

The Redemptive Thread That Just Might Save America

The United States has been the beneficiary of the blessings of God. Even those who are not Christians have become beneficiaries of these blessings.

And God's intention for us, just as with Abraham's promise, was that we would in turn be a blessing to other nations. Throughout history, we have been.

It is my belief, from a benevolence standpoint, the church in America is what helped make America a blessing to the nations. No matter what difficulties we have gone through, as a whole, we have always been a generous people. We have given to those who are suffering from disasters or hard times, both in our own country and in other nations, regardless of their personal preferences, political persuasion, pigmentation or religion.

I believe this generosity comes from the Lord, and allows us to hold onto God's redemptive thread as a nation. By caring for those in need, the church has given the nation access to God's promise in Isaiah 58:8 that in our time of need for healing, our "healing shall spring forth quickly."

Psalms 112:4-9 (NIV) reminds us, "Even in darkness [difficult times] light dawns for the upright, for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous. Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice. Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever. They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast trusting in the Lord. ...They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor, their righteousness endures forever; their horn will be lifted high in honor."

Our Freedoms in Peril

Benevolence and generosity, though, are no longer generosity if one is forcibly made to give. Benevolence comes from the heart being moved to give. That is why communism and socialism have failed.

I remember being in a communist nation that once prided itself as being a truly Marxist state. At the time the average monthly income was equivalent to around \$25 to \$30. We visited an international company trying to start business there, with a plan to hire over 100 people. After hiring quite a few, government officials came in and nullified many of those hires because those selected were not members of the right party—the Communist Party.

Silencing anyone who thinks for themselves or has a different opinion is no longer true freedom of expression and speech. It's interesting how we are now seeing selective censorship and selective freedom of speech and expression in America. Ultimately, we will all suffer the consequences of this kind of control and manipulation.

In the 1970s, a revolution of young people took place in another nation. They thought they were fighting for freedom, but upon the successful overthrow of the old regime, they found themselves under the grip of a dictatorship that has enslaved them. Years later another revolution of young people tried to peaceably and openly express their desire for freedoms in that nation, but they were brutally oppressed and many arrested for their part in the movement. I've personally met with many people from that nation and heard atrocious stories. It is a cautionary tale for us. Once freedoms are given up, it is difficult to get them back. It is better to maintain our freedoms than to try to regain them after they are lost.

I've been to dozens of nations and seen the oppression under which millions of people live. What we have in the United States may not be perfect, but at least we have a Constitution

that gives us rights and freedoms within which we can work. We have the freedom to be generous, compassionate and benevolent. We have the freedom to worship God and live out our faith. People all around world look to the U.S. as a beacon of hope, longing for the freedoms we enjoy.

Satan has wielded lies through our education system and the media, calling what is good, bad, and what is bad, good. He has sown division in our nation and even among fellow followers of Christ. Many have fallen to delusion and despair, lashing out in anger, violence and bitterness. Even in the church, many have become uncivil in both attitude and discourse.

If we are to see hope for the future and the lasting change our nation needs and we all desire, we must all individually look inward at the corruption of our own hearts and repent. Once we have dealt with our personal iniquities and transgressions, we can move on to dealing with our corporate public ones.

Yes, there is an unseen spiritual battle going on, but we are seeing the manifestations in the natural all around us.

I remember hearing former governor of Louisiana, Bobby Jindal, say, "America did not create religious liberties; religious liberties created America."

Our constitutional republic and democracy will only survive if we hold on to the core values of our constitutional rights and freedoms. These freedoms—religion, speech, expression and so on—are not just for those with whom we align ourselves, but also for those with whom we may strongly disagree.

As an American with Asian descent, I'm extremely grateful for all the sacrifices made for my rights. I'm grateful for the Constitutional rights, religious liberties, freedom of speech and expression that have been afforded me.

There are ideologues and elitists who care more about their ideas, politics, self-absorption and aspirations than they do the people they claim to care about. And sadly, freedom of religion, is becoming more like freedom *from* religion, and more specifically, freedom from Judeo/Christian religion.

The Mark of the Lord

William Booth, who founded the Salvation Army in the late 1800s, said, "I consider that the chief dangers which confront the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God and heaven without hell." That was so prophetic when we consider where we are today in 2020.

But the Lord is shining the light of the Holy Spirit first upon us and His church, identifying the dross and rubbish in our lives to purge and refine us in preparation for the days ahead. I believe He is searching throughout the church with lamps of His Holy Spirit and marking those who are settled in compromise and complacency (Zeph. 1:12). But He is also searching out and marking those who are weeping for all the detestable things that are happening (Ezek. 9:4).

The book of Jude says there will be a spiritual battle; and an increase of apostasy, false teachers and teachings; and an increase of attacks on the church, even on God and His Word.

In these days of increasing apostasy and false teaching, those who love God's truth will be derided for speaking the truth. But this cannot stop us from the work of the kingdom to which we are called—speaking His Word and sharing His love. We cannot be discouraged by what we see around us, retreating into our holy bubbles and disengaging from a world that so desperately needs to see our light.

Courageous leadership does not acquiesce to public opinion or what is popular at the time, no matter the personal benefit or

gain. But with sensitivity and compassion it adheres to a love for truth.

We must be fully prepared—mentally, emotionally and spiritually. We must be fully engaged, with our eyes fixed ahead and our hand to the plow, ready to work in the harvest fields! Let us put aside distractions. Let us put off discouragement. No more double-mindedness or doubting.

Reform of Josiah

Lasting reform and change can only happen when we deal with the inward corruption of our hearts, individually and corporately. This introductory commentary on the book of Zephaniah in one of my New King James Version Bibles is very revealing to where we are today:

“During Judah’s hectic political and religious history, reform comes from time to time. Zephaniah’s forceful prophecy may be a factor in the reform that occurs during Josiah’s reign—a ‘revival’ that produces outward change, but does not fully remove the inward heart of corruption which characterizes the nation. Zephaniah hammers home his message repeatedly.”

Zephaniah 3:1-9 (author emphasis) says:

—Her *princes* in her midst are roaring lions (vs. 3).

—Her *judges* are evening wolves that leave not a bone till morning (vs. 3b).

—Her *prophets* are insolent, treacherous people [unprincipled people] (vs. 4).

—Her *priests* have polluted the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law (vs. 4b).

Our nation is at a critical juncture. If our broken cisterns and foundations are to be fixed, then we, the church, must awaken our hearts and get back to our spiritual moorings and

biblical principles.

“For then I will restore to the *peoples* a pure language (pure lips), That they all may call on the name of the Lord, To serve Him in one accord” (Zeph. 3:9, author emphasis).

Choose Life

I choose to express and stand for my biblical convictions as a follower of the government of the lamb and the lion. I have a personal conviction to seek the Lord and to respond by principle rather than by preference. It is clear to me throughout Scripture regarding what pleases the Lord and what breaks His heart.

Isaiah 1:11-20 tells us God doesn't even regard our raising of hands to pray, our gatherings (or conferences), our numerous prayers, or our sacrifices, because we have allowed the shedding of innocent blood, overlooked justice and neglected the orphan and the widow.

Our prayers are not heard, He says, because, “your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil from your deeds” (vs. 15b-16a, MEV).

In other words:

- Stop sinning! (Cease to do evil).
- Learn to do right.
- Promote justice.
- Give the oppressed reason to celebrate.
- Take up the cause of the orphan.
- Defend the rights of the widow.

Personally, I value what I believe are biblical principles of life, the sacredness of marriage and the protection of our

liberties and freedoms. If we no longer value life in the womb, then we will no longer value life that is deemed less worthy to some, such as those who may not have physical or mental limitations and those who have entered the golden years.

“I call heaven and earth to witnesses against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deut. 30:19).

All kingdoms, principalities, and rulerships are subject to the pre-eminence of Christ (see Col. 1:9-18) who gives authority to His church to make known His manifold wisdom (see Eph. 3:10).

Choices Make History

Remember, those who tell the story define the narrative and create the history. We have the greatest story to tell because we've overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony. What is the narrative we want presented by our story? What is the history we want to see created as we define the narrative? Our nation's story and thus our history will be greatly defined by whether we make our choices from personal preference or biblical principle.

It's our moment. Don't let the enemy divide and conquer. Let us recognize we're part of something greater than ourselves. It's time to mend our net so we can be cast by the Lord and bring in a great harvest.

“for wisdom and might are His. It is He who changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who know understanding. He reveals the deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him” (Dan. 2:20b-22).

It is time for us to pick up the redemptive thread our forefathers have followed, and with benevolent generosity be a tangible expression of God's love to those around us, regardless of their political or other persuasion. It's time for us to make choices that are pleasing to God so that our prayers can be heard.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah is roaring from heaven. May we hear and be awakened from our sleep and stop pushing our snooze buttons.

'Now Lord!' (My Personal Prayer Modeled From Acts 4:29-33)

"Now Lord, grant boldness that we may speak Your Word with authority and by Your power. Stretch out Your hand to heal. Let signs and wonders be done through Your holy name, Lord Jesus! May You grant Your great power to give witness to the work of the cross and the power of Your Resurrection—that Your great grace would be upon Your people." {eoa}

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