

Sermon for The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Date: July 5, 2020

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 19:19-25

Epistle Reading: Romans 13:1-7

Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:25-30

Sermon Text: Matthew 11:25-30

Sermon Title: God Bless Our Nation



Introit: Psalm 91:2, 9–10; Antiphon: Psalm 91:1

Hymns:

LSB 903 – This is the day the Lord Has Made

LSB 966 – Before You Lord We Bow

LSB 606 – I Lay My Sins on Jesus

LSB 965 – God Bless Our Native Land

Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

Songs:

America the Beautiful

Give Thanks

Come Now Is The Time to Worship

Doxology

Hear Our Praises

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

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Grace, peace, and mercy be yours in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and God. Amen.

Yesterday we celebrated the founding of a nation, this nation, the United States of America. It is, as it should be, a day of pride as we look back on our history and the forming of this nation. What is sad is that there has been an effort since the late 1940's to rewrite much of that history.

These people want a purely secular society and secular government. They want no reference to God or the Bible. Large and financially powerful groups like the "Freedom From Religion Foundation" regularly attack the churches, schools and even individuals in an ongoing attempt to silence the truth about God and His Holy Word.

I am troubled by current efforts, presented as history, to explain the founding of our country. What I find most prominently peculiar is that these, so called, historians do not quote people like George Washington, John Jay, Benjamin Rush, John Quincy Adams, John Hancock, Patrick Henry, and the like. They talk about these men. They tell us their opinions about these men. They tell us their ideas about these men. They do not however quote these men, at least not at length.

They don't quote them because if they did their agenda would not fit the facts. You have all heard, and some have been taught in school, that these men were, if religious at all, deists. That is wishful thinking on the part of people who would like nothing better than to cleans this country of the Christian faith.

There is a book I recommend called, "The Life of the Signers." In that book the lives of the people who signed the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution are presented to the reader. It is a reprint of a book written back in 1848. It is stunning to read a book written in the mid-1800's, and then to read a modern history book and see how strikingly different the presentation is of these men.

The vast majority of these men were devoted Christians. Their own words attest to that fact. I could quote them for days and not exhaust the supply of statements they made and documents they wrote, as well as documents written about them by their contemporaries, showing unquestioningly their devotion to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. This includes what their wives wrote about them. You can read about that in the book, "The Wives of the Signers."

Some modern historians would have you believe that God does not exist. That, or if He does exist, has no influence on us or our nation. They would have you believe God is at best not useful here, and at worst, in the way. I was shocked recently to hear two members of the United States Congress openly ridiculing the

Christian Faith. To have individuals, elected to such an high office, so profoundly ignorant of the nation he leads is concerning.

They may wish their words were true but a number of things will continue to get in their way. One that comes to mind is the Washington Monument. By law it is and must remain the tallest building in Washington DC. On the top of that monument are inscribed in Latin the words, "Praise to God."¹

As you walk around our nations capitol you would be struck by the endless display of the Christian faith, though some tour guides will do their best to deny it. One I found particularly humorous, and a bit annoying, was at the Supreme Court building. There you will see, in several places the image of two stone tablets with the roman numerals one through ten. One tour guide suggested these represent the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the constitution, rather than the Ten Commandments.

When you read the word of George Washington you see a different view than is often portrayed these days. He wrote:

Let my heart, gracious God, be so affected with Your glory and majesty that I may ... discharge those weighty duties which You require of me ... Again, I have called on You for pardon and forgiveness of sins ... for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered on the cross for me. You gave Your Son to die for me; and have given me assurance of my salvation.²

Now all of this is true but does it really matter? We live in a different time. We are a different people. Isn't it time for us to advance, to grow, to free ourselves from such archaic ideas? That is what far too many of our nations leaders would like to think. They want to take God's job away. Get God out of the way so that we can do better.

Tell that to John Jay the first Supreme Court Justice who wrote:

Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.³

Tell that to Supreme Court Justice David Brewer who wrote:

1 In Latin: Laus Deo.

2 *George Washington, the Christian*, William J. Johnson, New York: The Abingdon Press, 1919, pp. 24-35.

3 Jedidiah Morse in 1797

This is a religious people...this is a Christian nation.⁴

Tell these men and so many others that God has no place in our nation and no influence in directing the affairs of our government.

Was that the opinion of the Continental Congress when, on September 11, 1777 they wrote:

The use of the Bible is so universal and its importance so great that the committee refers to the consideration of Congress... to order the Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere, into the different parts of the States of the Union...⁵

Was that the opinion of the Congress when on September 10, 1782 the they wrote:

Whereupon, Resolved, That the United States in Congress assembled... recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States..., and hereby authorize [Robert Aitken] to publish this... in the manner he shall think proper.⁶

Now you should know that not everyone agreed with these decisions back then. Some thought it was unwise. Some thought a purely secular society would be better. Cases were brought forward and deliberated. In 1844, the case *Vidal v. Girard*, the Supreme Court unanimously wrote:

Why should not the Bible, and especially the New Testament... be read and taught as a Divine revelation in the schools - its general precepts expounded, its evidences explained and its glorious principles of morality inculcated? What is there to prevent a work, upon the general evidences of Christianity, from being read and taught in the schools by lay teachers?⁷

The same ideas about a secular society are alive and well today. The difference is we have kicked God out of our schools. We have kicked God out of our government and we are trying to kick God out of our country. Our generation has been brought to a place where Christian duty and Christian honor are openly ridiculed. Where the

4 Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States 1885

5 <http://www.restore-christian-america.org/congress.html>

6 <http://www.restore-christian-america.org/congress.html>

7 <http://www.reclaimoklahoma.org/SupremeCourtRulesBibleMustBeTaught.htm>

sacrifice of Christians in the building of: schools, hospitals, orphanages and much more is labeled worthless. Where the heroics of Christian volunteerism, at times of national crisis is labeled valueless.

Are they right? Is it true God has no place in this country? I say God does have a place in this nation, and in this nation's people. Without God's divine providence and influence we are not a nation at all. With the vast advancements, technologies, wealth, and generosity with which this nation has brought comfort to so many people, by God, and God's good grace, would we now send Him packing and claim all of this was done on our own?

Hear the Word of God recorded in Romans chapter 13

No government would exist
if it hadn't been established by God.⁸

Some would say, "God has no job here, God has no business here." God does have a job here, but it is important for us to remember that it is not His job to cloth Himself in the Stars and Strips. It is our job to cloth the Stars and Stripes in Him. It is His job to protect and provide for this nation. It is His job to grow and prosper this nation, so long as this nation bows in humble respect and adoration of the One who has made it great.

When we fail to give God, who has given us so much, the praise which He is worthy to receive, then God has another job. Then His job is to bring this nation back to Him. If this nation will not bend to His will, then this nation must not stand. Such wealth, such power, such strength is too much for any people to wield without God's holy and divine guidance and direction.

What then is the answer? What can we do? How can we make a difference? Teach your children. Read God's Word with them. Encourage them to take up positions of leadership. How do we influence and change our nation? We change this nation one small step at a time. Influencing the world around us as God would provide opportunity. Acting always in His name, and in His will. Obeying His command to tell all people⁹ of the truths and promises He has given to His people everywhere.

It is with these deeds, and through this obedience, that we honor our God, give honor to our nation, and preserve a place for the generations to follow.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

⁸ Romans 13:1

⁹ Matthew 28:19-20



Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people