAR; REAR  
LEFT HIP INJURED FROM DOG FIGHT; RIGHT EYE MISSING,  
LEFT EAR CHEWED OFF. ANSWERS TO THE NAME LUCKY.

You’re not lucky to be born in America and you’re not lucky to live in America; you are blessed to live in this nation and so am I. See if you can guess who I am talking about. I wasn’t too long ago. I’m talking about a very visible world leader. See if you can identify him.

“Times were never better. The national economy was strong during his tenure. Inflation, which had been a plague for two decades, was under control. Peace and prosperity characterized the nation. Many considered him to be one the most gifted politicians to come onto the national stage. One journalist wrote of him, “Although there was uneasiness over his character and the allegations of corruption and immorality that swirled around him, none of his political opponents could touch him. He was far too slick for their accusations to stick.”

So charming and personable was this leader that even the religious leaders overlooked his lack of integrity. For his birthday, they distributed this prayer to be prayed in the churches all over the country: “Before you, O Lord, heavenly Father, we remember our leader and President on his birthday. We ask you to continue to help him find the right way in the difficult tasks that yet lay before our nation and to lead all things to a good end.”

Do you think you know who I am talking about? If you thought Bill Clinton, you’re wrong. Those very words were written about Adolph Hitler in 1940. Those of you who know something about Germany know just a few centuries before Hitler led the nation, it was one of the most spiritually deep and vibrant nations on earth. It was the birthplace of Protestant Reformation. And *how* in a matter of a few hundred years could they go from being the seedbed of Christian growth to become a nation that gave us the Holocaust. The same journalist, Dale Hurd observed:

“A nation with a great spiritual heritage lost its moral compass and decided to follow a silver-tongued rogue who could enrich them and the national treasury.” Somehow, Germany, the nation that birthed the Reformation — one of the greatest spiritual renewals

in all of history — fell off the moral cliff and became the nation that gave us the Holocaust.

Could it ever happen to America? Tonight I want to briefly talk to you about America’s spiritual heritage—what happened? I want to refer to two verses in the book of Psalms.

“Blessed is the nation who God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance.”  
Psalm 33:12

That’s a great promise, but there’s also a warning listed earlier in Psalms:

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Psalm 9:17

What are we going to do? I say there are three things we need to do as Americans who love America and who love God.

## **1. REMEMBER OUR SPIRITUAL ROOTS**

We must remember where we come from. We must remember the fabric out of which we were cut as a nation. From the very beginning, America was a haven and a place for religious freedom and religious expression. Even the name Christopher Columbus means “Christ bearer.” And when you study his life, you discover one of the reasons he wanted to find a new world was to travel to take the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who founded the Colonies were searching for religious freedom. The Puritans founded New England. The Quakers founded the state of Pennsylvania. Catholics sought out the area we now call Maryland to try to find peace from persecution. The very foundation of our nation is comprised of people seeking a place where they could be Christian as their consciences dictated.

Here is what some of the founders of our nation had to say about our spiritual heritage:

George Washington: “Did we bring the Bible to these shores? Or did it not rather bring us? The breath of the ancient prophets filled the sails of the tiny ships bringing pioneers to the new world. From these beginnings until now, the Bible has been a teacher to our best men, a rebuker to our worst men and a noble companion of us all.”

John Quincy Adams: “The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: It connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”

May I say he was wrong, because it has not been a dissoluble bond. It has been dissolved. As the state Connecticut was being founded, part of their constitution, which predated any federal document read:

The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut: “The state, the government, owes its origins to the wise disposition of the Divine Providence. The Word of God requires an orderly and

decent government established according to God to maintain and preserve the liberty and the purity of the Gospel.”

Years later Daniel Webster wrote:

“More than all, our government and our country were founded from the very first by faith under the Divine light of the Christian religion. Anyone who would wish that this country’s existence had otherwise begun is deceived. Let us not forget the spiritual character of our origin.”

Did you know at one time in the state of Delaware, every public official elected and appointed had to swear to this oath? “I do profess faith in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, His one and only son, and in the Holy Ghost, who God has blessed forever more — and I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures both Old and New Testaments to be given by Divine Inspiration.” That’s where we come from. That’s our spiritual heritage, founded on belief and fear of God. We carry it with us all the time; we just ignore it.

If you have a dollar bill in your wallet or purse, will you pull it out for a moment? I want you to look at it. I want to teach you something you may not know about the very currency we carry around. The front side of a dollar bill is fairly self-explanatory. There is the father of our nation, George Washington. It reminds me of the story about a Sunday School teacher who asked the children who the very first man who ever lived.

One little kid said, “George Washington.”

The teacher said, “No son, it’s Adam.”

He said, “Oh well, if you include foreigners.”

If you look on the back of your dollar bill, what you see in the two circles is basically the United States seal, both sides of it. You often see only the front side of it whenever the President of the United States speaks. Every part of it is a testimony to our belief and our dependence upon God. Of course, you can read the words clearly above the word *one*, “In God we trust.” But look at the pyramid. There’s been a lot of hocus-pocus and rumors going around that just aren’t true. Did you know the committee to form and design the great seal comprised three people? Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. They weren’t trying to use any satanic or cultic symbols at all. The unfinished pyramid was their way of saying America is a work in progress. We are not finished yet. The eye at the top was a well-known symbol of God, the all-seeing eye, Providence. Any time you read the word Providence, in any ancient writings in America, they’re talking about God, because the word “provide” means to look ahead, to look over *pro video*. God is the One who provides. He looks over all. That’s what the eye represents.

Look at the two Latin words above the eye, *Annuit Cæptis*, which means “God has favored our undertaking.” In other words, we’re trusting God to help us in this undertaking as a nation. Underneath the pyramid are the words *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, which mean “a new order of the ages,” they say America is something new. The eagle is the symbol of America. The thirteen stars above the eagle represent the thirteen original Colonies. The eagle grasps both an olive branch, for peace, and thirteen arrows, for war. It was not until 1945 that Harry Truman had the eagle turning toward the olive branch instead of the arrows, saying America wants to be a nation

of peace. At the base of the pyramid is the Roman numeral for 1776. In the Eagle’s beak you will read, “E Pluribus Unum,” meaning “one nation from many people.” Even the currency in your pocket says we believe in God, we trust in God and we’re depending upon Him for our deliverance. But ladies and gentlemen, America has forgotten that. We have forgotten our spiritual heritage and that leads me to the second thing I think we ought to do:

## **2. REPENT OF OUR NATIONAL SINS**

Would any of you agree with me in my belief that in these 225 years since they signed the Declaration of Independence, our nation has gone down, down, down *morally* and has gone far away from our spiritual roots? The fruit that has been produced from those spiritual roots is a bitter fruit. I believe you and I live in a time when we’ve seen the worst damage. In fact, most historians agree for basically the first 180 years of our existence, America seemed to be growing and thriving and becoming morally sound. But many of you were alive in the early 1960s when nine black robed men sitting in a courtroom in Washington decided that no longer could we pray in schools. Do you know the little 24-word prayer the Supreme Court of the United States deemed unconstitutional?

“To the Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee. We ask Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our Country. Amen”

Our Supreme Court said it was unconstitutional and couldn’t be prayed in school. I think what we’ve seen in the last 40 years has been a moral disaster. We’ve gone down, down, down. Do you know what we’ve done as Christians? We like to stand back and point our fingers at the Supreme Court and the drug pushers and the abortionists and the pornographers when *we* have been guilty of the sin of apathy. We’ve allowed a lot of these things to happen. I want to tell you what has happened. I think both have been terrible sins:

### **1. History has been rewritten**

Today, you don’t hear much about the spiritual foundation of our nation. It’s not taught in many of our public schools anymore. It’s as if someone has gone along and has tried to take out any reference to God in American history. Some have tried to rewrite our history. Columnist Don Feder writes: “For the past forty years, our courts, schools, and media have been involved in a massive conspiracy to rewrite history.” I’ll give you an example. Some of you just saw it. If you saw the movie *Pearl Harbor*, you know that in the movie, the character playing Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had a foul mouth and he spoke one of the most despicable expletives in our language today. Did you know the leading historian on the life of FDR wrote a column saying FDR was a gentleman and *never* used language like that? Let me ask you: Why did the writers and the producers have this presidential character using the kind of language everyone uses today? I’ll tell you why. They’re trying to say people used to talk like that. They *didn’t* talk like that. Some of you can remember a time when people did not use profanity in public. People did not use profanity in front of women and children. And today we’ve become so accustomed to it, we can sit in a movie theatre and we can listen to all kinds of profanity and watch gratuitous sex and violence and the only thing we complain about was that the popcorn was too salty.

I'm a Baby Boomer, which doesn't mean a single thing, other than I did live in a transition time when I can remember when my fourth grade public school teacher taught us the Bible every day after lunch. She read us Bible stories. Do you know how I learned about Moses and Joseph and the coat of many colors? I learned it because she read it out of a Bible storybook at school. I can remember when we prayed in school but I also saw the time that it changed. Let me read what a University of Alabama sociology professor, also a Baby Boomer, wrote:

I grew up in rural America in the '50s and '60s. On any given day, you could walk through the high school parking lot and observe that half the vehicles parked there were trucks with windows rolled down and doors unlocked. Most of them carried, as standard equipment, an FFA sticker [Future Farmers of America for you city slickers] and a gun rack with at least one gun, usually loaded. You could make the same observation at any of the four high school campuses in my little county. Amazingly, I do not ever recall reading or hearing about one mass shooting in any of those high schools. What has changed in America is not the accessibility of guns, but the character of people.

On the wall in my parents' home is a plaque awarded to my father in recognition of service for 27 years on the local school board. He told me that for years, a standard requirement on every teacher's contract was membership in a local church. I remember starting every school day with the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag and a prayer. I remember when girls who got pregnant in high school were ashamed, when abortions were illegal, when the divorce rate was not 50% because couples stayed together for the kids' sake, when there were no X-rated movies, when milk cartons didn't have missing kids faces on them and I didn't know anyone personally who used drugs. I remember when kids were taught respect for authority, to respect their elders and to be accountable to God.

I hear people say that the good old days weren't always so good but please don't tell me you think these are better. Last night I attended a high school football game that was covered by local and national news. The news coverage was not about the football teams, but about the defiance of a court order by one brave little Texas town to preserve the right to pray before a football game. The more this country struggles to free itself from God, the more we become entangled in the consequences.

I realize that in any given poll, over 90% of Americans claim to believe in God. I claim to believe that running is good for me but that does not make me a runner. Putting on my running shoes and running makes me a runner. It is an observable truth that the best time you will ever make on any American City freeway is on Sunday morning because there are no traffic jams of people getting to church. For those who believe that separation of church and state is not enough, that the world would be better off with no church at all, ask yourself this question: How many hospitals, universities, orphanages, homeless and abuse shelters have been founded by the ACLU or American Atheist Society? It is the inclusion of the word Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, Christian, etc., in the name of so many of these institutions that proves by actions, not just words, who really cares for the suffering of mankind and desires to make the world better. The question that people should be asking is not "Why does God allow tragedies?" but "When will we realize that

no nation, in the history of the world, has ever separated itself from God and evolved to a better society?” Of course, to answer, you would have to know history. Most people, it would seem, prefer *People magazine*.”

We’ve allowed our history to be rewritten and our

## 2. Values have been reshaped

Today in our society, prayer and the Ten Commandments have been taken out of our schools. We have no more absolute standards, no right or no wrong—it’s moral relativism. We’ve become a generation like the generation of judges in the Book of Judges that said every man did what was right in his own eyes. But we’ve gone beyond that. We’ve gotten to a point where our government *is* trying to impose morality on us. And the separation of church and state thing people have been crying about is that the government *has* been in some aspects, infringing upon our religious beliefs. If you don’t believe it, here’s a quote from the Federal Department of Health and Human Services Report of the Secretary’s Task Force on Youth Suicide. Now I know there must be millions of pages of federal documents, but this is an approved one:

“Parents should know that homosexuality is a natural and healthy form of sexual expression ... Religion presents a risk factor for youth because of the depiction of homosexuality as a sin and the reliance of families on the church for understanding homosexuality. Many traditional [for example Catholics] and fundamentalist [for example Baptists] faiths still portray homosexuality as morally wrong.”

And this is what this government document says to us, the church:

“Religions need to reassess homosexuality in a positive context. They need to accept gay youth and make a place for them in the church. Existing youth programs like Boy and Girl Scouts should incorporate gay youth into their activities.”

Not only have we lost our moral standard, we’ve gone full circle, until those who have a liberal agenda and those who want no laws have begun make us seem, here’s the word, *intolerant*. Do you know the only sin in America today that is *not* accepted? The sin of intolerance. You be ready for that, because if you are a Bible believing Christian and you stand up for what you believe the Bible says is right and wrong, you’re going to be labeled not just as politically incorrect, but as intolerant. And the time is not far away, I predict, should the Lord tarry, that Christians like us who believe what the Bible says, will soon become the target of persecution, because we’re not following in line with what most of the other Americans are saying about some of these moral issues.

So we need to repent. What does the Bible say? (2 Chronicles 7:14) “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” Did you notice God didn’t say, “if the abortionists will get right.” He didn’t say, “if the drug dealers get right.” He said, “if *my* people will get right and humble themselves and pray, I’ll heal the land.”

We need to remember our spiritual roots, we need to repent of our national sins and finally, you and I need to

### **3. RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO GOD AND COUNTRY**

Our nation was founded as one nation *under God, in God we trust*. We need to increase and deepen our love for God and our love for our nation.

John Witherspoon, one of the first presidents of Harvard University, said:

“He is the best friend of American liberty who is most sincere and active in promoting truth and undefiled religion and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down against profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy to this truth, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country.”

Abraham Lincoln wrote in a call for a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer:

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But WE HAVE FORGOTTEN GOD. We have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these things 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, too proud to pray to the God that made us.”

And General Douglas McArthur said:

“History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster.”

What is it going to be? It is going to be a spiritual awakening in which God’s people stand up and say, “I’m good and mad!” That’s what I mean. But stay good while you’re mad about it. You’re not angry at anyone, you’re just angry at the devil and the sin that has gripped our nation, you’re angry at the moral decay. When I look at the flag, I realize it’s just a symbol. But when I look at it, I know it stands for more than just a nation. It stands for all the men and women who for almost 225 years have said, “We want this to be a godly nation. We want a nation of religious freedom.”

Some time ago I came across a song, believe it or not, by Johnny Cash. The words to it are absolutely awesome. Think about the flag as you read it:

I walked through a county courthouse square,  
On a park bench an old man was sitting there.  
I said, “Your old courthouse is kinda rundown,”

He said, "Naw, it'll do for our little town."  
I said, "Your flagpole has leaned a bit,  
And that's a Ragged Old Flag you got hanging on it."

He said, "Have a seat," and I sat down.  
"Is this the first time you've been to our little town?"  
I said, "I think it is." He said, "I don't like to brag,  
But we're kinda proud of that Ragged Old Flag."

"You see, we got a little hole in that flag there  
When Washington took it across the Delaware.  
And it got powder-burned the night Francis Scott Key  
Sat watching it writing 'Oh Say Can You See'.  
And it got a bad rip in New Orleans  
With Packingham and Jackson tuggin' at its seams."

"And it almost fell at the Alamo  
Beside the Texas flag, but she waved on through.  
She got cut with a sword at Chancellorsville  
And she got cut again at Shiloh Hill.  
There was Robert E. Lee, Beauregard, and Bragg,  
And the south wind blew hard on that Ragged Old Flag."

"On Flanders Field in World War I  
She got a big hole from a Bertha Gun.  
She turned blood red in World War II  
She hung limp and low by the time it was through.  
She was in Korea and Vietnam.  
She went where she was sent by her Uncle Sam."

"She waved from our ships upon the briny foam,  
And now they've about quit waving her here back home.  
In her own good land she's been abused ...  
She's been burned, dishonored, denied and refused."

"And the government for which she stands  
is scandalized throughout the land.  
And she's getting threadbare and wearing thin,  
But she's in good shape for the shape she's in.  
'Cause she's been through the fire before  
and I believe she can take a whole lot more."

"So we raise her up every morning,  
Take her down every night.  
We don't let her touch the ground  
And we fold her up right."

On second thought I DO like to brag,  
Cause I’m mighty proud of that Ragged Old Flag.”

What are you going to do?

### **1. Vote!**

James D. Kennedy said in the last election less than 50% of evangelical Christian voters voted.

### **2. Speak up! Get involved!**

Confess and repent of the sin of apathy. It was Dante who wrote, “The hottest place in hell is reserved for those who remained silent during a time of moral crisis.” But more than anything

### **3. Pray**

Let’s pray for our nation. Let’s pray for our leaders. A little girl was in New York harbor and visited the Statue of Liberty. The guide explained about the torch, saying, “This torch symbolizes the light of freedom that America demonstrates to the rest of the world.” The little girl liked that. That night she couldn’t sleep so she went in to her parents’ room and said, “Mama, I just can’t sleep. I keep thinking about that woman and that torch. Mama, I think she needs somebody to help her hold up the light.”

There’s a lot of darkness out there and Jesus said, “You’re the light of the world.” There’s a lot of moral decay out there and Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth.” Back then salt was used to keep meat from decaying and rotting. You and I are the light in a dark and immoral world. You and I are the salt in a corrupting culture. May we be the kind of Christians God called us to be. May we be the kind of citizens God has allowed us to be. I want us to pray for our nation.

## OUTLINE

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance.” Psalm 33:12

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Psalm 9:17

### 1. REMEMBER OUR SPIRITUAL ROOTS

George Washington:

“Did we bring the Bible to these shores? Or did it not rather bring us? The breath of the ancient prophets filled the sails of the tiny ships bringing pioneers to the new world. From those beginnings until now, the Bible has been a teacher to our best men, a rebuke to our worst men and a noble companion of us all.”

John Quincy Adams:

“The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: It connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”

From the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut:

“The state, the government, owes its origins to the wise disposition of the Divine Providence. The Word of God requires an orderly and decent government established according to God to maintain and preserve the liberty and the purity of the Gospel.”

Daniel Webster:

“More than all, our government and our country were founded from the very first by faith under the Divine light of the Christian religion. Anyone who would wish that this country’s existence had otherwise begun is deceived. Let us not forget the spiritual character of our origin.”

### 2. REPENT OF OUR NATIONAL SINS

“If my people, who are called by my name, will HUMBLE themselves and PRAY and SEEK my face and TURN from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” *2 Chronicles 7:14*

### 3. RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO GOD AND COUNTRY

John Witherspoon:

“He is the best friend of American liberty who is most sincere and active in promoting truth and undefiled religion and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down against profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy to this truth, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country.”

Abraham Lincoln in a call for a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer:

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But WE HAVE FORGOTTEN GOD. We have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these things 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, too proud to pray to the God that made us.”



**DISCLAIMER:** These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes