



## 2018 October Sermon Series "Until the Whole World Hears"

October 21<sup>st</sup> - Message #2: Our Country

### Opening Video: **We Are the Church Empty Pews**

Getting the Nod

Showing Graphic Slide of Series at the Beginning

**What is our salvation for?** As you all know, this month is designated as Outreach month and our theme is "Until the Whole World Hears". Our verse of the month is Acts 1:8... NKJV | Ac 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

As Randy Young and I talked about this month, we concluded that the four topics we needed to address were our **Commission, Our Community, Our Country, and the Continents**. That's what Acts 1:8 emphasizes. **We are to all be witnesses to our families, church, and the rest of the world.**

We have endeavored to be a church that understands and acts upon this commission. Our logo reflects it. Our motto shows it. Our vision is saturated by it. Our finances have gone towards it.

In fact, I have some pictures from several of our recent investments as a church family to remind us of our desire to touch our world...

**(Pictures from our own Rose Avenue Community Center and Food Pantry)**

**(A video from Church on Como and their Drug Recovery and Sex-trafficking programs)**

**(Pictures from Haiti and Living Waters for Haiti)**

**(Pictures from Dominica and the repairs on our pastor's homes)**

**Transition: As you can see, Heritage is trying to be as intentional about being an Acts 1:8 church for the glory of God alone.** And today our emphasis is on our country and what we can do to impact it for Jesus Christ. And again, I ask... **What is our salvation for? Let's look at two German College students for some perception...**

Connecting Us



**Share the Illustration of Hans and Sophie Scholl:** Hans and Sophie Scholl were brother and sister at the time of Hitler's reign of terror upon the Jews. Sophie and Hans were just in their 20's when they led the underground resistance known as the "White Rose". From June 1942 until their arrest in February of 1943, they led a group of University of Munich students in an anti-Nazi movement by distributing pamphlets on campus... as well as surrounding communities. They were raised in a nominally religious German home... but came to Christ in a profound way on the university campus. While many Germans, including Christians chose to do nothing and remain silent... Hans and Sophie were driven to oppose Hitler and the German Reich. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1943, they were arrested. And within 4 days they were executed by guillotine. When asked by the chief justice why they would do such a thing, Sophie said, "Somebody, after all, had to..." They agreed with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's vision, **"We are Christians, and we are Germans; therefore, we are responsible for Germany!"**

**Their burden was for their nation. If you were to ask them what their salvation was for... they would've said for Christ and country!!! Shouldn't we feel the same? We are Christians. We are Americans. So, we are responsible for America.**

**What is our salvation for?** Luke, when writing the book of Acts, made the answer clear...

**To save us; and to send us. That includes our country!!**

***God empowers His people... where He plants His people***

To prove this, look at the two specific passages for today's message...

NKJV | 2 Ch 7:14 **If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.**

- The Hebrew word for **"HEAL"** here can also mean **"TO RESTORE FAVOR"**
- God wants His people to turn to Him completely... so He can heal THEIR LAND!! Wherever they are! **This is a promise for God's family... not geography!!**
- Thank God that is true... or else we could not claim this promise!!!

NLT | 1 Timothy 2:1-2 **I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.**

- The Greek word for prayer is **proseuche**, meaning to have a place set apart to offer prayers!
- We're not only called to pray seriously for kings and presidents and the leaders of our nation; but seriously for everyone around us.
- And the word for **"live peacefully"** is better rendered **"Lead Peacefully"!!!**
- **This is not just a call for DIGNITY... but to IDENTITY!!**
- We are to **not only to PRAY for others...** but also **PERSUADE others through God's love.**

**Transition:** Now, how does all this apply to how we reach our nation as Acts 1:8 calls us to?

## God's Take

### Reflecting on Our Nation:

#### 1. Let's remember our roots.

- At the beginning America had a solid foundation. It wasn't perfect, but the foundation was rock solid. Christianity was the foundation of our national identity!
- **Look at the First Congress...** May 17, 1776 Congress appointed a day of fasting and prayer for the colonies.
- **Look at the final words of George Washington** at his inauguration: **"So, help me God!"**
- **Consider the words of John Adams** as he said, **"For democracy to work, the majority of the people have to be religious and moral at their core, or it falls apart."**

- **Abraham Lincoln clarified our greatest need as a nation...**February 11, 1861, Abraham Lincoln acknowledged our **dependence on the Bible**.
- **Without hesitation we know that** our leaders were constantly in the Word of God. They were guided by prayer. They were resolved to make this nation a Christian nation.
- **It wasn't just the people who honored God back then;** the institutions did as well. In fact, **106 of the first 108 schools** in America were founded on the Christian faith. Did you know that Harvard and Yale began as ministry training schools—schools to train preachers?
- **In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt said:** After a week of perplexing problems, it does so rest my soul to come into the house of the Lord and to sing and to mean it, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.” My great joy and great glory in occupying this exalted position as president of the nation is that I am enabled to preach the practical moralities of the Bible to my fellow countrymen and to hold up Christ as the hope and Savior of the world.
- **I think it's fair to conclude that our country is built on a firm foundation!**

## 2. **Let's acknowledge the battle.**

- But let's fast-forward to the present. While our foundation was solid, through time cracks have formed, we've gone from being a God-fearing people who wanted religious freedom, who knew that God was sovereign and important, to a nation where we can hardly talk about God for fear of offending someone.
- **Our Constitution is under attack.** The recent supreme court justice proceedings are just a reflection of how there is a spiritual battle-line that is being drawn on the moral and ethical laws of this land.
- **Our Christian practices are under attack.** **Ronald Reagan said, “If we forget that we are a nation under God, then we are a nation gone under.”** Not only have prayer along with Christian apparel in many schools been banned across the country during school days; but even the relativism has overtaken us...
- **Relativism describes our culture.** Relativism is a sliding scale. What's right for you may not necessarily be right for me. According to relativism, any belief system is fine just as long as you are sincere. **But, the majority of our forefathers believed in absolute truth,** but that's not as “in vogue” in this updated America. Jesus Christ said in John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

**Illustration of First Graders:** In 2011, in the Cape Cod area, the school board unanimously passed a policy for elementary students—I want to make certain you heard that—for elementary students to be able to distribute free condoms at school. It even requires that school officials keep it confidential, so parents will never know if their child has requested them. Unbelievable! The school superintendent says, “Well, the intent is to protect kids.” The

school board committee chairman says, “We know that sexual experimentation is not limited to an age, so how does one put an age on it?” As I read that article, for some reason I couldn’t help but think of Jesus Christ’s words in Matthew 18:6: “But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” The president of the Massachusetts Family Institute blasted the policy as an absolute push to promote sexual promiscuity. He said, “This is the theatre of the absurd to hand condoms to first-graders. It is a gross violation of parents’ rights.”

**Transition:** Let’s now look at some suggestions on how to restore our nation to the place God intends for us to be...

### Taking It Home

#### 3. Let’s believe God can restore our nation.

- You may be thinking, “Why did we spend so much time on the history and the foundation of our country? Well, I’ll tell you why. **You can’t restore something if you don’t know how it was built.** And at the heart of the building of America—of this nation—was God’s Word, prayer, and faith.
- **So how do we restore our nation to its Christian roots and to that level of moral fiber and character?** Well, we need **godly people to run for office.** We need Christians to **register to vote.** Then when the election rolls around, we need **Christians who will actually go to the polls** and exercise their right to vote. But it goes further than that. Christians must look at those issues where the Bible speaks and **allow God’s Word to guide their choices.**
- **We need to empty ourselves of idolatrous ambition.** NKJV | Php 2:3 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*
- **We must penetrate the darkness with our prayers.** NLT | Lk 1:79 (We are...) *to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.”*
- **Fight the temptation of casual Christianity.** NLT | Re 2:4 *“But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first!*
- **Have faith in the power of God.** (Acts 1:8)

**Transition:** We need to be salt and light again. We need to become a lighthouse again. Its what we were saved for. **We are Christians. We are Americans. So, we are responsible for America.**

### Relevant Conclusion

**Closing Prayer by Abraham Lincoln in 1863:** *It was the third year of the Civil War. There were 4 million African Americans slaves... and our country was divided. The Emancipation Proclamation was introduced by Lincoln to end the slavery and fix the divide. And this was a prayer Lincoln offered during those horrific months.*

“Lord, we have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten you, O God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God who made us.

It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

And, Lord, here today in 2018 may we do the same? May we say it and may we mean it? We ask for it in the powerful name of Jesus Christ, the only One able to turn this nation around and to reach the lost among us. Amen.

(Sermon adapted partially from a message by Doug Stone)