

## INTRODUCTION

This is the final message in the series, "Heal Our Land." We had an amazing weekend last week as we presented the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of "I Love America." There were over 15,000 people present on our campus for all of our worship services. Even so, we turned away several hundred people on Monday night. I apologize to any of you who weren't able to find a seat on Monday evening. We are discussing ways to prevent this from happening next year. I'm open to any suggestions or ideas you might have, so don't hesitate to email me.

Today I want to talk about "Our Foundations are Being Destroyed."

Bible scholars believe David wrote the 11<sup>th</sup> Psalm when before he was king. He was living in the courts of Saul, the first king of Israel. Saul was a disobedient, jealous king. David looked around and saw the moral and spiritual decline of the nation. He didn't know what to do, so he asked the question, "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3)

As I look around our American culture, I feel exactly the same way. Our nation's moral and spiritual foundations are being destroyed, and many concerned Christians are asking the same question, "What can we do?"

I believe if our Founding Fathers like George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson could come back from the dead and look at America in 2015, they would be appalled.

The first thing I believe that would disturb them would be the size of the federal government. I believe their original intent was to give the various states more rights and to limit the size of the federal government.

In 1842 Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to a Mr. Ludlow in which he wrote, "I think, myself, that we have more machinery of government than is necessary, too many parasites living on the labor of the industrious."

Today there are about 2.5 million federal employees. In 1824 federal spending was about 2% of our GNP, and now it's over 25%.

There is a statement that has been misattributed to Alexis de Tocqueville or Alexander Tytler. The fact that it has been misattributed doesn't make it less true. It was actually written by Dr. Elmer Peterson, the Dean of the College of Education at Iowa State University. In an editorial that appeared in the Daily Oklahoman in 1951, he wrote: "A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the majority discovers it can vote itself largesse [gifts of money] out of the public treasury. After that, the majority always votes for the candidate promising the most benefits with the result the democracy collapses because of the loose fiscal policy ensuing, always to be followed by a dictatorship, then a monarchy." (Dean of the College of Education, University of Iowa, 1946-1961)

There is a lot of wisdom in that statement. In this message I want to answer the question, "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Please allow me to answer that question in four ways.

## **1. WHEN OUR MORAL FOUNDATIONS ARE CRUMBLING WE MUST SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE**

Since the founding of America almost 240 years ago, our country has been built upon the Judeo-Christian ethical foundation. That's another way of saying our morality has been based on the Bible, and especially the Ten Commandments. I've visited the building of the United States Supreme Court several times. Moses appears twice, holding the Ten Commandments. On a third statue picturing Justice, there are ten Roman numerals. Up until 1988, the official guidebook of the building noted that these ten numbers represented the Ten Commandments, but today if you're given a tour you'll be told those ten numbers represent the Ten Amendments to the Constitution.

In 1987, ABC news commentator Ted Koppel said in a commencement speech at Duke University, "Our society finds truth too strong a medicine to digest undiluted. In its purest form, truth is not a polite tap on the shoulder; it is a howling reproach. When Moses walked down from Mt. Sinai, he brought the Ten Commandments, not the Ten Suggestions." Today, twenty-five years later, he would be fired for making such a statement.

As you know, the Supreme Court has been in the news lately. Next Sunday's message title is "God's Definition of Marriage." You may be thinking I'm doing this in reaction to the Supreme Court's ruling that legalized same-sex marriage in all fifty states. Actually, most of you know that I've been preaching through the Gospel According to Mark for the past year, and when I planned my messages last summer, I planned to interrupt the Mark series to share this series on Heal Our Land. Next Sunday, it just so happens that the passage we resume is in Mark 10 where Jesus gives us God's definition of marriage. You may be thinking, "Wow, what a coincidence. I'll remind you that the word "coincidence" is not in God's vocabulary.

Our Founding Fathers saw the importance of a strong Christian foundation. Noah Webster, one of our Founding Fathers who has been called the Schoolmaster of the Republic wrote in 1828: "In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed. No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people."

For most of our nation's history, we have recognized the moral foundation of the Bible, but that is no longer the case. In 1979 Dr. Jerry Falwell founded an organization called "The Moral Majority." It was a network to bring like-minded Christians together. In 1979, the majority of Americans probably did recognize Biblical morality. But there is no longer a moral majority. Those of us, who believe the Bible, are a shrinking minority. But don't be alarmed because from the beginning of our faith, Christians were always the underdogs. During the first century, Christians lived in a pagan, sex-crazed Roman culture worse than anything we have today.

Here was Paul's admonition to the moral minority. He wrote, "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life." (Philippians 2:13-16)

After the recent Supreme Court rulings, our natural reaction is to do the two things the Bible says NOT to do. We want to complain and we want to argue. Instead, the Bible says we need to keep letting our light shine in a crooked and depraved culture. After the fall of the Roman Empire Europe entered a time historians called the Dark Ages. Morally, America is now entering the darkest period of her history. That's why we need to hold forth the light of truth.

We will never forsake the truth of God's Word, but we must speak the truth in love. I'm not going to argue with anyone who disagrees with my beliefs about marriage. But I'm happy to enter into a conversation with them about what the Bible says about marriage and morality.

I mentioned in an earlier message in this series that President George Washington's first act as President was to pray for God's blessings on our nation. In that same inaugural speech, he issued a solemn prophecy about how God could remove His blessings from our nation. On April 30, 1789 he said, "The propitious [favorable] smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained."

Our first President admitted that God has smiled on our nation. But he also warned us that if our nation ever departed from God's eternal rules, that we can expect God's smile to turn to a frown. Do you think God is smiling or frowning on our nation right now?

## **2. WHEN OUR HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS ARE COVERED WE MUST TEACH A NEW GENERATION**

During this series, I've mentioned the intentional effort by secular educators to completely revise our history to remove any references to God, Jesus, or the Bible. If you recall the quote of Noah Webster, he believed Christianity is the basis of all public education. And up until the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all schools in America were Christian schools. The Bible was read and the students were led in prayer. In 1962, the Supreme Court removed that from public schools. For instance, I first learned about the Bible stories of Joseph and Moses because my 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Mrs. Dean, would read a Bible Story book to us every afternoon after lunch. I was fascinated by the Bible stories she read.

Let me give you some specific examples of how our historical foundation of faith has been revised. We all know the story of Thanksgiving. The Pilgrims came to Plymouth Rock searching for religious freedom. They signed the Mayflower Compact. After a miserable year, they finally brought in a wonderful harvest, so they held a feast with the local Native Americans to give thanks to God for His blessings. That's the historical basis of Thanksgiving.

In one elementary school textbook, there are 30 pages devoted to the Pilgrims, but there is not one mention of their religious faith. In the book a Pilgrim is defined as "someone who travels a

long distance." In this textbook, the author says the Pilgrims and Indians ate together and thanked each other for their help to survive. God is not mentioned.

Kenneth C. Davis writes history textbooks for public schools. He mentions the Mayflower Compact, but he conveniently omits the parts of the document that mention God or the Christian faith. His quote of the Mayflower Compact is printed in black letters and the parts he omitted are in red letters: "Having undertaken, for the Glory of God, and advancements of the Christian faith and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God, and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic." (*Don't Know Much About History*, 1990, p. 61)

In the same history book, Davis quotes the famous speech by Patrick Henry, but notice what he leaves out: "An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us. We shall not fight alone. God presides over the destinies of nations, and will raise up friends for us. The battle is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains of slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

Another historian, W. E. Woodward wrote, "The name of Jesus Christ is not mentioned even once in the vast collection of Washington's published writings." (*George Washington, The Image and the Man*, p. 142)

Is he correct? Absolutely not. George Washington mentioned Jesus many times, and his prayer journal is full of powerful prayers calling on the grace and mercy of Jesus. He once wrote a letter to the Delaware Indian Chiefs (June 12, 1779): "You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are. Congress will do every thing they can to assist you in this wise intention." (*The Writings of George Washington*, Washington D.C. Government Printing, Vol. 15, p. 55)

So, what we have is a generation of children who haven't been exposed to the powerful spiritual influence of our Founding Fathers. We need to teach our children and young adults about how America's history is full of references to dependence on God, Jesus, and the Bible.

I'm not blaming the schools, though. The primary place children should be learning about the Bible and truth is not in the schoolroom, but in the home. As Moses was preparing to take a new generation into the Promised Land, he gave this assignment to the parents: "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them." (Deuteronomy 4:9)

I thank God for every family that chooses to homeschool its children. And I'm grateful for every Christian school in our area. They are doing a great job teaching Biblical and historical truth to the students. But we can't give up on public schools. I thank God for every teacher, administrator, and student who attends public schools. Use that as your mission field to let your light shine for Jesus.

I've spoken of our moral and historical foundations. There's another foundation that has been destroyed.

### **3. WHEN OUR SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS ARE REMOVED WE MUST CRY OUT IN DESPERATION TO GOD.**

Our only hope is for God's people to cry out to Him. The theme of this series has been God's solution for every rebellious nation in 2 Chronicles 7:14. Solomon was dedicating the beautiful Temple of God, when the Lord gave them a choice. He said, "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." We all know that verse. But God didn't stop talking. Down in verse 19 He warns what will happen if they forsake Him and His ways. God says, "I'll uproot you from this land, I'll reject this temple, and I will make you a laughing stock among the other nations." Israel made the wrong choice, and America is on the same downward spiritual spiral.

Leonard Ravenhill was an evangelist from England. He moved to the U.S. in the 1950s and retired to Garden Valley, Texas in the 1980s where he worked with Keith Green and Last Days Ministries. He died in 1994 and is buried in Garden Valley. I consider him to be a rare 20<sup>th</sup> century prophet. In 1979 he wrote this about America: "Compared with hoary dynasties and the empires of the ages, America is but a prattling child in a crib playing with its toes. Compared with the ancient civilizations, America was born only yesterday. But she is dying today, and she will be dead tomorrow unless there is a spiritual awakening...America can die but it would have to be by suicide. It would be because she thinks God is dead, and because she believes that His laws do not, in her hour of freedom and affluence, include her...We go down on our knees or we go down in oblivion." (*America is too Young to Die*, p. 29)

Right now I see a lot of Christians in America getting angry about the direction of our nation. God doesn't want you to be angry. He wants you to be so burdened for America that you fall on your knees and your eyes fill with tears. Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives and wept bitter tears over the spiritual condition of Jerusalem. The prophet Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet because he wept over the spiritual condition of Judah. There's an entire book in the Bible that contains Jeremiah's weeping prayers; it's called Lamentations. We need to discover the book of Lamentations again. As you join me in praying for America, I challenge you to read through the books of Lamentations and substitute the name America for every reference to Israel.

Jeremiah was weeping before the Lord, but in the midst of his darkness, he saw hope in God shining like a bright star. He prayed, "I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I will remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:19-23)

Our moral, historical, and spiritual foundations have been removed. David poses the question, "What can the righteous do?" Here's my final observation.

#### **4. BEFORE WE REPAIR THE FOUNDATIONS WE MUST RENOUNCE OUR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND STAND IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF JESUS**

For many years I've been predicting that America is headed for a second civil war. This war won't be fought with bullets, but with beliefs. The two main issues are abortion and same-sex marriage. And we are at this moment engaged in a culture war of convictions. We believe we are right, and they are wrong. But we must be careful that we don't become conceited and think we are any better than those who disagree with us. The moment you start feeling superior to anyone who disagrees with you, then you have become like a Pharisee who, in the time of Jesus, believed they were the good guys and everyone else, including Jesus, were the bad guys.

The Bible says our acts and attitudes of self-righteousness are like dirty, filthy rags. Here's a question, "Who is a righteous man or woman?" The Bible answers this question unequivocally in Romans 3:10, "There is no one righteous, not even one..." The only righteousness we have is that which God has imparted to us. The Bible says, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

When you surrender your self-righteousness and admit you are a sinner, then you come to a place where God can give you the righteousness of Jesus. When you stand in the righteousness of Jesus, it's not your goodness; it's HIS righteousness.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The question is, "What can the righteous do?" There are several things you can do. You can study the issues and let your voice be heard. We cannot be a silent minority. Use every means necessary, whether social media, or letters to the editor, to letters to government leaders. But don't be angry or argue. Show the love of Christ in everything you say and do.

Second, you can register to vote, and vote according to your convictions. There are 100 million Evangelical Christians in the U.S and only half of them have registered to vote. Heaven hears our prayers, but Washington counts our votes.

But the most important thing you can do is to pray! There is great power when people pray together. Praying together doesn't mean we have to be in the same place, but it means we pray at the same time and pray for the same thing. So based on 2 Chronicles 7:14 I'm asking you to join me in praying every day at 7:14 for God to restore our spiritual foundation. It can be 7:14 a.m. or 7:14 p.m., or both. Set your smart phone, or an alarm clock, and start praying. Let's bombard heaven with our prayers for God to restore the greatness of America.

Edward Everett Hale penned one of my favorite short poems. He wrote, "I am only one. I can't do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, that I ought to do, and what I ought to do, by the grace of God I shall do!"

Let's pray for God to heal our land.

## OUTLINE

*George Washington's warning (April 30, 1789) "The propitious [favorable] smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained."*

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"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life." *Philippians 2:13-16*

2. When our historical foundations are covered, we must teach a new generation.

"Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them." *Deuteronomy 4:9*

3. When our spiritual foundations are removed, we must cry out in desperation to God.

"I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I will remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." *Lamentations 3:19-23*

4. Before we repair the foundations, we must renounce our self-righteousness and stand in the righteousness of Jesus.

"There is no one righteous, not even one..." *Romans 3:10*

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." *2 Corinthians 5:21*

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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes



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