

PRAYING FOR AMERICA

Galatians

Jealousy is not a good thing, so I try not to be jealous of David, shepherd, warrior, king. But I admit that God described David in a way I would love for God to be able to describe me – “a man after God’s own heart.”

And in the Scripture, especially in the Psalms, we get to see and hear something of David’s heart.

Psalm 145:1–10

1 I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever.

2 Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.

3 Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness *is* unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts.

5 I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, And on Your wondrous works.

6 *Men* shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, And I will declare Your greatness. 7 They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, And shall sing of Your righteousness.

8 The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. 9 The LORD *is* good to all, And His tender mercies *are* over all His works. 10 All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, And Your saints shall bless You.

And in Psalm 103 David said,

Psalm 103:1–2

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:

You know, we bless the Lord when we praise Him.

We bless the Lord when we thank Him.

We bless the Lord when we worship Him.

I love the worship song *10,000 Reasons*. It sounds like David wrote the song after he finished Psalm 103.

“Bless the Lord oh my soul
 Oh my soul
 Worship His Holy name
 Sing like never before
 Oh my soul
 I'll worship Your Holy name”

Some of you may be asking, “Why would a church whose focus is on worshipping God, teaching the Bible, and proclaiming the gospel, why would they have a God and Country Day on Sunday morning?”

The answer to that is related to what David said in the psalms we read a moment ago. Let me just re-read the pertinent parts:

Psalm 145

3 Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness *is* unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts.

6 *Men* shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, And I will declare Your greatness. 7 They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,

10 All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, And Your saints shall bless You.

Psalm 103

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:

Asaph, a leader of King David’s worship choir, took David’s words most seriously and wrote Psalm 78, which has been described as God’s Kindness to Rebellious Israel.

Listen to just a little of it.

Psalm 78

A Contemplation Of Asaph.

1 Give ear, O my people, to my law; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

4 We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

12 Marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers, In the land of Egypt,

13 He divided the sea and caused them to pass through; And He made the waters stand up like a heap.

14 In the daytime also He led them with the cloud, And all the night with a light of fire.

15 He split the rocks in the wilderness, And gave them drink in abundance like the depths.

32 In spite of this they still sinned, And did not believe in His wondrous works.

33 Therefore their days He consumed in futility, And their years in fear.

34 When He slew them, then they sought Him; And they returned and sought earnestly for God.

35 Then they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer.

54 And He brought them to His holy border, This mountain which His right hand had acquired.

55 He also drove out the nations before them, Allotted them an inheritance by survey, And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.

So, **at David's urging, Asaph told a portion of the story of Israel**, not at all hiding the sins of the people and of the nation, but telling how God had worked through the history of the nation **so that God's marvelous works would be declared to the next generation.**

Now the fact that David and Asaph would do this is interesting, but what is especially important is that both of them did this being inspired by the Holy Spirit! God wanted them to bless Him, to give Him glory by remembering and recounting the mighty works God had done for them.

Now, **does what God told David and Asaph relative to Israel have anything to do with us here in the United States of America? The answer is YES!** There is an application.

- **But the application is not to America because America as a nation has a special relationship with God.**
- **America is not the new Israel or a second Israel.**
- **Biblically speaking, the United States is just one of the many Gentile nations.**
- **The application of God's instruction to David and Asaph applies to any and all of the nations.** Paul explained to the Athenians, citizens of the Gentile nation of Greece

Acts 17:26-27 And He (God) has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed

times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, ...;

- Every nation that has ever existed or exists today does so because our all-powerful, sovereign God has determined their boundaries and the dates of their existence as a nation.
- He has done this in such a way as to cause people to seek the Lord.

Consequently, **believers in any nation should bless the Lord by declaring what He has done to the upcoming generations to glorify Him and to draw them to seek the Lord.**

- **Believers in China should declare to their people how their nation had its beginning in the migration from the Tower of Babel.**
 - **But when their people turned from faith in the One True Creator God, God sent missionaries to tell them of Jesus Christ God's Son who died for their sins and rose from the dead and offers them the gift of eternal life.**
 - And although their government today will not allow the open proclamation of the gospel in state regulated churches, yet **God maintains a colossal underground church where people can hear the gospel, read the Bible, and worship the Lord their God, Jesus Christ.**
- **Believers in Iran, which is ancient Persia, should declare how God caused one of their greatest emperors, Cyrus, to release God's chosen people from captivity to go back and rebuild their temple.**
 - **They should tell them how God worked through one of their Queens named Esther to spare the lives of all of God's people who lived within the vast empire.**
 - **They should tell how even today, while the leaders of Iran, forbid any worship except of the false god allah, Jesus is appearing to thousands of their citizens in dreams** and causing Bibles to be secretly brought into the country that Iranians may come to faith in Him.

Folks, believers in every country have their stories of God's mighty works among them to lead people to seek the Lord and come to know Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

And we who trust in Jesus in the United States of America have our stories too. We have true stories of God's mighty works among us to bring people to faith in the Lord Jesus. That does not mean that all of America's history or culture has been good or godly, not by a long shot. It does not mean that all or even most of our leaders were or are believers. All Americans are sinners just like all Chinese and all Iranians and all Israelites, and all our leaders were and are sinners as well. Some of them were

saved by grace through faith in Christ; but many, most, were not. But that's not the point.

God and Country Day in church is not to exalt leaders or even a nation.

It is to exalt God, to bless God, to honor God by telling what mighty things He has done among and around us to cause people to seek the Lord and come to faith in Jesus.

And that is what we want to do today! In order to exalt and bless God we shall first

I. EXPRESS OUR THANKFULNESS FOR WHAT GOD HAS DONE.

A. First we say thank you to the Lord as Creator.

God established the boundaries of these United States, and what a beautiful land He gave us, a land in which believing eyes can behold the fingerprints of a Creator God who loves us.

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

B. The second verse speaks of another great thing God has done here in America. By His mighty hand, God has made America known as the Land of the Free. Freedom has been our hallmark as a nation, and our freedom is a gift from God.

And God has a purpose for the freedom He has given us. In freedom, we have been a nation that since our earliest days

- The gospel could be proclaimed and shared.
- The Word of God could be taught.
- People could be saved, and they could live their lives in obedience to the Lord unhindered.
- Preachers could go forth and missionaries could be sent. Even today, the people of the United States send out more missionaries than any other nation, over 127,000 according to one recent report. And why? Because God has gifted us with the freedom to worship and to follow Christ.

I want us to continue to express our gratitude to God, but now we are going to do it in prayer.

1. Would you thank God for letting you hear the gospel and giving you the opportunity to come to faith in Christ wherever it was that God did that? For many of you it was here in America, but for others here it was in Brazil, or Korea, or the Philippines, or Australia, just wherever it was, give God thanks.

2. Thank the Lord Jesus for what He did on the cross for you.
3. Thank the Lord for letting you live in a land where you have the freedom and opportunity to share your testimony without fear of being imprisoned or killed because of it.
4. Thank the Lord that you have the freedom that makes it easy to go anywhere and everywhere the Lord commands you, sharing the gospel, in your Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the end of the earth.
5. Thank God for whatever physical and financial blessings He is providing in your life right now and for giving you the opportunity to give back to Him for His Kingdom's work in this place and around the world.
6. Thank God that you have the opportunity to give to Him right now, as an act of worship, as a testimony that you believe that every blessing you have has come from Him, and as an expression of your love and devotion.

We thank you, God, In Jesus' Name. Amen.

I said earlier in our service that our purpose today as always is to exalt, bless, honor, and worship God. The only thing different about today is that like Asaph, we are focusing on honoring God for what He has done and is doing where we live right now.

One of the things God is doing specifically among us in this church is that He has us reading through the New Testament, and this week we read Galatians. And I believe that in that book, is a prompting from the Lord that we could honor Him today by

II. IDENTIFYING OUR HOPE FOR AMERICA AND THE WORLD

Galatians 1:3–4 3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, **that He might deliver us from this present evil age**, according to the will of our God and Father,

Do those words not describe the age in which we live?

Do those words not describe the age in which we live in our country, right here in the United States of America?

Do those words not describe the age in which we live in the world as a whole? Where on earth is evil not pervasive?

The Book of Galatians not only identifies the problem but it also identifies the hope for deliverance from the problem. It identifies the hope for Americans and America. It identifies the hope for all the world!

Like all the rest of the New Testament, Galatians says, “Our hope is in Christ alone through the gospel.” Our only hope for America to be delivered from this present evil age is for men and women, boys and girls, teenagers to come one by one to faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and trusting in Him.

Our hope for seeing America transformed is truly in Christ alone as people give their lives to Christ and Christ becomes their life. Paul said,

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Do these words describe our lives?

Are you crucified with Christ?

1. Have you crucified the desires of the flesh so that the things of the Spirit reign supreme in your life?

Does Christ live in you?

1. How much?
2. While you are at work, can people see and hear Christ in you in your speech, in your attitude, in your manners, in your actions?
3. How about after work?
4. How about when you are with the family? Do they detect that Christ is living in you? By your patience, by your self-control, by your selflessness? By your love for them? Can they tell?
5. How about when you are with your friends? Do they see it? When you are having a good time and just having fun, is Christ still showing in you?

Do you live your life guided by your faith in Christ?

Do you live your life controlled by your faith in Christ?

Do you live your life empowered by your faith in Christ?

Brothers and sisters, if these words are not reality in our life, how can we be a part of God delivering our fellow citizens from this present evil age?

If Christ in us is not real and pervasive, how can we be a part of God’s deliverance of this world from the present evil age?

This evil age looks to everything except Christ for the solutions to its innumerable problems. Paul asked the Galatians, but he could be asking Americans or the citizens of any other nations around the globe:

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

Mankind is always coming up with some new theory of social salvation, some new emphasis that is going to save our society for the evils within it.

When I was a kid, it was education. Just help more kids get a college education. And we did, and now we have people with more education, but they are not any better; they are just more educated in their wickedness. And that is not to say education is bad, but it won't fix this evil age.

There is only one thing that will, and that is the gospel. The only thing that saves is a person. His name is Jesus. There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we can be saved, not in America, not in this world.

Only Jesus lived the perfect, sinless life God demands.

Only Jesus could be the spotless sacrifice who could pay the death penalty each of us deserves.

Only Jesus could and did make the great exchange for us. He took our sin and gave us His righteousness for all of us who trust Him as Lord and Savior.

That is the gospel and nothing else will deliver us from this evil age.

We have so many areas of challenge before us in our country:

1. **Lostness in our nation. Only 45% of Americans claim to be born again.** But Jesus said, "Many will say Lord, Lord, but He will say, I never knew you."

So well over half of Americans make no claim to be saved, so we know the figure is even larger.

2. **No wonder we have all these consequences of lostness:**

- a. **Continuation of abortion**

- b. **Demeaning of marriage**

- c. **Devastation of families** – children without two parents, children without one parent

- d. **Racism** and racial hatred and violence

3. Racism – The root cause of racism, like every other sin is selfishness and self-centeredness.

The only thing that allows us to see beyond differences whether they are differences in color, nationality, ethnicity, culture, or habit is love.

And the only thing that will enable us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love others as our self, is a genuine response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nothing else will do it!

And by the way, **the answer of the gospel for each of these maladies is not just an answer for society or culture. If you are struggling with any of these, the answer for you begins with the gospel.** When you come to faith in Christ, and Christ begins to live in you, you have the firm foundation for your life being wonderfully and miraculously transformed.

If you yourself are lost

If you are contemplating abortion

If you have had an abortion but are suffering guilt and anguish over it

If you are burdened with same sex attraction

If you are threatening your marriage by participating in adultery

If you are considering divorce or you have divorced and now you are in regret

If you struggle with racism or prejudice

COME TO CHRIST! BELIEVE THE GOSPEL! TRUST JESUS AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR!

That is the beginning point of transformation. If you get saved then we as fellow believers can and will help you with the individual areas of struggle and discipleship. But honestly, if you will not come to Christ, there is not really any way we can help you.

The power of transformation is in Christ, and Christ in you brings the power into you.