

America's Greatest Need

by B.R. Lakin

America's greatest need is to revive its sense of gratitude, responsibility, and faith in God in order to maintain its greatness and avoid moral collapse.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:30, 1 Samuel 17:45, Psalm 139:23, Proverbs 14:34, Jeremiah 4:2, Matthew 11:28, John 14:1, Romans 13:1, 2 Timothy 1:12

Topics: "National Revival", "Faith In God"

Description

Dr. B. R. Lakin delivers a powerful sermon titled 'America's Greatest Need,' emphasizing the importance of patriotism, gratitude, responsibility, and faith in God for the nation's success and survival. He highlights the righteous birth of America, the blessings bestowed upon the nation, and the need for a revival of spiritual interest. Lakin warns against complacency, urging a greater consciousness of individual responsibility and a sincere faith in God as the foundation of national strength and victory.

Transcript

The following sermon by Dr. B. R. Lakin entitled "America's Greatest Need" was read into the Congressional Record by the Honorable Congressman William Jennings Bryan Dorn of South Carolina on October 3, 1968.

Many distinguished political leaders, ministers and members of the Mission Board were present to hear the following outstanding and timely address of Dr. B. R. Lakin of Fort Gay, West Virginia.

"The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." Jer. 4:2

In these days of national strife and international confusion, when the seeds of hatred are being cultivated in the hotbeds of communism and radicalism, let us throw back our shoulders, double up our fists, rough with the calluses of honest toil, and stand up for true, fundamental, godly Americanism. The Bible teaches patriotism, and patriotism was the light that burned in the hearts of the faithful in the midnight gloom of the dark ages.

It was the torch that lit the fires of the Reformation. It was the rock upon which Western civilization survives the onslaught of the Red Scourge, it will be Christian patriotism that will fuel the lamps of truth and provide morale for the fight for freedom. America has many privileges, but it also has great

responsibilities. Our freedom was obtained at a great price. Our first responsibility is to God, but we are duty bound to our beloved country.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. 13:1

Sir Walter Scott struck a note of true Christian patriotism when he wrote--Breathes there a man, with soul so dead, who never himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land!

Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,

As home his footsteps he hath turn'd

From wandering on a foreign strand?

If such there breathe, go mark him well;

For him no minstrel raptures swell;

High though his titles, proud his name,

Boundless his wealth as wish can claim--

Despite those titles, power and pelf,

The wretch, concert'd all in self,

Living, shall forfeit fair renown,

And, doubly dying shall go down

To the vile dust from whence he sprung,

Unwept, unhonor'd and unsung

With manmade creeds forgotten, we find common ground in the sublime truth of the "Old Book" and in the spirit of those brave men who crossed the seas in search of a free land in which they could worship their God according to the dictates of their hearts.

WE enjoy the benefits of a land founded in faith, baptized in blood and dedicated to the freedom of worship. I would like, by the help of the Spirit, to revive within our hearts some of the great ideals that have made America the "Hub," the very center upon which the world revolves. I would like to stir up our souls with a renewed national zeal and a closer walk with God, without whom no nation can succeed.

1.WE NEED A SENSE OF GRATITUDE

One day in every year we celebrate Thanksgiving, but one day out of 365 is not enough. Americans should thank God every day that we live in "the land of the four freedoms." Every day we should thank God for the sacrifice of blood, sweat, privation, even death, on the part of the multiplied thousands of our heroic dead. Had it not been for their standing between us and the iron hand of fascism and Nazism, we

might not be commemorating their sacrifice. Instead, we might be goose-stepping at the heels of storm troopers and taking our orders from them instead of the Bible being read in our beloved homes. Mein Kampf might now be our textbook. Instead of blending our free voices in the singing of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," we might be "Heiling" and saluting the swastika. Let us bow our heads in humility and our hearts in reverence and gratitude to a merciful God who has brought us national deliverance.

A. We should be grateful for the righteous birth of our native land. Other nations were born in the blood of plundering conquest, but not America. Our nation was conceived in the noble hearts of courageous, righteous men. She was born in the throes of holy prayer at Plymouth Rock, cradled by the strong hand of stalwart faith, nourished at the bosom of living, vital, sincere religion, fed on the wholesome food of the highest ideals and developed to her towering stature under the smiling approval of Almighty God. America stands today a fortress of freedom, loved by all free men, respected by the liberty-loving peoples of the earth, feared by the enemies of God and human liberty. With the shadows of communism deepening upon every continent, America holds high the torch of faith, light and hope for the downtrodden peoples of the world.

B. We should be grateful for our natural, industrial and scientific resources with which we have been blessed. Because of our giving God His rightful place at the outset of our national life, God smiled--and gold poured from the rocky crags of the Gold West. God smiled--and wide acres of grain sprang from the soil of the Middle West. God smiled--and the picturesque hills of the East yielded black gold in ample abundance to warm our hearths and turn the wheels of industry.

God smiled--and the automobile, the airplane and a thousand and one industrial miracles took place before our eyes. God smiled--and has seen to it that Old Glory has never dipped her colors to any atheistic, God-hating, man-enslaving country. God smiled--and our scientists brought into being the atomic and nuclear bombs, which are destined to be those paradoxical instruments of destruction to save men from destruction.

Today, we stand in a precarious position in regard to our national life. We as a nation must do nothing to invoke the frown of Almighty God. Our course must be such as to keep Heaven's smile upon our beloved country.

We stand at the crossroads. To the left lie the bogs of extreme liberalism, socialism and the inevitable drift into communism. To the right lie the timeworn swamps of ultra-conservatism, which leads to monopolies of certain groups at the expense of other groups. We must keep in the middle of the road and prayerfully seek the guidance of God or our nation will go the way of all their nations in past history--into oblivion. It is the approval of God that makes a country great, not the genius of statesmen, not merely the form of government not the energy of its people, but the level of the national morals and the depth of national faith in God.

Not serried tanks with flags unfurled,

Not armored ships that gird the world,

Not hoarded wealth nor busy mills,

Not cattle on a thousand hills,

Nor sages wise, nor schools nor laws,

Not boasted deeds in Freedom's cause--
All these may be, and yet the state
In the eye of God be far from great,
That Land is great which knows the Lord,
Whose songs are guided by His Word;
Where justice rules, 'twixt man and man,
Where love controls in art and plan;
Where, breathing in His native air,
Each soul finds joy in praise and prayer--
Thus may our country, good and great,
Be God's delight -man's best estate.

C. We should be thankful for our homes. Though many of our citizens have brought reproach on the American home by their selfish and loose living, it still remains our greatest heritage. The meaning of the word home is so foreign to some peoples of the world that the equivalent of the word is not even in their language. The American traveler abroad, when he sees the condition existing in some foreign families, comes into a new appreciation of our home life in this country.

Henry Van Dyke once wrote after a trip abroad, so it's home again, and home again, America for me! My heart is turning home again, and there I long to be, In the land of youth and freedom beyond the ocean bars, Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars. Thank God for a part in guiding the American home in spiritual things! For years, every morning a radio poll showed I spoke to 800,000 people over the Nation's Family Prayer Period. People from all walks of life gathered before their radios at the beginning of the new day to look into His face and listen to His Word. We need a revival of interest in spiritual matters today.

2. We need a Greater Consciousness of Our Responsibility

Our greatest sin as a nation is the sin of complacency. Smugness is the forerunner of indifference, and indifference is the predecessor of national deterioration. As the old saying goes, "A chain is no stronger than its weakest link." It can be truthfully stated that America is no stronger than her weakest citizen. This truth puts a tremendous responsibility upon every of us. The forces of anti-Americanism and anti-Christianity are at work in our beloved land. Most of their work is sinister and under cover; but like leaven, they seek to eventually leaven the whole lump of our way of life and supplant regimented, centralized totalitarianism for old-fashioned, red-blooded, stalwart Americanism. This leaven of atheism is found in high places as well as low. No nation ever survived a moral collapse. When Rome was in the zenith of her power and glory, sin started to eat like a canker at the heart of her national morals. Her politicians became weak, flabby and spineless. She became morally weak and spiritually depraved. One night while the Roman politicians were engaged in a shameful, drunken orgy in the resort town of Pompeii, the fires of God's judgment were raging not far distant in the bowels of famous old Mt. Vesuvius, the

volcanic mountain. As the night wore on, the sin and debauchery became more pronounced in Pompeii. There came a weird, sickly rumbling from the adjacent mountain. For years Vesuvius had been quiet and asleep, but the hour of God's judgment had arrived. As the revelers continued their sinful indulgence, Vesuvius quivered with a mighty quake, and the top of the volcano was blown completely away as a surging river of flaming, molten rock poured down the mountain in a death-dealing torrent. There was no hope of escape. The door of God's mercy was closed for these Roman renegades. As the lava swiftly overwhelmed the city, 25,000 people were buried beneath the flood of molten rock. This was the beginning of Rome's end as a nation. It all began when sin and lust supplanted the love for God and when gratification of the lower appetites took the place of noble character.

Egypt was once the center of world culture, and their scientists were way ahead in scientific knowledge and research. But Egyptian civilization floundered upon the rocks of immorality and depravity, and today she is leagues behind other nations which have striven to give God His rightful place in their national development. One has only to walk the streets of Cairo and note the lust and the sin on every hand, to see the reason for her utter lack of national prosperity and integrity. A nation can rise no higher than the moral level of her average individual. Every American, in these days of confusion and moral crisis, has an individual responsibility to God and his country. Not only do we have our own souls to save, but we have a great country to protect from the fate which has overtaken other civilizations just as strong as ours.

3. America Needs a Higher, Nobler and a More Sincere Faith in God

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14:34

What we are as a nation we owe to our underlying faith in God: the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock on their knees; Washington at Valley Forge praying for guidance and strength in the crisis of battle; Lincoln calling the country to national repentance in the midst of civil conflict. These are memorable portraits of our basic faith in God as a nation. If we have any success as a nation, we must attribute the glory, the honor and the praise to a benevolent God who has guided, with omnipotent hand, the course and destiny of our fair land. In most of our wars, many of our greatest generals were professed Christians, and their decisions and strategy were mingled with sincere prayer and dependence upon Almighty God. It is significant that our enemies, as far as I know, could not boast of one Christian general in their military personnel. Japan with her warlords and Germany with her atheistic Nazi leaders did not have one military commander who sought the wisdom of God in their military endeavors. Today, as far as I know, none of our enemies are Christians. Could any fair individual say the prayers offered by devoted mothers and by the churches all over America had nothing to do in bringing about victory for our armed forces? Suffice it to say, the enemy forces, which refused to honor God by seeking His wisdom through prayer, went down into bitter defeat and their systems vanished into oblivion as all civilizations have which left God out of their program. Abraham Lincoln struck a keynote when he said, "The important thing is not that we have God on our side, but that we make sure we are on His side."

Faith in God often becomes the balance of power when two matched forces are joined in combat; or, more often, the victory often goes to inferior forces when God's power and blessing are upon their efforts. As Moses said,

"How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?" Deut. 32:30

When as a lad David dared to face the giant Goliath, he trusted not in swords and staves but in the Lord. He faced the towering giant of the Philistines undaunted, unafraid and said,

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." I Sam. 17:45.46.

We need to know as a nation that adequate equipment is insufficient to win a war. Germany had superior planes, tanks and men, but they lost the last war. WE must not become smug and complacent. The atomic bomb, without the blessing of God upon our nation, could never win a war. The most potent weapon in existence is the inward conviction that we are on God's side and that our cause is just and right. We not only need a greater faith in God as a nation but we, as individuals, need to know God in a personal Christian experience. Lieutenant Whitaker, speaking of his experience, said,

At forty years of age, I had never been inside a church for any reason whatsoever; but out there on a raft in the middle of the Pacific I met God. I heard Bill Cherry pray, and a rain cloud that had passed us turned around and came back over us and drenched us with water when we were about to die of thirst. It was there I saw God and learned to say, "I believe."

These words are from a hardened military man who found God the hard way. Afterwards, he traveled throughout the land telling the marvelous story of how he met God. Many of us will never have the unique experience of meeting God under those unusual circumstances, but we can know Him nevertheless.

We can prove His adequacy in the crucible of human experience and know that He is the Christ of every crisis. We can learn to say with Paul,

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." II Tim.1: 12

I would rather the citizens of our beloved America should know Christ personally than for America to have the greatest military might in the world. I would rather have it said that we are a people who love God and worship Him than for America to have the security of the atomic bomb. I would rather that Americans should be reverent and humble in their attitude toward Jesus, the Son of God, than to have the rest of the world acclaim us as the mightiest of the nations. I want to close in the spirit of that touching little poem.

"I MET THE MASTER."

I had walked life's way with an easy tread,

Had followed where comforts and pleasure led;

And then one day in a quiet place,

I met the Master, face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for a goal;

Much thought for the body, but none for the soul;

I had thought to win in life's mad race,
When I met the Master, face to face.
I met Him and knew Him and blushed to see
Those eyes full of sorrow were turned on me;
And I faltered and fell at His feet that day,
While all my castles melted away--
Melted and vanished, and in their place
I saw nought else but the Master's face;
And I cried aloud, "Oh, make me meet
To follow the steps of the wounded feet."
And now my thoughts are for the souls of men;
I've lost my life, to find it again,
E'er since that day in a quiet place
I met the Master, face to face.
--Author Unknown

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