

God's Truth: Rebellion and Patriotism

by Russell Kelfer

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's truth and rejecting Satan's lies in the areas of authority, rebellion, and patriotism.

Duration: 41:25

Scripture: Numbers 16:1-4, 1 Samuel 15:9-10, Jeremiah 3:1, Romans 13:1, Romans 13:7, 1 Peter 2:16

Topics: "Patriotism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses five qualities that are best developed in a nation during times of struggle: submission, goodness, respect, commitment, and prayer. He emphasizes that God often brings out these qualities in our lives through spiritual warfare and both victories and defeats. The speaker also highlights the responsibilities of Christians to their nation, particularly the importance of prayer. He urges listeners to reflect on their lives before meeting Jesus and to be grateful for the forgiveness of sins and personal relationship with God.

Transcript

The lesson you're about to hear is designed to help you in your spiritual pilgrimage. We pray that this will be a blessing in your life. Our teacher is Russell Kelfer of the Into His Likeness radio broadcast.

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We also invite you to visit us anytime on the World Wide Web. Our Internet address is simply www.dtm.org. We pray God's richest blessing may be yours as He continues to live His life in you. We have in recent weeks been studying one of the problems of an impure heart, the double-mindedness that comes from Satan's deceptions in the world.

In other words, his believable lies. Lies about the character of man. Lies about man's relationship to God.

Lies about what constitutes success. Lies about morality. Lies about marriage.

Lies about the home. Lies about the role of man and woman in the world. And most recently, lies about authority and discipline, where our children are concerned.

This morning we continue our study of Satan's lies and God's truth concerning three basic areas--authority, rebellion, and patriotism. He has fostered basic lies in each of these three areas, and, as always, he has deeper goals to discredit God in each case. Lie number one.

Satan says authority as we know it is outdated and must give way to mutual expression. Each person you see then has equal say in the final decision. That way no one person tells anyone else what to do.

Life becomes a majority rule issue, and if no agreement ensues, then each person does that which is right in his own eyes. This line of thinking has permeated our schools, it has affected our homes, it has affected our churches, it has affected our government. Teachers no longer want to be authority figures for fear of damaging their, quote, creativity with their class.

Parents no longer rule in the home, they plead. Respect for authority has reached an all-time low. What kinds of alternatives are there? Well, I think there are at least three kinds of relationships in this regard.

The first far extreme is the ruler ruling over the servant without love, dictatorship, or one who rules by force without love. In the third category, at the other extreme, we see two people on a peer-level relationship with no authority, response without rule. And many people feel that this is the way our children should be raised today, this is the way children should be taught in school today, this is the way the marriage relationship should be today.

But in the center you see God's kind of alternative. And that is, one having authority over another in some cases and yet still with the freedom to be a friend. In illustration two, the authority figure plays two roles.

He is authority and he is friend. As friend, he listens, he cares, he responds, and he serves. But as an authority, he decides, he leads, and if necessary, disciplines.

One example would be if your best friend were a policeman and you might say every Saturday night you as a family and he with his family would go out to dinner. And you just had great fellowship with this policeman and his family. And if you had a need, you could call him up in the middle of the night and he would be there.

But one day you rob a bank. Now, the policeman is still your friend, but as your friend, he must exercise the authority vested in him. And though your friend, he will have to be the arm of discipline in your life.

Teachers, you can be a friend and an authority to the people you teach at school. And by doing so, you are teaching them a deep spiritual principle at the same time. Why is Satan so bent on destroying this philosophy? Well, where was man in the garden before the fall? God and man walked together as friends.

God, man's friend, ruled the universe, ruled the angelic host, and ruled over Adam and Eve. He was Lord, but he was friend. Satan's cry to Eve was, if he really is your friend, what right does he have to make your decisions? To limit your freedoms, to insult your intelligence by saying you don't have the capacity to be in charge.

Eve, express yourself. Do what appeals to you. If God has that right, so should you.

Eve, look at that fruit. You want it, don't you? Express yourself, Eve. Take it.

And Eve came out from under the authority of her best friend, Jehovah. And she was never the same again. Why? What was Satan's goal? Satan's goal is to convince man of this lie, that God cannot be both

friend and Lord at the same time.

That either he must be a cold, impassionate despot, or a loving friend who never interferes with what you want to do. Lie. John chapter 15 tells the truth.

Verse 9, I have loved you. This is paraphrased. I have loved you even as the Father has loved me.

Live within my love. When you obey me, you are living in my love, just as I obey the Father and live in His love. In other words, the exercise of love is obedience.

Verse 11, I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your cup of joy will overflow. Verse 12, I demand that you love each other.

Some of us ought to memorize. I demand that you love each other as much as I love you. And here's how to measure it.

The greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for his friends. And you're my friends if you obey me. Verse 15, I no longer call you slaves.

For a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends. Proved by the fact that I have told you everything the Father told me.

Friends. You're the friend of God. And yet why is it that Paul years later wrote, Paul, bond slave, servant by choice of Jesus Christ.

It was because from God's perspective, Paul was now his friend. From Paul's perspective, he was still God's servant. It's a truth basic to enjoying the Christian walk.

And Satan hates it. The second lie is an extension of the first. It says that rebellion is an acceptable means to a reasonable end.

If no one is to rule over us, and then someone tries, we must cooperate only if we agree with their goals, agree with their methods, and agree with their timing. But if not, an acceptable means of expression is to rise up and oppose that authority. Of course, you must then presuppose that authorities that be are not ordained of God.

This is no problem. You take a pair of scissors, take your Bible, and you cut out Romans chapter 13, 1 Peter chapter 2, Ephesians chapter 5, only to find that every place you turn, it's still there. Rebellion.

Satan's trademark. That means children obey your parents unless you disagree with their instructions. Then you throw a temper tantrum.

It means students listen to and obey your teachers if they teach the way you choose. Otherwise, rebel, argue, and undermine their authority. It means citizens obey the laws provided the laws meet with your approval.

Otherwise, defy them. It means wives submit to your husband if they are worthy of your respect. Otherwise, you refuse.

It means employees do as you're told provided the boss is pleasing you and meeting your needs. Otherwise, you strike. It means soldier obey the commander-in-chief unless you don't approve of the war.

Then you refuse to serve. You see, you, remember, are the final authority by Satan's argument. I will exalt myself, he said.

I will be like the Most High. I will be my own boss. The funny thing is that Satan himself, who hates authority, believes in it when he's it.

You read Matthew chapter 4 sometime, and when Satan was in control of the situation, boy, did he love having authority. Everyone does. It's amazing the people who stand and defy the concept of authority and how their whole life changes when they're there.

What man is saying is, I don't believe in authority unless I'm it. It's called rebellion. It's acceptable behavior in today's society, but it's still a dirty word in God's vocabulary.

What's his goal? Satan's, that is. It is to discredit God by fortifying his own philosophy. And his own philosophy is founded on a concept of rebellion.

What is rebellion? Rebellion. That spirit in man that refuses to allow another to rule over him. That spirit in man that refuses to allow another to rule over him.

It expresses itself subtly or overtly by resisting man's authority and God's authority. A shorter definition would be rebellion. Defiance or reluctance over another's control.

Rebellion. Now how does God feel about rebellion? 1 Samuel chapter 15, paraphrased, tells us a little bit about how God feels about a rebellious spirit. Now the background is found in verses 1 through 8. One day Samuel said to Saul, I crowned you king of Israel because God told me to.

Now be sure that you obey him. Here's his commandment to you. I have decided to settle the accounts with the nation of Amalek for refusing to allow my people to cross their territory.

Now you go and destroy the nation. So Saul mobilized his army. There were 200,000 troops in addition to 10,000 men from Judah.

The Amalekites were camped in the valley below. Saul sent a message to the Kenites telling them to get out or else die with them. For you were kind to the people of Israel, he said, when they came out of Egypt.

And then Saul went in, it says, and he butchered the Amalekites and he captured Agag, which he wasn't supposed to do, but killed everyone else. Verse 9, however, Saul and his men kept the best of the sheep and oxen and the fattest of the lambs, everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They only destroyed what was worthless or of poor quality.

And then the Lord said to Samuel, now here's where our story begins. In verses 9 and 10, he compromised the command of God. The believer does not need the spoils of the world.

And this was a picture of that. And he went in and he kept the things he wasn't supposed to keep. You remember that we call it the IBC syndrome, itty-bitty compromise.

Moses was guilty of the same thing. But we'll get to that in a minute. Then in verse 11, Saul's next sin, having done the itty-bitty compromise, he broke the heart of God.

I think this is one of the saddest verses in all of Scripture. And as I read this, God just really worked me over because I could see some areas where I could see where God was saying this about me. Verse 11, I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has again refused to obey me.

And Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard what God was saying that he cried to the Lord all night. It broke the heart of God, and that broke the heart of God's men. I couldn't help but wonder this week how often we cry, weep before the Lord, when men in positions of responsibility break God's heart.

Or do we just kind of smugly sit back and say, aha. Boy, I wouldn't have done that, like Peter. Broke the heart of God, and broke the heart of God's men.

And in verse 12, he stole the glory of God. It says the next morning he went out to find Saul. Someone said he had gone to Mount Carmel to erect a monument to himself.

Some of us have done that, too. And then in verse 13, he rejected the truth of God by lying. Samuel found him, and Saul said, hey, there, I did what God said to.

What was all the bleeding of sheep and the lowering of oxen, I heard Samuel demanded. Well, he said, it's true that the army spared the best sheep and oxen, but he said, they're going to sacrifice them to the Lord your God. The end justifies the means.

Now, here was God's response, verse 17. And Samuel told him, here's four things God said to Samuel. Five, excuse me.

Number one, he said, you forgot where you were when I called you. Verse 17, Samuel told him, when you didn't think much of yourself, God made you the king of Israel. God took you from nothing.

How could you forget? Any of you here this morning that have a tendency, like all of us, to complain and murmur, have you ever imagined what your life might have been if you were continuing on the course you were on before you met Jesus Christ? And you were still on that course without Calvary, without forgiveness of sins, without a personal relationship with the living God. Stop for a moment and let your television set switch back to that channel. And in your heart, you ought to fall to your knees.

He said, Saul, when you were nothing, God made you king. And then secondly, in the next three verses, he said, not only did you forget where you came from, you forgot your responsibility. He said, well, I almost did everything.

I did almost everything God wanted to. What is God after? Can you imagine Jesus almost going to Calvary? Can you imagine Him bargaining with God and saying, Father, I understand what you're saying, but I can do more good for you if I just get all beaten up and inflicted, have pain inflicted for the sake of my people, and then I can rise up and be king and I don't have to die for their sins. The second reason he gave was, he said, God, you ought to understand I was under pressure.

I didn't want to let the people down. The third response was, in verse 22, you forgot what pleases the Lord. Samuel said, has the Lord as much pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obedience? Obedience is far better than sacrifice.

He's much more interested in your listening to Him than in your offering the fat of rams. In other words, God's not interested that you show your religiosity before men, but whether or not you do what you're told

in the Word. Not the size of your offering or your service, but the receptiveness of your heart to God.

And then lastly, or fourthly rather, and here's the key to it in verse 23, here's how God feels about rebellion. He says, Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry. What is witchcraft? It is to trust a spirit other than God's Spirit.

What is stubbornness? It is an unteachable spirit that defies instruction. So what this passage says is an unteachable spirit is to God, idolizing Satan by exalting self. And the spirit that cannot be ruled by another is in effect ruled by demons.

What this passage is saying, not just that they are equal, rebellion and witchcraft are equal in intensity, what they are saying is they both invoke the same heart response from God. Sometimes you do a study on how God feels about witchcraft and idolatry. Then you'll know how God feels about a stubborn spirit and a spirit of rebellion.

How do you detect rebellion in yourself, in your children, and in those under you? Very quickly, I'm going to give you some evidences of a rebellious spirit. Number one, do you encourage others in their rebellion? Numbers chapter 14, verses 36 through 38. Numbers 14.

Then the ten spies who had incited the rebellion against Jehovah by striking fear into their hearts were struck dead of the Lord. Now, there are a lot of other verses that go into that, but because of time we won't go into them. You can also read numbers 16, 1 through 4, which is an even better illustration.

Ask yourself this question, what is your effect on other people? What kind of counsel do you give? Do you say, if the boss treats you that way, quit? Do you say, leave him, nobody should treat a wife like that? Your counsel, you see, expresses your heart. And how you counsel people will tell, basically, what rebellion is in your heart. Number two, complaining or an ungrateful spirit.

We won't read this passage, but most of you have read Psalm 78 before. And what it basically says is that the people were never satisfied. Rebellion is the absence of contentment with God's provisions.

And if you're never satisfied with your lot in life, you have a rebellious spirit. The third evidence of rebellion is found in Isaiah 30. It's the rejection of counsel that you know is right.

Isaiah 31 says, woe to my rebellious children. You ask advice from everyone but me and decide to do what I don't want you to do. You yoke yourselves with unbelievers, thus piling up your sins.

Without consulting me, you've gone to Egypt to find aid, and you've put your trust in Pharaoh for his protection. But in trusting Pharaoh, you will be disappointed, humiliated, and disgraced. He can't deliver you.

You see, the principle is, they chose to listen to the voice of a stranger. Take the easy way out. How many times do you receive counsel that you know comes from God, either from the Word or from someone else, and you spend the rest of your life trying to justify your way out of it? That's rebellion.

Number four, failure to admit your own condition or learn from the mistakes of others. Jeremiah 3, beginning with verse 1. There is a law that if a man divorces a woman who then remarries, he is not to take her back again. Some people use that wrongfully, I think, as an excuse that two people cannot remarry after divorce, the same people.

He is not to take her back again because she has become corrupted. But, Jehovah gives the reality of it. He says, But, though you have left me and married many lovers, yet I have invited you to come to me again, the Lord says.

And then he goes on and says, Is there no spot in the land that you haven't defiled by your adulteries? That is why even the springtime rains have failed. He said, You are like a prostitute, completely unashamed. And you say to me, O Father, you've always been my friend.

You wouldn't be angry over such a little thing. Just forget it. This message came from the Lord.

Have you seen what Israel does? Like a wanton wife, she gives herself to other men at every chance. I thought someday she would return to me and again be mine, but she didn't come back. She paid no attention even though she saw that I divorced faithful Israel.

But now Judah too has left and given herself to prostitution. She treated it all so lightly. To her it was nothing.

In fact, faithless Israel is less guilty than Judah. Therefore, go and say to her, O my sinful people, come home, for I am merciful. The whole principle is, what he was saying was, you saw the mistakes of others, but you rejected that illustration.

How many of us have been in families where we have seen problems from unequal yoking? We've been in situations where we've seen drug problems and other things. And how many times have we seen children go through situations where they have witnessed firsthand the mistakes of others and turn right around and make the same mistakes again? Scripture teaches that this is a rebellious spirit. Very quickly then, the fifth thing is, seeking friendships with others in rebellion.

Proverbs 14.9, the common bond of rebels is their guilt. The common band of godly people is good will. Now, I don't know about you, but I've had some experience in school situations, and I think some of you have too.

You bring a new person into a school, even a Christian school, and turn them loose. And you watch where they gravitate. And the people they choose for friends will tell you what their real spirit is.

Because a lot of times they will be drawn to friends who will do the things they would like to do if there were no restraints. Seeking friendships with others in rebellion is evidence of a rebellious spirit. Number six, speech that does not reflect love.

Number seven, a negative spirit. Number eight, a desire to run the show or to have things your way. Don't be surprised if God surfaces rebellion in your lives this week.

My experience has been that God tests me the week before I have to teach a lesson like this, and He tests you the week after. And if it will help prepare you at all, this has been one of the roughest weeks I've had in years. I've seen rebellious spirits surface in my life this week that scared me to death.

Additional thoughts on rebellion. Number one, you don't need to hide rebellious ancestors. Psalm 78, you read that sometime, particularly if you read it from a modern translation.

Sometimes, you know, we take our family tree and we chop it up so that the dead limbs don't show. I think that's wrong. I think our children need to learn from the mistakes of others.

And there may be some people in your family tree that needed to hang there. And your children may need to know about it, and they may need to know the price that was paid for that rather than just covering it up. It's an important principle.

There's not really time to deal with it this morning. A second principle is, remembrances serve to prevent rebellions. Numbers chapter 17, verses 10 through 13.

I think psychologists will disagree with this, but I think that the great physician says it's good medicine. When a child makes a mistake, a serious mistake, let him make a remembrance of it, put it somewhere where he can look at it again and remember the grace of God, but also the fruit of that mistake. Number three, rebellion never affects only you.

Joshua 22, 16 through 23. You read these passages yourself. And number four, the more responsible you are, the more your rebellion will affect other people.

James chapter 3, verse 1. Numbers chapter 20, verse 24. Now, how about you? What is your RQ, your rebellion quotient? Let me ask you some questions to test your attitudes. Number one, how does your inner spirit respond when asked by your boss to do something that you know is unnecessary? Number two, do you find it natural to assume the negative position in most conversations? Number three, how quickly do you question God when circumstances do not go your way? Number four, do you consider paying taxes a privilege, a necessity, or a crime? Number five, are you drawn to friends who murmur? Murmur, an undercurrent of negative conversation.

Number six, are you quick to question the motive as well as the judgment of those who lead you? Number seven, how open are you to godly counsel and how obedient are you when you receive it? Remember, from God's perspective, rebellion is, as the sin of witchcraft and a stubborn spirit is, in essence, idolatry. Well, the third law builds, as always, on the other two. It says if authority yields to expression and finally, if necessary, to rebellion, then the needs and ideals of the one exceed the importance of the many and loyalty to a group or a nation, patriotism, if you will, is a thing of the past.

It's a lie. Now, what's the purpose of the lie? Satan wants to discredit the national purposes of God. God delights to magnify himself through the nations.

He reveals his will, often through the nations, and a world that talks or laughs its way through the national anthem at football games is in trouble. Have you ever wondered why God works through the nations? Let me give you some reasons to chew on. Number one, because he can choose their leaders.

Proverbs 21.1, the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord and he turneth it whithersoever he chooseth. You remember 1 Samuel 16.7, where they were choosing the wrong king and Jehovah said, wait a minute, that's the wrong one. He's not the one I've chosen.

And Psalm 75.6 and 7 says God sets up one and puts down another. God works through nations because he can choose their leaders. Number two, he works through nations because he can gain the attention of multitudes.

That's why God scattered the people at Babel. He didn't want a one-world rule. The nations are his checks and balance system to keep society from rushing headlong into disaster.

And he can gain the attention of multitudes. You have a scuffle and you may attract a few people, but you have a world war and the whole world wakes up. Thirdly, through the nations he can develop missionary activity.

You can look sometime at Acts chapter 2, the first twelve verses. God, as we'll talk about in closing in a minute, God takes nations and uses them as a mission base to send people to other places to spread the gospel. He has from the very beginning of the time that he called out Israel.

From the very beginning of the time that Jesus came into the world and formed the church. Fourthly, he can depict spiritual warfare through the nations. This is one of Paul's favorite illustrations.

He said, you want to learn what it's like to deal with the enemy, you look at war. You get ready for war. You learn about preparation for battle, the roles of men and women, the effects of compromise, the effects of unholy alliances, the need to be armed, the need to be sober, the need to be alert.

Fifthly, he can demonstrate justice and authority through the nations. Sixthly, he can punish ungodliness. It creates a system for discipline.

And lastly, Jeremiah chapter 3, he can teach about the coming kingdom through the behavior of the nations. God desires to work through the nations. God desires allegiance to the nations he works through.

What are some qualities that he can develop through patriotism? What is patriotism? It is allegiance to a nation as an instrument of God. Allegiance to a nation as an instrument of God. And there's at least five qualities that patriotism develops.

First is loyalty. How many of you are loyal? An attitude of faithfulness demonstrated through adverse circumstances. That's loyalty.

A second is submission. It's an attitude of yielding rights to help others succeed. Sacrifice.

The act of giving up benefits to meet another's needs. Respect. The attitude of bestowing gracious honor on another.

Commitment. The steadfastness of purpose that endures. Unfortunately, all five of these qualities seem best developed in a nation in time of struggle, war, shortages, internal strife, but usually war.

And there's a great lesson in that. The greatest qualities in our lives come out of struggles, out of spiritual warfare, out of the victories, and even out of the defeats. Now, the Christian has certain responsibilities to his nation, too.

Scripture is very plain. And as we close this morning, we ought to look at what those responsibilities are. The first is to pray.

1 Timothy 2, verse 1. Here are my directions. Pray much for others. Plead for God's mercy upon them.

And give thanks for all He's going to do for them. Pray in this way for kings and all others who are in authority over us or are in places of high responsibility, so that we can live in peace and in quietness, spending our time in godly living and thinking much about the Lord. This is good.

It pleases God our Savior. For He longs for all to be saved and understand this one truth, that God is on the one side and all the people on the other side, and Jesus Christ Himself is between them to bring them together by giving His life for all mankind. The gospel.

That's the goal. But the vehicle that the will of God be done, that the gospel be shared, the vehicle is that you pray for everyone that's in authority over you. This is a command.

Now, let me ask you a question. How many of you think you can even name the people that are in authority over you? I'm going to give you a list real quick. I think you can get the first.

The President of the United States. Good. I know.

At least some of you know his name. Definitely. Now, we stopped about four months ago in this class and prayed for the President.

How many of you have prayed for him on a regular basis since that time? Some. The Vice President. Poor guy.

Not everybody remembers his name, do they? You ever wondered why you should pray for the Vice President? Well, it says to in 1 Timothy, Do you realize that the future of this nation is in his hand if anything happens to the President? He may be one of the strongest influences on the President. How about the Supreme Court? Who would volunteer to stand up and name all of the justices on the Supreme Court so we can pray for them? You see, we can't even name them, let alone pray for them. When was the last time you prayed for the Supreme Court? It shapes history.

How about the Congressional leaders? How about the Cabinet? How many of you pray for the Cabinet? Most of us don't even know where the door to the Cabinet is, let alone how to pray for it. How about other world leaders? How many of you pray for the leaders of Israel? The most important nation in the history of the world. The most important nation in the future of the world.

How many of you pray for the leaders of Israel? How many of you pray for the Governor, whether you voted for him or not? For the Mayor of this city, whether you voted for her or not? For the police chief? How many of you just pray for Christian policemen that you know that are out there as God's instruments day by day to protect us? How about the other authorities over you? The Senators and the Congressmen that represent this district. Can you even name them? So the first thing we're supposed to do is pray for those in authority. The second thing is to show respect for the government.

1 Peter 2, verse 16 says, You're free from the law, but that doesn't mean you're free to do wrong. Live as those who are free to do. Only to do only God's will at all times.

Show respect for everyone. Love Christians, everyone. Fear God and honor the government.

Servants, respect your masters. Do whatever they tell you to. Not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are tough and cruel.

Praise the Lord if you're punished for doing what is right. Respect. Romans chapter 13, verses 1 and 7. Obey the government, for God is the one who put it there.

There's no government anywhere that God did not put in power. Verse 7. Obey those over you and give honor and respect to whom honor and respect is due. That means you respect your country when you

salute the flag, when you discuss its heritage, when you revere its offices, and when you pray for its future.

Thirdly, your responsibility is to pay taxes. Romans chapter 13 again, verses 6 and 7. Pay your taxes. For these same two reasons, government workers need to be paid so they can keep on doing God's work, serving you.

Pay everyone whatever he ought to have. Pay your taxes and your imports duties gladly. It's an exercise of obedience to demonstrate loyalty.

Fourthly, vote. Matthew chapter 5 says you are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has lost its flavor, if there's no seasoning, what's the world going to do? Number five, obey the laws that are placed over you.

First Peter chapter 2, verse 13. And back to Romans 13. So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God.

And punishment will follow. A policeman doesn't frighten people who are doing what's right. A policeman is sent by God to help you.

But if you are doing something wrong, you ought to be afraid. And then the last two things, pay your debts. The next verse says pay to everyone what they ought to have, taxes and so forth, and pay all your debts except the debt of love for others.

You say, what does that have to do with national unity? The financial strength of a nation is proportionate to the credit of its people. I don't believe it's placed here accidentally. Credit represents integrity.

And every time we sin, Jesus goes to the Father and He says, charge that to my account. And God never fails to do it because Jesus' credit rating is perfect. He always pays.

And then verse 9 says, exercise love in every situation. In closing, is America a Christian nation? No, America is not a Christian nation. But America is a nation founded on Christian principles.

Christian principles have dominated our legal system. Christian principles have shaped our moral codes. Christian principles have assured us of our basic freedoms.

And even more important, this nation only 50 years ago was the hope of the Christian faith. It was God's mission base to send Christ to the four corners of the world. And today, many of our missionaries are no longer welcome in other parts of the world, sometimes because of resistance to the gospel, sometimes because of resistance to Americans.

And in many ways, much of what made this nation spiritually great is gone. Men and women and government alike have bowed before humanistic idols in worship. One nation under God is teetering because that one nation is not under God as once it was.

And as we fall prey to satanic pressures and make unholy alliances with our enemies, waver on our support of God's nation, Israel, we stand on the precipice, to be sure, of losing our mantle of spiritual leadership. But mark this, this nation was ordained of God as a nation to proclaim the truth. This nation's heritage is one of honor and dignity and righteousness.

And this nation is worthy even today, scripturally, of your respect. This nation holds memories of being mightily used of God. And our eyes should still water when we say the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

And there should still be a lump in our throats when we sing the national anthem. This nation is God's. And it, like God, is not dead.

And you and I must begin caring again for America, crying again for America, praying again for America, singing again about America. Satan says that's foolishness. But Satan is a liar.

In closing, I'd like for you to bow your heads, if you would. And I'm going to ask Wink to lead us as a closing prayer, just in singing, God bless America. I think the verse that goes before it says something like this, as the storm clouds gather far across the sea, let us all be grateful for a land that's free.

Let us all be grateful for a land so fair as we raise our voices in this solemn prayer. God bless America, land that I love. Stand beside her and guide her through the night with the light from above, from the mountains to the prairies to the oceans white with foam.

God bless America, my home sweet home. God bless America, my home sweet home. Amen.

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