

INTRODUCTION

One year ago, the Presidential campaign was in full swing, and all the pollsters and political pundits were predicting that Hillary would win the election by a landslide. However, in November we learned again that *voters* elect a president and not the pollsters.

I have often lamented how many eligible evangelical voters have stayed home on election days, but last November, the largest number of evangelical voters in history turned out to vote. And according to the Pew Research Center, almost 70% of them who identified themselves as born-again or evangelical voted for Donald Trump. Many of them were voting for a platform, rather than for a person. Others were voting for Vice-President Pence. Still others were sick and tired with politicians and decided to give a businessman a chance to run our government.

By now, we all know Donald Trump's campaign slogan was "Make America Great Again." He stuck with that theme and it struck a chord with voters. At the inauguration, Congressman Gohmert gave me a red cap with that phrase on it. But today, I want to borrow that phrase and change it to say, "Make America Godly again."

History records that God blesses nations that honor and respect His Word. In Psalm 33 we read, "Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord-- the people he has chosen to be his own possession!...For our hearts rejoice in him because we trust in his holy name. May your faithful love rest on us, Lord, for we put our hope in you." (Psalm 33:12, 21-22 CSB)

This message is not about politics. You know my definition of politics. It comes from two words, *poly* meaning many and *tics* meaning blood-sucking pests. This message is about restoring a sense of Biblical morality to our nation. Let me make one observation and two challenges about how we can see America become godly again.

1. WE HAVE WATCHED WHILE OUR GODLY FOUNDATIONS ARE BEING DESTROYED

If we are going to make America godly again, we've got to ask the question, "Was America ever godly in the first place?" There is plenty of evidence that those who first came to these shores were godly people who were seeking a place to have freedom to worship God. They laid a foundation of faith for others who would come. But what has happened to this foundation? In Psalm 11, King David asks an important question: "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3) I'm going to be sharing with you a couple of ways that we should react as we've seen our moral foundation begin to crack and crumble.

I'm not saying all our Founding Fathers were what we would call evangelical believers; that term didn't even exist at the time. But all 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence had one thing in common: They had all received a Biblical education. The Bible was the main textbook of every school and university of their time. Fifty-one of the fifty-five were active members of a local church.

Three of them were deists, including Ben Franklin, but it was the 81 year-old patriarch who called for a season of prayer at the constitutional convention where he quoted the Bible four times.

Charles Carroll signed the Declaration of Independence and he was a seminary-trained Christian. He wrote: "Without morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion are undermining the solid foundation of morals, and the best security for the duration of free governments."

Our Founding Fathers didn't make this a Christian nation, because they were resisting the model of the Anglican Church in England. Instead, they knew the Bible and designed our moral foundation to be built upon the Ten Commandments.

To show you how far our nation has departed from our Christian roots, did you know that preachers and churches started the first nine colleges and universities founded in America? These include Harvard, Yale, Princeton, William and Mary and other Ivy League schools.

Harvard, the oldest college in America, was named after a pastor, John Harvard, and their book of rules and precepts states: "Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only gives wisdom, let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to see it of him. (Proverbs 2:3)."

The original seal of Harvard read *Veritas et Christo et Ecclesia*, which means "Truth for Christ and the Church." But in the current seal, you'll notice Christ and the Church have been booted off the seal. And it simply says "Veritas" or "Truth." When you remove Christ and the Church, you removed the standard for truth. Today, none of those original schools are affiliated with their founding churches.

This is a perfect example of how we watched as secular forces have destroyed our moral foundation. Os Guinness is a brilliant observer of Western culture. I was on a program last year with him in Hong Kong. He said evangelicals like to complain that our spiritual heritage has been stolen from us. However, he said that we stood silent and surrendered it. He said while the disciples of Jesus were hiding in our churches, the disciples of Marx, Darwin, Freud, and Nietzsche were actively taking over our educational system. So when the foundations are being destroyed, what can God's people do? Let me suggest two reactions.

2. WE MUST HAVE ONLY POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS THAT WE CAN BECOME A GODLY NATION AGAIN

You will recognize that this is my acrostic for the word "Hope." Hope is Having Only Positive Expectations. Next Sunday when I'm back in Hebrews I'll be talking more about holding on to hope.

But today I want you to join me in believing and expecting that we will see a spiritual awakening in America. The only way we'll have a godly nation is when we get serious about living godly lives. Paul wrote these words of hope to Titus, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:11-13 CSB) Our ultimate hope is found in waiting for the return of Jesus, but until then we must live godly lives in this present age.

I've got to admit I have admired President Trump for his stand for religious freedom. He signed an executive order directing the IRS to ignore the Johnson Amendment that has been muzzling some pastors and churches for decades.

If you only listen and watch most of the mainstream media they have portrayed the President as a monster, and they carefully choose sound bites that make him sound foolish.

Where were the mainstream media outlets when President Trump spoke at the graduation of Liberty University in May? Here's an excerpt from his speech taken word-for-word, and I'm sure you didn't see this on the news. He sounded like he has been reading my sermons when he said: "When the pilgrims landed at Plymouth they prayed. When the Founders wrote the Declaration of Independence, they invoked our Creator four times, because in America we don't worship government, we worship God. That is why our elected officials put their hands on the Bible and say, 'so help me God' as they take the oath of office. It is why our currency proudly declares, 'in God we trust.' And it's why we proudly proclaim that we are 'one nation under God,' every time we say the Pledge of Allegiance."

As I've said before, our hope isn't in who sits in the Oval Office. Our hope is in the One who sits enthroned in heaven. But it gives me HOPE to hear a President talk about our spiritual heritage.

Another reason I believe there is hope for America is because we are only one generation removed from a time when America truly honored and trusted God.

These and other men were part of the Greatest Generation that literally prayed their way to victory. After the Normandy Invasion, the Allied troops became bogged down near Germany because of bad weather. Then the Germans mounted a huge counter offensive later called The Battle of the Bulge, because the German offensive broke through the Allied lines and created a "bulge." The Americans bore the brunt of the attack and lost more soldiers than in any other battle of the war. The bad weather kept the superior Allied Air Forces from coming to support the troops.

General George Patton was a lot like President Trump in that he was a tough, straight-spoken, vain leader. But when the enemy was decimating his soldiers, he knew he needed help from above. He called the head chaplain of the 3rd Army, James O'Neill. He said, "We must ask God to stop these rains. These rains are that margin that hold defeat or victory. If we all pray...it will

be like plugging in on a current whose source is in Heaven. I believe that prayer completes that circuit. It is power."

Chaplain O'Neill wrote a prayer and Patton told him to make 250,000 copies of it and send it to every soldier in the 3rd Army. He wished them a Merry Christmas and asked God to bless them. On the other side of the card was the prayer he asked them to pray: "Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies and establish Thy justice among men and nations."

What happened? Patton's adjutant, Paul Harkins, later wrote in his biography of Patton: "Whether it was the help of the Divine guidance asked for in the prayer or just the normal course of human events, we never knew; at any rate, on the twenty-third, the day after the prayer was issued, the weather cleared and remained perfect for about six days. Enough to allow the Allies to break the backbone of the German offensive and turn a temporary setback into a crushing defeat for the enemy."

That's evidence of our spiritual heritage that is only one generation ago, so it's not too late for us to reclaim it. So, don't give up hope! The second reaction to a crumbling foundation is:

3. WE MUST RETURN GOD'S WORD TO OUR PUBLIC CONVERSATION

As I mentioned, from the beginning of our Republic, the Bible was taught in every lower school and University. Benjamin Rush, the famous physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, is one of my favorites. He's the one who said, "I'm neither a Democrat nor an Aristocrat, I'm a Christ-ocrat!" He wrote many times about the need to teach the Bible in our schools.

He wrote: "The Bible must be the primary textbook in schools because it contains more knowledge necessary to man in his present state than any book in the world. And when not read in schools, it is seldom read in any subsequent period of life."

That was an American value in the 1800s. Noah Webster has been called the Father of American Education; we're still using his dictionary. He wrote: "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."

Several times in the Nineteenth Century, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the importance of the Bible in our schools. But during the early 20th Century, our educational system became influence by humanism. John Dewey has been called "The Architect of Modern Education." In all fairness, he advocated for some wonderful classroom methods, but he was one of the original signers of the Humanist Manifesto in 1933. He said: "There is no God, and there is no soul. Hence, there are no needs for the props of traditional religion."

So by 1962, the Supreme Court ruled that prayer in public schools was unconstitutional. A year later they took the Bible out of the classroom. So over the past fifty years, we have been reaping the bitter fruit of NOT teaching all our students to: "Honor your Father and Mother; do not steal; do not lie; do not commit adultery."

So, Pastor, are you advocating that we try to legalize prayer and Bible reading in public schools? No, I'm advocating that all of God's people be more active in taking God's Word into the public arena—whether you go to a private or a public school, if you are a Christian student, you can openly pray and share God's Word—even in public schools. The law just prevents schools from mandating that all students pray or read the Bible.

I'm saying that as individuals, families, and a church, we should more actively engage our culture with the words of the Bible. We can't just hide away in our churches and retreat from the culture. We can't just hide God's word in our hearts, or in our churches. We're always going on Christian retreats; I think it's time for a massive Christian advance!

The early Christians were a tiny minority within a hedonistic, sexually immoral, pagan culture, where unwanted babies were left at the river to die. That sounds like America today. It was in this kind of culture that Paul challenged Christians, "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 2:14-16)

Let me give you three words to describe our culture without Christ. They are darkened, they are depraved, and they are doomed without Christ. There are fifteen blocks in Hollywood that feature 2,600 stars listing the names of people our culture calls stars. But in God's accounting, the real stars are His children who allow the light of the word of God to shine through their lives.

It's a dark world out there, so hold out the word of life! I'm asking us to permeate our culture with powerful verses of scripture every single day. You have the means. Use Facebook to post verses of scripture. Tweet the Word. Email it; Text it; Instagram it; Snapchat it; YouTube it; LinkedIn it; Pinterest it; Tumblr it; Flickr it; and you don't use any of those, take a pen and paper and write a letter or note with the Word, or call someone up and share the word of God with them, start a conversation with someone and share God's Word. There is great power when people are exposed to the Word of God. There are over 4,000 people here today. If each of us shared the word ten times a day for the next week, that would be over a quarter million shares. If we shared it over the month that would be over a million shares! There are 175 days left in 2017 and if shared the Word ten times a day that would be over 7 million shares.

We are One Nation Under God. Don't give up hope! There are trickles of good things happening, but we need to join to see a tidal wave of change take place. Through the power of the risen Christ, and the power of the Word of God, we can see our nation turn around. Let's get on our knees and beg God to **MAKE AMERICA GODLY AGAIN!**

OUTLINE

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



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