

"AMERICA'S GREATNESS"

Matt. 25:14

I come to you to speak about greatness of this nation. In our practicing Christianity and attempt to communicate with God, his ways and his blessings, and his directions, we know that Jesus Christ is our example.

"Queen Victoria handed a Bible to an ambassador from a heathen land and said, tell your ruler that this book is the secret of England's greatness." It was true and history proves that righteousness exalteth a nation. We must then ask the question, why are God's words and laws so rejected. Defied and ridiculed by some.

This past week, the leader of our nation stood with his hand upon a Bible. And made a solemn pledge to defend the Constitution of this country. And in his special speech, he mentioned what we needed.

Calvin Coolidge said we do not need more physical development. We need more spiritual development. We do not need more intellectual power - we need more spiritual power. We do not need more knowledge, we need more character. We do not need more government, we need more culture. We do not need more laws, we need more religion. We do not need more of the things that are seen - we need more of the things that are unseen."

And I believe that God expects more of us than just the things that we have been doing. I believe that he expects us to use our God-given abilities, God-given energies and talents, to help the welfare of man around the world. I think he has given us the greatest challenge on earth. That we might be a people who solves their problems.

We happen to live in the greatest nation of the world. Now it is not anything that we have built. It is not anything that we necessarily deserve. We are Americans and this is our heritage. Because of the great traditions of our fore-fathers.

Perhaps this can best be illustrated in the matter in which the tests of life are given. When the Bible so relates the use of our talents. In this Parable, in Matt. 25:14 - Jesus tells the King to call the three servants before him. To one servant he said, I will give you five talents. To another, two talents. To another, one. I am going out into a far country - not on a long journey. But I asked you to be stewards of the talents that I give you.

The King came back many months later. He called the one that he had given five talents. That one had taken those five talents and developed them into ten. The other one that he had given two talents, had developed them into four. And he said, to them, well done thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things -- I will make you master over many. Enter into thy kingdom.

The man that had one talent reported that he protected his talent -- he buried his talent. Now he was prepared to give his talent back to the King. The King said, I expected you to do something with it. And he turned to his guards and told them to take this one man's talent and give it to the man that had developed ten talents. And he said to him, to those that have - it shall be given. To him that hath not, even that which he hath not, shall be taken away.

You know all through life we can look at our talents. For God gave us a large assortment of them. He gave you arms, hands, feet, and a head to use. If you put your arm in a sling for a year - and then you take it out of the sling, you'd probably

find that you were crippled. And you would have a shriveled arm.

Now they tell us if you go down into Mammouth Cave, you find fish that had bright strong eyes. But in the dark caves, they had become totally blind. We have found through life, if we do not use our talents, we'll soon lose them and the usefulness.

Today as we think about the talents that we have as Americans -- this great nation that we are a part of. Our forefathers had a great dream for us. And they had a great dream that no other nation in history had. A nation of liberty, a nation of freedom, a nation of opportunity. They challenged us with this.

Today, there are those around the world that question America. That say America is now on the decline. They are no longer one nation under God. Indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Perhaps in many ways they are right.

We have become a nation concerned, a nation of worry, a nation of hand-wringers, we have become a nation of inflation. And we have recession and a high interest rate. We have had problems overseas.

But let us say this to you today -- that this nation has always had problems. Why just a few years ago it was Watergate. Before that it was the Vietnam war. And on it goes. But this has been a nation of strength, a nation of committment. And we have survived the crises of the past and I am satisfied we will in the future.

I think perhaps we ought to go and re-discover America -- how did it come to be. What was the sacrifice. What was the committment of this great nation of ours.

If we study history, we would find that it is based on the principle that would build any organization -- whether it be a football team, whether it be a business, or an Army. I think you would find the leadership and the program pretty much alike. Whether it was Alexander the Great, George Patton, or George Washington - the first leader of our nation.

Notice some of the things that have taken place.

As in the Parable

First, you must have a unity of purpose. We had a unity of purpose of this nation. And any successful organization has to be together in their goals and in their unity.

We must have discipline and self-sacrifice. That we cannot overlook. We do not have to stop every time and count the cost. That has built this great nation after 200 years. We have been a nation that has been willing to fight wars to preserve it. But also, to develop power and success in this manner. And then, third.

Third, we must have vision. Our forefathers had vision. That charter and Constitution that they wrote some 200 years ago - we have not had to change in all of these years.

Herbert Hoover in the dark days when he took over this nation. Of trying to balance a budget and trying to get things moving. On his inauguration day, March 4, 1929, used the Bible text, Proverbs 29:18. "Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint. But he that keepeth the law - happy is he." We need to have that vision.

In the fourth place, which is most important, we must regain and have that spirit and that enthusiasm.

Emmerson wrote many years ago that nothing great in life is achieved without enthusiasm.

Calvin Coolidge on the day of his inauguration, used that text in John 1:23 - "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord. As saith Isaiah the prophet. What a choice -- of enthusiasm that someone was following him. He was sure that Jesus was going to come."

What is the spirit of America? There are the Nathan Hale's, the Patrick Henry's. And I believe that they are right here in everyone of us today. If this nation is ever challenged for whatever cause - that soft, over-weight America will rise to challenge that and to take up where others have left off.

You know, as we look at this nation, 230 million people, there is not a whole lot of difference about people. We are all pretty much the same. Here, or whether you live in some foreign country. As for the children of God, but fortunately, we have more to start with here. I believe that the people can do anything if they use the basic ingredients which our forefathers used.

I think Alfred Sloan, the founder of General Motors, said - it best "take my money, take my machines, take my buildings, take my land but leave me my people - and we will come back and be as strong as ever." There is every example through history of people that overcame great sacrifice and great handicap to make their way in this world so you

can do it. It has been done by those that have more difficult handicaps than any of ours.

You have heard the name Beethoven, one of the great composers of the world. But did you know that that man was deaf. Yet he heard a world to sing about.

Have you ever heard the name John Milton. That wrote "Paradise Lost". And many other great novels of history. Did you know that John Milton was blind and yet he saw something in the world to write about.

Have you ever heard about the world's great Orators, a man by the name of Demosthenes. As a young man, his speech was so poor, his parents could not even interpret what he was saying. Yet he walked the banks of the river by his home with pebbles in his mouth, until one day he became known as the world's greatest orator.

And we have times of more recent days when an athlete who was so broken, by a car accident - that the Doctors said he would never walk again. They had to strap him to the back of a chair so that he could sit up. That same man came back and became the U. S. Open Champion. His name was Ben Hogan.

And an inspiration closer to home and to all of us, here in the United States, is a man who came out of retirement just a few years ago, because he had a God-given talent which had been trusted to him. And he has made a contribution to the world. He died the other day. His name Col. Saunders.

Yes, if we have the desire, and God has given us every opportunity -- look at what you have done, say in this very church. You have used your one talent somehow, some way. And you have reached out beyond earth, and have been able to get ahold of Heaven. That is exactly what we can do through this church. You are using your talents, you are working together. You have provided the support to one of the greatest churches in our state.

We need to stop worrying about the problems. Because the problems are not going away by worrying about them. One of the great sins of life is worry. You get up in the morning - you worry. You worry about your health. You worry about your money. You worry about your family. You worry about your friends. You worry, worry, worry.

I really never saw a man who was a worrier who ever accomplished much in this life. Let's be thankful for the life that God gave us. And let's do the best we can with what we have. You will be amazed as how it solves your problems. How you end up being happy and successful.

Our nation has been in the midst of a great period of worry over the hostages. They have just gotten their release. But thank God many many people instead of sitting down and ringing their hands, have been praying for these people. And this is what we need to do in this nation today. Because we have a great nation. This nation has survived a Civil War. World Wars. A Great Depression and two recessions. The assassination of Presidents - and America can rise again. It is something within us that we will survive. It needs your support and your prayers.

As we believe God teaching us, and following Jesus Christ, we will make our obligation.

I sometimes get the feeling that the people of this nation are waiting around for the nation to do something. And the nation is waiting around for the people to do something. This is a people's nation and you know, politics - as many people are turned off. But we want to make a contribution. And things will not change unless we get involved. But it can be done.

We talk about our government, outside of our health and our families. Our religious faith. What is more important than your government. It controls things in your life.

You get an automobile - you have to have a driver's license. You have traffic lights to obey. Yes, this country is worth defending and standing up for.

Did you know America is the wealthiest nation in the world - over 10 trillion dollars. And that broken down means 46,000 dollars for every person. You talk about the good old days. What are the good old days. Today is a good old day. We have more of everything than any generation of this nation ever had. And I say to the young people today - that your opportunity is unlimited. It is there for those who reach out and who want it.

George Bernard Shaw said that people sit around and blame their problems on the circumstances. I do not believe in circumstances. I believe that people that get on in this life, are the people who find the circumstances that they want and when they find them - they make them. Now that is our message. If we are going to build a country. We are not going to do it by complaining - by sitting down and doing nothing. But we must participate. We must show that we have

the spirit. And the committment of our forefathers. We must not go forward or backwards. We have too many lessons in history. Rome, when they lived in the glories of the past, instead of meeting the challenge of the future. And we know that in the teachings of Christianity, that we are expected to meet this.

Now when we talk about the greatness of this nation, think about some of the statistics - that with 6% of the population in this nation, we have 7% of the land. We control 30% of the world's growth with this system that was started some 200 years ago. We have a gross national product bigger than Russia, Japan, and West Germany combined.

The standard of living is that we are in the bread basket of the world. Did you know, that we have more Doctors, more nurses, more hospitals - that we have 80% of the televisions, and 60% of the telephones.

We publish more books than all of the rest of the world combined. We have more churches, more operas, more non-profit theatres. And 115 million Americans invest in the American free enterprise system. No other country is even close to that.

Some people say that our country is the 8th wonder of the world. Because of the system of freedom and liberty. But, I think they could say, that often we are the 9th wonder in the world - because the average American lacks appreciation for the system of this country.

Suppose we compare as our President - who was just placed into office. Pointed

out in a speech about Russia. If we could become just like Russia. What would
happen in our country. We would have to cut out pay checks, for 80% of the
people. We would have to put 33 million workers back on the farm. We would
have to destroy 59 million T. V. sets. We would have to tear up 14 of every 15
miles of highway. And another thing, we would have to junk 19 of every 20 auto-
mobiles. We would have to tear up 2/3 of our railroad tracks. We would have to
tear down 70% of our homes. We would have to rip out 9 out of every 10 telephones.
And too boot, we would have to give up what we call liberty - freedom - opportunity
as a nation. We don't know how good we do have it. There is not another nation
or country in the world like America. We had better be thankful for the lessons
that are ours. We need to pause and ponder.

Yes, I am proud of America. And I know that you are but we live in a country
in which we seek change. Our people have walked on the face of the moon in the
past. We have research being done to make this earth safe from disease. We have
elevated our people by education. We have been able even to transplant a human
heart. And today, daily, there are operations performed on the human heart to
restore that which would mean certain death other wise. We have fed half of the
earth. We have faith in God. And we cannot lose if we take and use our talents.
This is the greatest history of the world -- we Americans have proven it. We have
freedom. And if God continues to bless, it will continue in America. We will ask
our Heavenly Father to guide us by his will. That we might live our lives in the
way that he chooses for us. That he might give us courage and strength in the
committment to live a full life and to utilitize the talent that we have - though
it may be one. And follow the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought to
ask God to give us strength for that committment. We are in a position to help
our nation and to help our world. And we can do it by making a contribution to
our church. We pray that God will help us to perform this and that God will look
over us and watch over us in all of the future.

over it

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The days in which we live again that we
seem our best in some spirit.

"My Pledge" I promise that when I die I
will work it will come, I will accept,
I will endure, I will fight cheerfully,
and do my utmost, so if the name of
the whole struggle is dependent on me then.

Member - Martin Traptan -
1917 Sept 21, Small town Oklahoma -
I have with some friends
killed trying to get money from Oklahoma Army & Navy
they found me in body - written

President Roosevelt to Washington Mr. Traptan