

# If My People - Part 1

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman's sermon emphasizes the need for the church to reclaim its voice in addressing societal issues and advocating for godly leadership.*

**Duration:** 52:18

**Scripture:** Exodus 18:21, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Nehemiah 1:6, Psalm 11:3, Psalm 82:3, Psalm 139:13, Proverbs 29:2, Daniel 9:4-19, James 1:22

**Topics:** "National Revival", "Repentance Prayer"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of addressing controversial topics and recapturing the prophetic zeal in churches. It highlights the impact of the Johnson Amendment on churches' freedom to discuss social and political issues. The sermon stresses the need for humility, prayer, seeking God's face, and repentance as the solution to the spiritual and societal challenges faced. It calls for a return to God, acknowledging the foundational principles of the nation, and the significance of prayer in bringing about revival and restoration.

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## Transcript

And what I'm going to do tonight's a little bit different. I don't know if you've heard of this. It's been obviously on the news and Christian posts and different things.

But every once a year, they have what's called Pulpit Freedom Sunday. And a lot of churches throughout the nation are doing it tomorrow. And it's where the churches kind of recapture that prophetic zeal and talking about things that we're not supposed to talk about.

In 1954, something was passed called the Johnson Amendment. And it basically means that churches, me, cannot talk about social issues, political issues, candidates and things like that. We can't mention it.

Or you can be in jeopardy of losing your 501c3 tax exempt status, which everybody's worried about. I think if they took ours away, we should be OK. I just get a different job, right? And just pay taxes, a lot of taxes to the government.

But nobody's ever challenged that. But that's what we do once a year. And first weekend in October, we come and we talk about some controversial things just to remind everybody that the pulpit used to be the voice of the nation, the pulp.

If the truth doesn't come from here, where is it going to come from? Hollywood, maybe the media. No, it comes from here. So that's what we do.

This type of sermon that is more topical based on what we're trying to do this weekend. And I really want to pray Paul's prayer and Ephesians that I may open my mouth boldly as I ought to speak. And they've been trying to silence the pulpits.

There's thousands of pastors doing this tomorrow and throughout the rest of the month because we're wanting to say, listen, nation, wake up. These things should not be in. The truth needs to be said and it needs to start here.

And that's really what this is all about, because I want to remind you that while we are concerned with terrorist attacks and Ebola and all those things, and rightly so, I believe there's a greater threat from the corruption within our own country. We're concerned about the outside coming in, but there's a greater threat from what's the inside that's coming out. And I came across a quote from Roy Moore, who was a former chief justice of the Supreme Court in Alabama.

Do you know why he's a former chief justice? Because he put up ten commandments and he would not take them down and they removed him from being a judge. I think it was about 12 years or so ago. And he encapsulated this perfectly.

He actually has a long, this is a lot longer. It's included in my book I wrote a few years ago entitled One Nation Above God. And you guys can grab one from the ushers on your way out if you don't have that book, because it talks about a lot of what I'm talking about tonight is in there.

And he said, while truth and law were founded on the God of all creation, man now through law denies that truth and calls it separation. No longer does man see a need for God when he's in full control, for the only truth self-evident is in the latest poll. But with man as his own master, we fail to count the cost.

Our precious freedoms vanish and our liberty is lost. Children are told they can't pray in school and they teach them evolution. When will they see that the fear of God is the only true solution? Isn't that true? You see, it's interesting, and this is I love sermons like this because it reminds me of why I'm here and God has always had voices.

God has always had voices from Genesis to Revelation. A lot of times he would call them watchmen or even women with prophetic messages, with messages warning the people God would call watchmen to say, listen, people wake up. Sometimes we need to be encouraged, sometimes we need to be built up, but sometimes we need that voice of God crying in the wilderness saying, come back, because without that voice, we don't listen.

If we go along our day, there's conviction of the soul, I know that, but without a voice saying, thus saith the Lord, many people do not turn back to God. And that's one of the points of this type of sermon, recognizing that God has always had voices. And guess what the enemy tries to do? He tries to silence that voice.

And a favorite scripture that I've quoted often, it won't be unfamiliar to many of you if you've been coming in Second Chronicles 36, 15, right before the fall of Jerusalem. The Bible says, And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by his messengers, rising them up early and sending them because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked his messengers, they despised his

word, and they scoffed at his prophets until the anger of the Lord arose against his own people until there was no remedy.

See, as much as we want to avoid that scripture, those are actually the ones we need right now in these dire times. That's what we need. We don't need Dancing with the Stars and Duck Dynasty reruns, folks, that's not going to cut it.

We need men and women on their faces seeking God again. To wake us up, God says, I sent warnings to my people, how? Through his messengers, not lightning bolts, through his messengers. And I find it so ironic that we love this verse, right? If my people who are called by my name.

But if you put that verse in context and go back to Second Chronicles six, God says, when I bring pestilence, you know what pestilence is? It's in the news right now, Ebola. When I bring pestilence, when I bring drought, when I bring famine, if my people who are called by my name will do these things, I will heal the land. So that's why I have a passion for it, because that's our only hope.

This isn't like, well, the playing the lottery. God says, do this and I'll do this, if, if, if my people, if my people do this, I will do this. And that's I actually love that because God doesn't leave us in the dark.

He tells us what to do. And that's why it's so hard to do these things. You ever wonder why these things are the hardest things to do? It's because they're the most important.

And I'm going to let me just put this disclaimer up front. I had it towards the back. I'm honestly not trying to be patriotic and glorify America.

I'm trying to glorify God and I'm trying to bring a nation and a church back to him. And in doing that, we have to talk about the foundation. We have to talk about some of these things.

And there was a Frenchman who came to our country in the 1800s and he wanted to and I've talked to you guys about this before a year ago. A lot of this isn't new, but we need a refreshment, refreshing course now and then. But he came to America and he wanted to know why were they why was it prospering? Why was it blessed of God? And his book records he didn't they don't know exactly who said this.

It's often attributed to him who wrote he wrote Democracy in America. He said that he sought for America's greatness in her in her fertile prairies and her boundless prairies and in her harbors and her gold mines and in her shores and all he sought for it everywhere. But he says it wasn't until I visited the churches of America and I heard the pulpits of flame with righteousness that I understood the secret to her success.

America is great because she is good. And if she ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great. Isn't that interesting? It wasn't until I heard the pulpits of flame with righteousness.

Now I understand why America is great in America. This is a patriotism. This is God is great.

God is great and he has built the nation. He has sustained that nation and he's calling the nation back to him. That's a very good thing, a very passionate thing that we should be passionate about.

And again, what happened in 1954 through the Johnson Amendment, pastors lost their freedom of speech on so-called political and social issues. Pastors could no longer apply God's truth to national life and policy. And the fallout has been undeniable.

Has it not? Think of what everything that's happened since 1950s and the progression going away from God and their thought is silence the pulpits and you silence the truth. So really, this type of message is a loving rebuke to both parties. I don't care if it's Democrat, Republican, whatever it is.

We've got to stop assuming that God is on our side and start wondering, are we on his? Did you catch that? That's what this is really about. God's on our side. Well, are you on his? Because that's what's important.

Everybody says God's on their side, but the proof is in the pudding. Is God on your side? Is he on our side? And this is also a loving rebuke to coward churches and pastors who keep avoiding controversial topics because we need to wake up. The church is not called to make the truth acceptable.

We're called to make it clear. That's it. So it's a wake up call to those passive churches who don't want to offend anybody or upset anybody when that's actually our calling is to make not make the truth acceptable, to make the truth crystal clear.

So my job when people leave here is to say, Lord, was your truth clear? You see the difference? If I say, was it acceptable, that means I'm going to change it, I'm going to dilute it, and then I'm going to pollute it. So if I go, was the truth acceptable, that doesn't work. Because actually, God doesn't want the truth acceptable.

He wants it clear. And then by the clarity, we can accept his truth. So that's really what the point of these types of sermons is.

It's a wake up call. I like what Martin Luther King Jr. said in a letter from Birmingham jail in 1963, we will have to repent in this generation, not merely for the hateful words and the actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people. That's that's profound.

He said, we will have to repent. You know what they were going through in the 60s with it with with this whole the civil rights issue and all these things that he stood up for? He said, we're going to have to repent in this generation. Not for the hateful words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.

See, we forget that by saying nothing, we say something. Do you realize that if I never talked about controversial issues by my silence, I'm endorsing them. When we say nothing, we say something.

It speaks volumes, actually. So what I'm going to do, I'm going to do something a little bit different. I'm going to hit on some some four hot topics.

All at once. And the reason I'm doing this is these types of messages, you know, they go out to a lot of people. A lot of people are going to hear this.

Thousands and thousands of people. And they're going to a lot of times to get emails, you know, what about this? What about that? What about this? What about that? So I like to dismantle all of those arguments right off the bat. And I want to the reason I want to dismantle a few misconceptions is because the media likes to portray us as racist, not caring about women's rights, right.

Disdaining the poor and hateful protesters. Right. I've been called all four of those when the opposite is true.

And you know what I want to tell, let's tell Al Sharpton or gay rights activists, I'll pay for it. Let's go get a lie detector to test and let's see who the racist is. Let's see who the hater is.

Really, I would I would do that without a shadow of a doubt, let's pay a non biased person to do a lie detector test. You ask me the same questions you're asking you. It's going to go up the chart.

You've got you're mislabeling us, there's there's there's there's there's misconceptions there. And the big one that at least maybe I hear a lot about it, and when I talk about our nation, I talk about how God did this and how God did that and God built it. You know, the number one issue that comes up is the mark on our nation's history with the issue of slavery.

How could how could change everything you say? And they allowed that. And I often think, well, in 100 years from now, how are they going to say that was there weren't Christians in that nation? How did they abort millions of babies? I say, hello, not all of us don't throw us in that one. Same thing with this issue.

And in that book, I mentioned One Nation Above God, I have three pages of all these quotes, all these quotes from the people who started our nation. They said things like this. This was a president of Congress, Henry Lawrence.

He said, I abhorred slavery. I was born in a country where slavery had been established by British kings and parliaments, as well as by the laws of the country ages before my existence. The Revolutionary War was a turning point in the national attitude about slavery.

Benjamin Franklin, in a letter to Dean Woodward, we have all this stuff, all this stuff is history in our archives. He confirmed that whenever the Americans had attempted to end slavery, the British government had indeed thwarted those attempts. Further confirmation that even the Virginia founders were not responsible for slavery, but actually tried to dismantle the institution.

This was provided by John Quincy Adams. He was known as the hellhound of the abolition movement. He was for he was he was pushing to end this.

And Adams said the inconsistency of the institution of slavery with the principles of the Declaration of Independence was seen and lamented by all of the southern patriots of the revolution. Now, were there people who owned slavery slaves then? Absolutely. But don't throw the baby out with the bathwater and say, well, God's your this nation was not built on God's word because of this.

That's just not true. That is a lie. And that's why they don't want us talking about it, because the truth hurts.

So there's many people fighting against this, fighting, saying we don't want this in our nation, we don't want this in our country. But many weren't, but many were. So let's look at the many that were as well and say, listen, these are God fearing men who saw the evil for what it was.

And again, I remind you, even in 50 years from now or 100 years, 200 years, 200 years might upset those people who believe in the rapture. But let's just say 100 years, right? I'm going to study on that. I'm going to teach on that someday.

I'm caught in the middle, so that's a whole different topic. But in 100 years from now, right, you see, how could you guys allow you weren't Christians in America 100 years ago, you'd allow the aborting of millions of babies. You're not Christians.

What would we say? Wake up, don't we're not the we're not the we're not the the legislation that put all of that into effect. Don't blame us. So the same thing fits with this issue of slavery.

And the next, of course, I get this all the time. You're against women's rights. You're against women's rights.

And I say, when is murdering a child the right? When ever? Never, Thomas Jefferson, the first and primary duty of government is to protect innocent human life. We are calling good evil and evil good. Abraham Lincoln, nobody has the freedom to choose to do what's morally wrong.

Are you catching this? This is this is foundational stuff. That's why they're going after the foundation, because you take out the foundation. Guess what? The whole structure comes crumbling to the bottom.

I don't know if you ever listen to John Stone Street or read his articles, very good stuff, prolific author. He wrote this. I had to actually went online and pulled it from his website.

He said the tried and true pro-choice label, meaning for abortion, it's out of vogue now. So the days when abortion was supposed to be safe, legal and rare are gone. Now, abortion rights activists are turning the so-called procedure into art, film and even spoken word poetry.

I'm hoping I can read this next part. A person by the name of Leila Josephine joined the party with her new video entitled, I think she was a she. Josephine, who had an abortion as a teenager, feels no shame over her decision.

In fact, she says she thinks her aborted child would have agreed. Well, talk about a decadent society. I would have supported my daughter's right to choose to choose a life for herself, a path for herself.

I would have died for that right, just like she died for mine. I'm sorry, but you came at the wrong time. I heard that on the radio and I pulled my truck over, I said, God, help us.

Really, God, help us. Can you believe what I'm reading? And then he quotes somebody else and they asked, would anyone think that these comments of a sane woman, if the baby were outside the womb when killed rather than inside, would a mom's right to choose Trump, a toddler's right to live? Celebrating death like this exposes the pro-abortion movement for what it really is. And I hope people are paying attention.

I mean, this is this is this is. This is a decadent, sick, perverted society that we live in, and this is what's flowing out of that. Psalms 139, 13, for you created me in my innermost being or for you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb.

If all the names of all the babies who have been aborted since 1970s were placed on a monument, much like the Vietnam Wall, it's been estimated that that monument would span over thirty five miles. The womb is no longer the safest place, but one of the most dangerous. It's uncomfortable, isn't it? That's why they don't want us to talk about these things.

You talk about those things, pastor, you might lose your tax exempt status. Why, if I don't talk about these things, I have to face Almighty God. And you might say you might.

Why mention this? Why mention the shame? Let me tell you why. Here's exactly why. Because leaders in our country play a role in our national sins.

They either lead us to repentance or they lead us to judgment. I don't care what your opinion is of the current president, but he's either leading us to repentance or he's leading us to judgment. Don't get upset at me.

Get upset at him or presidents past or presidents coming or leadership or Congress or Senate or the judicial. Don't let him get me started in the Supreme Court. All these leaders either lead the nation to repentance or they lead the nation to judgment.

That's just that biblical truth. That's why this is important. Proverbs 29, 12, when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice.

But when the wicked rule, the people mourn. And scripture commands us to select people. Exodus 18, 21 told Moses select leaders of fear, God, men of truth, hating covetousness from Moses to the kings.

God said, put these kings that will love my law, put these judges over my people who will love my law. God wants. So it begs the question, does God not want godly leadership? See, that's that's you know, if you take this argument full circle and say, Shane, you shouldn't talk about these things.

Bring judgment. The church needs to be purified. Really? I don't want to live next to your house.

What needs to be said is that God wants godly leaders, God wants godly leadership. If you don't believe that, you'll have to prove why he wouldn't. Now he'll bring them in for judgment.

God would often use ungodly leaders to judge his people. And you might think I enjoy talking about these things. I don't.

I don't like looking at the news. I don't like the direction of our country. It's the last thing I want to do.

But sometimes we need to address these things in order for change to occur. We can no longer hide behind the excuse. I don't want to get involved.

As citizens, we are given the privilege for now to place people in positions of leadership. Whether we like it or not, we are involved. Here's here's the kicker.

Millions are not registered to vote and millions of registered voters stay at home. We'll stand in line to see a movie, but we won't stand in line to vote and elect leaders who affect the direction of our country. One in seven Americans think they're registered to vote, but aren't.

And this really isn't a sermon on voting whatsoever. It's a sermon on showing you that we have apathy in our culture. We are apathetic to leadership.

We love our Dancing with the Stars and Duck Dynasty and mint chocolate ice cream, our Starbucks. And we're so caught up in this world as we're going to hell in a handbasket. That's why the Bible talks about loving the world when people love the world.

And we try to stay busy with things, right? Oh, I'm going to ignore. I'm going to ignore. I mean, I just hearing the guys on.

There's nothing to worry about. The guy in Texas with Ebola. It's not that.

Really? Well, look at what it's doing in Africa. And if God says it's going to do something, you better watch out. Have you heard the bubonic plague? Have you heard of pestilence destroying people? But we just.

Oh, it's no big deal. They'll contain it like I would pray to God. Lord, it's no big deal for you.

Would you contain it? Because if God allows something, there's nothing that the CDC, there's nothing the government can do. Nothing. Nothing, nothing.

Actually, they'll be hurting the plans of God because they think there's no God. And they think they're God. And that's why we need messages like this.

Could you imagine if you turned on Christian TV tomorrow and heard this type of stuff? You'd have people across our landscape falling on their knees and faces before God and repenting, but they're not. All they're going to hear is good things and encouraging things. As we head in this direction.

I've talked to pastors before about reading the story I wrote about this girl with abortion. I would have died for your right. She died for mine.

I'm sorry, but you came at a wrong time. They say, Shane, why are you reading that stuff? Don't read, don't, man, you're going to, you're going to make the people upset. You're going to bring a kind of downcast to the service.

What we don't, you don't do that. So really don't speak the truth because we're afraid of the opinions of others is what it boils down to. And here's another favorite one.

And again, I want to, I want to just break these misconceptions down because then I think people's hearts are open to understand a little bit more. Christians don't care about the poor, right? We don't care about poverty, really. You know, the government wants to help all this, the entitlements we call it where the government's helping everybody.

And why, why, why are you Christians against a lot of that? Well, number one, we have to realize we should all strive to defend the weak and the fatherless, maintain the rights of the poor and the oppressed and deliver them from the hand of the wicked that Psalms 82. But here's why the church has an issue with it. The church, when we do it at a local level, we can determine if the poverty is created by laziness or genuine need.

You see the difference there? The Bible says, if you don't work, you don't eat. But what the government will do is they'll just billions of dollars. Anybody that qualifies, here you go, here you go.

So hold on. You're giving a lot of money to a lot of people don't need it. You are actually creating a culture of entitlement, a culture of laziness, people that can work hard and do things.

They're just going to sit back generation after generation and collect money from the government. That's why we have an issue. We want to help the poor.

Those who really need that, but you can't, you can't just actually, that's not biblical. That is not biblical what they're doing. The Bible never says to just give it to whoever wants it or qualify.

They're going to doctor this or doctor that. And they'll just, no, it says work, eat. You can't work.

If you're truly in need, then the church is to help. So that's where there's a big division there. And especially in different parties, right? Republican, Democrat, they're always fighting over this.

This is one of the issues. And the parties need to both realize that the government is not the best entity to handle this issue. The church wants to help people work hard.

We want to help build esteem and worth, but many who receive assistance don't need the assistance. We are creating a lazy independent culture. Now, am I saying that for everybody? Of course not.

I think there's some good systems in place and we have to help people. I mean, nobody hearing me is going to think that, but those who have agendas want to twist things. Of course, I'm saying we should help poor the poor.

What do you think we do all week? We spend time visiting the hospital homes. We take to spend time visiting people, praying for those who are dying in the sick. We give money, we give gas cards, we give food cards, all types of things to those in need.

That's what we do. So it's funny how Hollywood wants the government to do it so they don't have to do it. And then the people are actually doing and helping.

They're getting, they're being chastised because they're against the government helping. Isn't that, that just does not make any sense to me. So we have to dismantle that issue about poverty too and how we handle it.

Because anytime the government says we have money, do you want it? Do you think people are going to say yes or no? Of course, of course. But now it's like trying to turn, turn around the Titanic. I don't have answers because people say, well, then what do you do? I don't know.

It should have started years ago, but if you take it to God leaders, he can fix it. He can fix it. And I've also seen in our recently, a lot of people, you know, it is hard to get work.

So I understand that as well. But it's interesting when I talk to people, you know, I'm looking for this kind of job. I have a master's degree.

I'm not going to do this. I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to do this.

Hey, if you need work, you just say, Lord, put me to work somewhere. Remember I dug, I dug up septic tanks for a year. I lay pipeline and all these things that I want to do that.

No way. I ran from that. But when you say, Lord, I'll work wherever you want.

He said, okay, I'll put you here. I'll put you there. But now I have a master's degree.

I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to dig ditches. I'm not going to do something that's nine to five.

I need to be home by 12. I'm not. So we have all these tight parameters.

Then we say, I can't get a job. If you ask God, he will open that opportunity. I guarantee it might take waiting.

It might take a lot of waiting, but at least your heart's in the right position because by doing that, you say, God, here's what I'm going to do. You approve it versus saying, God, where do you want me at? Where can you bring in the income? When he opens the door, watch out. Watch out because he can open the gates.

I just think it's biblical to work hard. It's biblical to work. The Bible says if you don't work, you don't even eat.

So I think that's something we have to look at as Christians. We should work hard. The next misconception, of course, you know, I have to touch on this one is that that I'm a very hateful person because I'm against gay marriage.

The thing is really, I'll just be transparent with you. I'm not going to talk a lot about this because I have another sermon entitled same sex attraction, balancing truth and grace. But we tremble Christians tremble because we compare our laws with God's truth and we tremble because we see what the Bible says and we see the culture going the opposite direction.

Who do you think is going to win? Think about who's going to win the cultural war. Is God going to go home? Gosh, I didn't. Is that what God's going to do? Of course not.

But why do we act like that? Christians have no, no, no gut for truth. This, this issue of gay marriage is a lie from the pit of hell. It's destroying our families and it's destroying our children.

Again, if the truth doesn't come from the pulpit, where is it going to come from? John Stone Street again, he said to judge by media coverage, the legalization of same sex marriage is good. Pictures of happy couples kissing and otherwise celebrating leave the impression that only the only people who are unhappy about same sex marriage is the, are the bigots and the grumps us all. Well, Jana Darnell would beg to differ.

Seven years ago, her husband of 10 years told her that he was gay and that he wanted a divorce. As she wrote in the public discourse, these words in an instant, the world that I had known and loved, the life we had built together was shattered. She tried to persuade him to stay and work through their problems and fight for their marriage.

But as she writes, my voice, my desires, my needs, and those of our two young children no longer matter to him. We had become disposable because he had embraced one tiny word that had become his entire identity. Being gay trumped commitment, vows, responsibility, faith, fatherhood, marriage, friends, and community.

And adding insult to injury, her soon to be ex-husband sought primary custody of the children. While he had to settle for shared custody, this still meant that their children, regardless of their desires had to become props in the campaign for same sex marriage. So in USA Today, in its cheerleading article for same sex marriage, it ran a photo section of her ex-husband, his partner and her children without her consent or even her note or even told her.

Darnell wrote comment, commentators explained how beautiful this gay family was and congratulated my ex-husband and his new partner on this family that they had created. She continues, there is no, there's, there is a significant person missing from those pictures, the mother and the abandoned wife. That gay family could not exist without me.

It says this is a heart crushing. It's a much needed reminder that behind all the celebration we see in the media, there's often real suffering and heartache that goes unreported and even unnoticed. And that's just one story.

That's just one, that's just one thing that's happening. But the media again, wants to make it like we're grumpy and upset. And it's just, it's not, it's not a life of joy.

It's not a life of peace. There's not, there's not when you go against God's way, God's rule for the family, it does not result in peace. It results in misery.

It results in, in, in, in difficulty because you're fighting against God. So three, three things I'll be out of your hair. The foundation, here's what's happening.

The foundation is what everything is built on. The foundation and the pillars of truth are being removed. And Psalms 11 13 says, if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Now, let me just take a minute and talk about these foundations.

Jesus said, your word is truth. And I find it so interesting that so many people love Jesus, right? Good teacher, this great guy, but he said, God's word is truth. They, they, they reject the truth, but love Jesus.

But he said, his, your word is truth. Alexander Hamilton, signer of the constitution wrote the law, the law dictated by God himself is of course, superior and obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe and all countries at all times.

No human laws are of any validity of contrary to this. What about the Illinois Supreme court? 1883, our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon the embodied teachings of the redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise.

In this sense and to this extent, our civilizations and our institutions are empathetically Christian. William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, the origin, the origination and descent of all human power is from God first to terrify evildoer. Secondly, to cherish those who do well.

Government seems to be, to me, to be a part of religion itself. And of course, the famous quote, John Adams, signer of the doctor, president, second president of the United States, our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is whole, only wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

Benjamin Rush, signer of the declaration of independence. I do not believe that the constitution was the offspring of inspiration, but I am as perfectly satisfied that the union of the states in its form and adoption is as much the work of divine providence as any of the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testament. So that's the foundation.

And if I could take up a whole sermon talking about the foundation of what the nation was built upon. Actually, when they were forming the nation, there was a man called John Locke. He wrote two treaties on civil government.

And he referenced the Bible 1500 times to show the proper use of government, the separation of powers, executive legislation, judicial comes from Ezra. It comes from, I'm not sure if it's Ezra, but it comes from one of the biblical texts to separate where God says, I'll be your judge. I'll be your king.

I'll be your lawgiver. The tax exempt status comes from Ezra. The lawyers in the 1800s were trained by a book called Blackstones, William Blackstone's Commentaries of the Laws of New England.

And in those laws, he referenced the Bible and all these things. So the Bible was the foundation. That was the foundation.

And now we remove it and we wonder what's going on. Where's God at? What's going on? Why is everything going haywire? Because we're removing the foundation. So the structure is going to come down.

That's just, that's the truth. So here's the problem. That's the foundation.

Here's the problem. We have lost the fear of the Lord. We used to tremble.

Now we mock him. Isn't it interesting? In churches, we used to tremble at God's presence. We used to fear God.

Now people just mock him and put Jesus on their T-shirt or bumper sticker. There's no fear of the Lord. I remember recently when Robin Williams passed away, something came out of the media.

They text to him as if he can read, he can't. But it said, Jeannie, you're now free. And then text to Joan Rivers after she died.

Now you're relaxing in a recliner with the cabana boy bringing you champagne. That's what our culture thinks of God in heaven. Joan Rivers is now relaxing in a recliner with a cabana boy bringing her champagne.

People are not fearing and trembling God. They're mocking him. This is mockery.

But don't misunderstand. As a pastor, I know that the problem is spiritual. We cannot deny our primary responsibility.

My primary responsibility is not voting and politics and all these things. My primary responsibility is to encourage people to turn to Christ as their Lord and Savior. This is how America will truly change from the inside out.

The number one problem in America is not a political problem. It's a spiritual problem called sin. So we have to address that.

And the primary goal of the church is not to become a political movement, but a spiritual influence. So that's the problem. What's the solution? That's why we're here, and that's why we're starting the Monday study.

And that's why we have this up. This is a solution. If I bring pestilence, God says, if I bring drought, if I bring famine, when all these calamities come upon you, or when it looks like you're going in that direction, if you just look to me, if my people who are called by my name, let me just read it.

If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven. I will forgive their sins and I will heal their land. It's interesting.

It doesn't start. Stop there. Now my eyes shall be open and my ears attentive unto the prayers that are made in this place.

Now, I've just briefly talked about a few of these. We're going to talk about them on Monday, but humble, humble themselves. You know, folks, it's not a, it's not an accident.

That the process of renewal, revival, restoration begins with humility. I would have to say that this is the number one problem in people's lives. Including mine.

We have so many excuses. Our marriage isn't good. We have an excuse.

I made a mistake. I have an excuse. We have excuses for everything.

Do you know what excuses really reveal in my own heart? Pride. Pride. Pride.

And so God says, if you want renewal, if you want to come back to me, you must humble yourself. And this isn't like just, oh yeah, I guess Shane's right. This is saying, Lord, I'm totally dependent on you.

I've been wrong. I'm an arrogant man. Shane, you say that? Oh yeah, sometimes.

Very healthy. Because that realization draws me to the cross, draws me to the need, my need. And when you admit that, then you humble yourself.

And then from that humility, you're filled with the Spirit of God. That's all humility is, is acknowledging, Lord, you're over me. I've made mistakes in these areas.

Lord, would you come back to me? Pride must die in you or nothing of heaven can live in you. Did you catch that? Andrew Murray, in his book, Surrender. I dare you to read that book.

You probably won't get through the first chapter. Pride must die in you or nothing of heaven can live in you. The humble he teaches his ways.

I could do a whole sermon on this topic because I see it in my own life, in the life of so many people. We're so prideful. We don't see it, though.

That's a problem. That's a deception of pride. The pride of your heart has deceived you.

Old Testament says that. The pride of your heart has deceived you. We've talked a lot about James 1 and 22.

If you hear my word but don't do it, you'll live in deception. Okay, we got that down pretty good, but we forget this one. The pride of your heart has deceived you.

So I can go through my marriage being mean to my spouse because of pride. I can go and pastor and be mean because of pride. We can go to our workplace and be mean because of pride.

God says, draw nigh unto me and say, I don't need to draw nigh unto you. I'm already good with God. Pride, pride stops everything.

The pride of your heart has deceived you. So if we truly want God, I don't care if this reaches the nation. I don't care if this reaches the radio.

I just want 100 people on their faces before God, humbling themselves and saying, Lord, we need you. I'm a prideful, arrogant man, and I need you on a daily basis. God says, good.

Now the vessel's ready. Now the vessel's ready. Now I can move through that vessel.

Once you humble yourself, then he says, now you pray. What? Now you can pray. Can you imagine how I could pray now after that? But we do the opposite.

We get up and we pray real quick and we go scurry to work. Why is God not answering my prayer? Why does my life seem dead? Why does God seem distant? Why does shame upset me every other week? Why? I pray, I pray. No, humble yourself first.

Humble yourself first and then pray. And that's where, that's where the power comes from. Remember, Jesus said, if my people pray, and this is why I joke about a lot, but I'm also serious about, you know, everybody's dancing with the stars, Duck Dynasty reruns, ice cream on the couch.

There comes a time when you need to turn that off and seek God. I mean, what's it going to take? We're all in this routine of a quick little prayer life. To get a deep prayer life, you've got to make some major changes.

We have to, because God says, how bad do you want it? My house shall be called a house of preaching. No, my house shall be called a house of prayer. Jesus said that.

I was reminded this week too, when Martin Luther prayed, the church was transformed. When John Knox prayed, Scotland was reborn. When John Wesley prayed, America was revived.

When George Whitfield prayed, nations were changed. When D.L. Moody prayed, America was repented. When moms pray, their children, the prodigal comes home.

When dads pray, the family's restored. When we pray, we move the hand of God. And this isn't just a quick little prayer, folks.

That's why things aren't being answered. That's why the nation is not turning around. That's why the church is not reborn.

Five-minute prayers are not biblical. They're wonderful now and then. I do them a lot.

But there comes a time and a place where you've got to spend time on your knees or on your face or on your bed, on your couch, praying to God. You give Cinemark two hours and God two minutes. It's not going to work.

It's not going to work. I don't mean to alarm. I don't mean to upset.

But I do mean to convict. You show me your prayer life, and I'll show you your spirituality. The majority of people we counsel that are having problems, and you say, tell me about your devotional life.

Tell me about your prayer life. I don't have one. And what's discouraging for me is they'll come to church and go, boy, that sermon really got me.

Yeah? You're going to say that for the next year? When is it really going to get you and you're going to make changes? Because when it really gets you, you make changes. I don't want to hear you say that. I

want to see your heart do it.

That's the whole point of preaching. Don't go, oh. No, the whole point and the power of preaching is what you do when you leave here.

That's how I gauge the fruit. If I have another person come up and say, oh, that just hit me to the heart, and then I have their spouse call and say, you hit me last night. We can't have both of those happening, folks.

It's one or the other. Either it hits you to the heart, and the heart changes. A prepared heart is better than a prepared sermon.

That's so true. A prepared heart is better than a prepared sermon. How do I get my heart prepared for this? Exegetical studies? Homiletic resources? Listening to sermons online? They all help, but it's a direct reflection of my prayer life.

That plain and simple, plain and simple. Sometimes I'll show the elders and deacons. I don't say it a lot because we don't want to teach.

Toot our own horn, but sometimes I think it's important to say, this week from Germany and from Sweden, all these emails coming of people being changed. Pastor Shane, you speak the truth. It's not me.

It's a prayer closet where the vessel has to humble himself. I have to empty myself. Don't say, good job, Shane.

Say, good job, God, and get in the prayer closet. That's the point, is prayer moves the hand of God. Prayer empowers the vessel.

Prayer is everything. That's why many people avoid it. So I just want to ask you tonight, what's it going to take to finally change this around? How many more Saturdays are you going to come and hear the same thing? Yeah, I got to do that.

Got to do that. Yeah, he told me that in 2010, 2011, 2012. What's it going to take? The state of our nation, the state of our church, the state of our family should foster the motivation.

That should be motivation enough. I mean, I love that saying. You know, it's not in the Bible, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

I've noticed that God doesn't like a lot of good intentions. He likes a lot of good application. That's what gets the job done.

Intentions doesn't get the job done, application. You know, good intentions, right? Yeah, I should do that. I thought about, I should, I should, I should.

I would go buy some duct tape, put it right here, and just do. Just do. We should buy a roll of duct tape, right? And have that be a, you know, kind of our motto.

Just go home and do it, because that's where the power is. That's where the application comes in. And then, of course, and pray and seek.

I've talked about this a lot, you know, seeking with losing your child, and what that meant in the Hebrew language. And when you, you know, you lose something, and that happens sometimes at our house. You know, I can't find my little one half-year-old, and you're like, you know, a nice little afternoon turned into, where's Kylie? I don't hear anymore, do you? No, did she go in the backyard? Where'd she go? And everything changes.

But that's what parallels with seeking God. It's really about priorities. Look at our priorities.

All you do is look at your checkbook, look at your calendar. I'll tell you what you seek. It's about seeking God, rearranging our priorities to seek Him.

Listen, our marriages aren't gonna get better. Our families aren't gonna be restored unless we seek Him and realign our priorities, humble ourselves, and pray. And then the last point, I love what the Benson commentary said on this.

It is profound. Commenting about this Scripture. They must humble themselves under His hand, they must pray for the removal of the judgment, and they must seek His face with favor, and yet all of this will not be sufficient unless they turn from their wicked ways and return to Him from whom they have revolted.

Isn't that interesting? People pray, and they appear to seek God, and they say, I'm humble, I'm so humble. But if we don't turn from our wicked ways, folks, we're just playing games. We're just going through the motions.

That's all we're doing. We have to turn from those wicked ways, repent. Now my eyes shall be opened and my ears attended to the prayer in this place if my people do these things, if my people do these things.

And I'll end with what I often end with, that repentance is our only hope. Repentance is our only hope. Folks, we need to start praying as well because prayerlessness in the pulpit is leading to apostasy in the church.

Prayerlessness in the pew is leading to broken lives. Prayerlessness in men is leading to breakdown of the family, and prayerlessness in Washington is leading to the breakdown of society. Everything stands or falls on prayer, humility, seeking God, and then repenting.

If you're going through something right now, I guarantee that's probably the secret to success. If you're upset at your marriage or this or for your singles, you haven't found the right person or you're dating somebody who you know is the right person, but you'll win them later, right? Totally ignoring all the scriptures about unequally yoking different things. We get ourselves in our own messes.

And isn't it wonderful God doesn't say, I told you so, because I do that. I told you so. I told you this was gonna happen.

God says, okay, you're stuck. Here's how you get out. Here's how you get out.

Return to me. Return to me and repent. So I wanna throw that out there.

If you're just here visiting and you're gonna come back again, that's a good thing. But if you're upset at this message, we often say it's probably because you need to hear this message. Many times when we're upset, it means God is convicting.

So if you've never been in a right relationship with God, you've never repented of your sin, and you've never been able to call Jesus both Savior and Lord. He's my Savior and Lord knows he's my Lord because I need him. I've repented of my sin.

If you've never done that, guess what? That's why I'm here, to encourage you to turn to him, turn your life over to him. You don't need to say a prayer. You don't need to come forward, but your heart has to repent.

You have to say, Lord, I'm sorry. I've been playing church. I've been playing Christian.

I've been going through the motions, but I truly repent tonight. And he will hear that prayer. Or if you're like a lot of other people, Christians have been caught in this lukewarm life and this destructive life.

God says the same thing, repent, repent. And also, guess what? He calls all of us to repent for the sins of our nation. We have the blood of innocent children on our hands.

We do. And God says, repent. Look at Nehemiah.

He repented for his people. And his people, Lord, we repent. Daniel repented for all those people.

Corporately, it's very healthy to say, Lord, we are so sorry. Lord, we repent. Would you restore us? Would you visit us again? We might not see results tomorrow.

We might not see it next week. We might not see results. We might be seeing the decline of a nation that will not be turned around.

But we're not supposed to go down with the Titanic. We're supposed to be fighting and pulling it back up. And I know God, apart from a national awakening, I don't have a lot of hope.

But if God visits his people, revives his people, there is great hope. And the only way to do that is to reconnect those four things. Humble yourself, seek him, pray, and turn from your wicked ways.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/-DGpvyWlftQ.mp4>

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