

AMERICA, Bless God

Sunday July 5, 2020

It is not unusual for us to hear the words God Bless America. In fact, we have a well-recognized national song that declares just that. Especially in times of crises will you hear that phrase, though I believe it is spoken with little true knowledge or belief in the one to whom it is addressed

Several years ago (on the 1-year anniversary of 9-11). God planted this thought in my spirit.... "How can I bless America when America won't bless me?"

STEVE ELLIOT of GRASSFIRE WRITES...

Two hundred and forty-four years ago, the founders of our nation gathered and agreed to a document that began with these immortal words:

"When in the course of human events..."



And thus, the grand American experiment in liberty formally began. This bold Declaration was rooted in our understanding of God-given rights, a firm rejection of man-driven tyranny, and a profound confession of mutual reliance on Providence and our fellow man.

It was an experiment that would put everything at risk and cost many their lives, their fortunes and even their families. Yet at the heart of this Declaration and the very essence of this land we call America is a constant recognition that the future of our nation is perpetually in the balance — determined by each generation's willingness to stand and sacrifice.

+ + Our national question...

This tension between a nation's greatness and its inherent vulnerability can be seen in our National Anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

After a night of intense fighting, Francis Scott Key peered into the "dawn's early light" to see if the American troops had maintained control of Fort McHenry. The first stanza of his poem, which later became our anthem, posed an enduring question: "Oh say does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave, o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

Instead of an anthem full of pride and inflated language about our greatness, Americans sing forth a national... question. Every time our anthem is sung, that question goes forth: Will we survive the battles of the night? Will our flag of liberty under God still be raised at the dawn's early light?

The question is answered in the following stanzas. But it seems fitting that these words are not sung as our anthem. Instead, at every formal gathering and every sporting event, our national question goes forth:

Oh say, does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

This is why America is unique among nations. Yes, we can question. Yes, we challenge each other "in order to form a more perfect union." And yes, we acknowledge that the future destiny of our nation is always in question. Our future is dependent upon the faithfulness, determination and dedication of patriot-citizens who are willing to answer the call, to stand for the anthem, and to boldly sing forth our national question, knowing that the answer depends on our commitment to liberty and our firm reliance on the Creator and each other.

*Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.*

*And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!*

You see, that is the key! God cannot bless America until America blesses God. As David said in Psalm 33

Psalm 33:12 English Standard Version (ESV)

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

We cry for blessings from God but how often do we bless Him? To bless means to speak and act in such a way as to confer goodness, happiness, and favor upon the one to whom we are addressing as well as the condition that fulfills those good words and acts

So how can we BLESS God, so that God may BLESS us?

We can BLESS God...

1. By acknowledging his existence and supremacy

The Declaration of Independence mentions God 4 times

The U.S. Constitution never explicitly mentions God or the divine, but the same cannot be said of the nation's state constitutions. In fact, God or the divine is mentioned at least once in each of the 50 state constitutions and nearly 200 times overall, according to a Pew Research Center analysis.

And yet, as a nation we have witnessed the systematic removal of all mention of, reliance upon or submission to God. Many of our educational institutions have taught our young people that God does not exist. Atheism on college campuses is the norm. Politicians boldly declare that we don't need God and that what we have accomplished has been done on our own. Modern thought declares God is a myth made up to make us feel better about ourselves. Scientists declare that there is no evidence of God but plenty of evidence to prove that time and evolution created everything that we have. Belief in God and displays of his existence is an offense to many who continue to try and erase its existence from every facet of our society.

When we do acknowledge God, it is rarely done in a way that acknowledges His supremacy over all. Even in the church, we have been guilty of diminishing the supremacy of our God by including other religions and gods as equally valid pursuits. Like the words of Luther to Erasmus, we could say of our culture *"Your thoughts of God are too human."*

But David said... Blessed is the nation whose God is THE LORD. The one and only creator of the heavens and the earth and all that exists. The one who sent his Son, Jesus Christ to die for our sins and to restore right relationship with Him.

As a nation, how do we bless God? Our hearts cry must echo that of Paul's when he said...

1 Corinthians 8:6 English Standard Version (ESV)

6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Like King Jehoshaphat we must bow our knees and declare...

2 Chronicles 20:6 English Standard Version (ESV)

6 ... "O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.

2. By following His ways, not ours

One of the greatest grievances to our God must be the extensiveness of our refusal to follow his ways

Exodus 23:2 New International Version (NIV)

2 "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong.

And yet that is exactly what this nation has done. We have turned our backs on God and sought to define our own rules for right and wrong. We have called evil good and good evil.

We have murdered millions of innocent babies in the womb, refusing to call them living souls, and yet during this pandemic the hypocritical cry has been "we care for life" and must take extraordinary measures to protect it

We have redefined gender saying that it is a choice and that God's declaration of male and female is old and outdated but should rather be decided by the person themselves.

We have thrown out God's prescribed order for marriage and sexuality and said that homosexuality is not a sin, that divorce does not matter, and that marriage can include multiple partners.

How can God bless a nation who defiantly disregards his truth?

3. By humbling ourselves and repenting of our sin

If we truly want God to bless America, then we need to corporately humble ourselves and repent of our sin.

We must heed the words of the Spirit spoken to the church in Ephesus...

Revelation 2:5 New International Version (NIV)

5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

We know the scripture well, but how well do we put it into practice

2 Chronicles 7:14 New International Version (NIV)

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 I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

It's time for the church to realize that we must lead the way in national repentance as

Daniel 9:4-11 New International Version (NIV)

4 I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed:

“Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, **5** we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. **6** We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land.

7 “Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. **8** We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, Lord, because we have sinned against you. **9** The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; **10** we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. **11** All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

“Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you.

Daniel 9:17-19 New International Version (NIV)

17 “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. **18** Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. **19** Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

4. By fervently praying and interceding for His help

When the War for Independence [ended](#) in 1783, America was operating its national government under the [Articles of Confederation](#). But that government had [many flaws](#) that needed [to be corrected](#), so [efforts were begun](#) to address these issues.

In March 1785, the [Mount Vernon Conference](#), with delegates from Virginia and Maryland, met at George Washington's home to address tense issues that existed between the two states. The positive outcome suggested that perhaps a meeting with additional states could be successful in addressing other issues. So in September 1786, twelve delegates from five states met in the [Annapolis Convention](#) to address revising the Articles of Confederation. After favorable discussions, the delegates passed a resolution calling for a meeting of all the states, which led to the Constitutional Convention, where the US Constitution was eventually written.

On [May 25](#) of 1787, the Convention began. The first several weeks were frustrating, as [the delegates](#) deadlocked over issues such as representation. On June 28, at the height of the impasse, Benjamin Franklin made [his famous appeal](#) for prayer in the Convention, telling the other delegates:

In this situation of this Assembly, groping, as it were, in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understanding?.... We have been assured, sir, 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. . . . I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business.

The delegates took three days off, and George Washington ([president](#) of the Constitutional Convention) [recorded](#) that they attended church. They heard a sermon by [Rev. William Rogers](#), who specifically prayed a [lengthy prayer](#) over the Convention, part of which included the request that:

[W]e fervently recommend to Thy fatherly notice . . . our federal Convention. . . . [F]avor them, from day to day, with Thy immediate presence; be Thou their wisdom and their strength! Enable them to devise such measures as may prove happily instrumental for healing all divisions and promoting the good of the great whole.



Delegates reported that after this time of church attendance, sermon, and special prayer, the tone of debates in the Convention changed. Over succeeding [weeks](#), many positive compromises were reached and the [Constitution](#) was finally approved on September 17 and sent to the states [for ratification](#).

"For my own part, I sincerely esteem it a system which without the finger of God never could have been suggested and agreed upon by such a diversity of interests."

[Alexander Hamilton](#)

Dave Butts Harvest Prayer Ministries

Clearly, our nation is in desperate need of prayer. We need the power of God to be poured out. We need another great awakening. The Church needs to be revived. We need godly leaders in our nation. None of that will happen without prayer.

James 5:16 says... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much

James 5:16 New Century Version (NCV)

16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so God can heal you. When a believing person prays, great things happen.

Once again, knowing the verse and practicing it are 2 vastly different things indeed.

Ezekiel 22:30 New International Version (NIV)

30 “I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.

5. By boldly proclaiming His name

When Peter responded to Jesus question, "Who do you say I am?" with a bold and rightful declaration "You are the Messiah, The Son of The Living God;" Jesus replied

Matthew 16:17-18 New International Version (NIV)

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. **18** And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

We bless God when we are not ashamed to boldly stand up and proclaim his name.

Matthew 10:32 New International Version (NIV)

32 “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

And when we do, like Peter we will be blessed, and the Church will be triumphant over the enemy.

And when we do this as a nation, God WILL bless America