

One Nation Under God

Genesis 46:1-3 (KJV)

“1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.
2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.
3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: **fear not** to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation”

Introduction

- * I have titled this message this morning **‘One Nation – Under God’**
- * As a child growing up one of the very first things I can remember being taught when I first entered public school was the **Pledge of Allegiance**
- * I was taught to recite the Pledge but not the History behind the Pledge

The Pledge of Allegiance

- * **Francis Bellamy** (1855 - 1931) - a **Baptist minister**, wrote the original Pledge in **August 1892**
- * He was a Christian Socialist – [for whatever that means???] [saved politics??]
- * In his Pledge, he is expressing the ideas of his first cousin, **Edward Bellamy**, author of the American socialist utopian novels, **Looking Backward** (1888) and **Equality** (1897)
- * **Francis Bellamy** in his sermons and lectures and **Edward Bellamy** in his novels and articles described in detail how **the middle class could create a planned economy** with political, social and economic equality for all
- * In **1892 Francis Bellamy** was also a chairman of a committee of state superintendents of education in the **National Education Association**
- * **As its chairman**, he prepared the program for the public schools' quadricentennial celebration for Columbus Day in 1892

He structured this public school program around a flag raising ceremony and a flag salute - his 'Pledge of Allegiance.'

His original Pledge read as follows:

'I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all'

He considered placing the word, 'equality,' in his Pledge, but knew that the state superintendents of education on his committee were against equality for women and African Americans

* Bellamy had been pressured into leaving his church in 1891 because of his socialist sermons

* In his retirement in Florida, he stopped attending church because he disliked the racial bigotry he found there

Bellamy's own account of some of the thoughts that went through his mind in August 1892, as he picked the words of his Pledge:

* It began as an intensive communing with salient points of our national history, from the Declaration of Independence onwards; with the makings of the Constitution...with the meaning of the Civil War; with the aspiration of the people...

* The true reason for allegiance to the Flag is the 'republic for which it stands.' ...And what does that vast thing, the Republic mean?

* It is the concise political word for the Nation - the One Nation which the Civil War was fought to prove.

* To make that One Nation idea clear, we must specify that it is indivisible, as Webster and Lincoln used to repeat in their great speeches - And its future?

Just here arose the temptation of the historic slogan of the French Revolution which meant so much to Jefferson and his friends, 'Liberty, equality, fraternity.' No, that would be too fanciful, too many thousands of years off in realization. But we as a nation do stand square on the doctrine of liberty and justice for all...

In 1954 - In response to the Communist threat of the times, President Eisenhower encouraged Congress to add the words "under God" creating the 31-word pledge we say today

Today it reads

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all"

President Eisenhower's encouraged Congress to add "Under God"

* Thank the Lord for a President and a Congress that moved to add "Under God"

Why?

Because now The Pledge is both a patriotic oath and a public prayer

* You see those two words – literally challenged and changed the very focus and foundation of the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance

* One mans preparation for the public schools quadricentennial celebration program for Columbus Day in 1892 with political motives and philosophies entwined became not only a Pledge but a Prayer in this nation because leaders chose to add God to it!

Because of a Communist threat President Eisenhower encouraged Congress to add the words "under God – and by the way the Communist did not allow God into their nation – and look where that party is today

Might this be a reminder to this nation today that we must be a nation - one nation under God, indivisible [Means: not separable into parts; incapable of being divided], with liberty and justice for all"

Just maybe my friends God had a hand in this Nations Pledge!

One Nation Under God

Gods hand on its founding leadership...

Samuel Adams

Father of the American Revolution, Signer of the Declaration of Independence

I . . . recommend my Soul to that Almighty Being who gave it, and my body I commit to the dust, relying upon the merits of Jesus Christ for a pardon of all my sins - From the Will of Samuel Adams

Charles Carroll

Signer of the Declaration of Independence

On the mercy of my Redeemer I rely for salvation and on His merits; not on the works I have done in obedience to His precepts.

John Dickinson

Signer of the Constitution

Rendering thanks to my Creator for my existence and station among His works, for my birth in a country enlightened by the Gospel and enjoying freedom, and for all His other kindnesses, to Him I resign myself, humbly confiding in His goodness and in His mercy through Jesus Christ for the events of eternity - Will of John Dickinson

Patrick Henry

Governor of Virginia, Patriot

**This is all the inheritance I can give to my dear family. The religion of Christ can give them one which will make them rich indeed -
Will of Patrick Henry**

Our nations fathers were not believers in just a Deity - a higher power – or a mixture of many gods no – it is very clear that they had a deep faith in God and understood Jesus Christ is the savior – they had a Christian Faith!

They established this country upon Faith in God

Jeremiah 33:3

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and *show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not*”

- * The word “mighty” in the KJV is sometimes translated “unsearchable”
- * (NIV) or “hidden”
- * (RSV) or “remarkable”
- * (NLT) or “wondrous things”

The Hebrew word means “inaccessible” or “impregnable”

- * The picture is of a fortified city that is impenetrable because of its high, thick walls
- * The idea being conveyed is that God alone knows the future
- * No human being can see into the impenetrable, inaccessible future
- * Only God knows the future. And when He wishes, He reveals it to His people.

In the present case, the Lord meets the need of His dear servant Jeremiah by revealing the future to him

Jeremiah 33:3

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and *show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not*”

- * One of the great promises of God is that He will answer prayer
- * Simply the Lord wants us to communicate with Him – to allow Him to be in our every days – our business – our life – our nation
- * Jeremiah desperately needed to hear from the Lord, for he was in prison for preaching the Word of God ([Jeremiah 32:3-5](#))
- * Have you ever felt persecuted or like you are imprisoned for your faith

At the same time, the citizens of Jerusalem were also suffering

- * The Babylonian army had already conquered the entire nation **except** for the capital Jerusalem
- * After being surrounded by the invaders for eighteen months, the people's food and water supplies were depleted
- * People were starving and dying of thirst, and the Babylonian army was ready to assault and capture the city
- * No doubt Jeremiah felt the pain of his people's sufferings as well as the anguish of his own imprisonment during those days of crisis
- * As would any believer imprisoned for his faith, this faithful prophet sought the Lord in prayer
- * And God met His dear servant's need
- * Simply Jeremiah despite his surroundings or the state of his nation or even his city kept his relationship with God and understood he was doing the will of his father

The greatest thing in all the world is doing God's will

Why?

Because the greatest possessions in the entire world are given to those who really do God's will

Think of these things:

- * Think of love, joy, peace, faith, and hope: the five greatest things in all the world
- * Think of supply and provision: every need imaginable met and provided for

- * Think of protection and security: the absolute assurance of perfect and even eternal protection and security
- * Think of purpose and guidance: a life that is never empty or meaningless and that never fails to see where it is going
- * Think of fulfillment and satisfaction: a life that is absolutely fulfilled and satisfied, that knows it is living to the fullest

God takes these things and gives them only to those who do His will

* He cannot give them to a person who would misuse them in a life of selfishness, immorality, lawlessness, and greed.

Therefore, if we are to ever possess the great things of life, we must do the will of God

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3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: *fear not* to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation”

But before we can do God's will, we must know God's will

The all important question, therefore, becomes:

"How can I really know God's will as I make decisions throughout life?"

This is the subject of what now happens in the Scripture

* Jacob and his family were leaving Canaan, leaving the land promised to them by God

* Jacob had now arrived at Beersheba. He was about to move out of Canaan into a new land. Was he doing God's will?

He had felt led, but was he right (Genesis 45:27-28)

* This was a critical decision, a momentous step

* Jacob had to seek God for confirmation to know, to make absolutely sure, that he was doing God's will

To know, understand and have the Faith to do Gods will one must know the voice of God – one must know the Word of God

2 Timothy 4:3

“(3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers*”

"Heap up to themselves teachers" is a interesting illustration

* We might phrase it as, *"They've got themselves a whole smorgasbord of preachers to choose from"*

* We would not say that they heap them up—that brings to mind a picture of bodies piled up, one upon another

WE would probably picture what was happening as more like a cafeteria, where a person could pick this preacher's understanding:

* of marriage

* then a little further on, select another preacher's understanding of faith

* and a bit later, for dessert, choose this minister's wonderful sense of humor

This is much what is happening in the American Church of this age

Do we dabble a little here, a little there?

We fool ourselves sometimes by saying, "I'm just getting a well-rounded approach to the subject because this guy is really strong in this area"

*** I need what he can give me**

Many are heaping up for themselves teachers, so that we can pull one from the bottom of the pile when we need it?

*** Do we flit from place to place as the mood suits us?**

Maybe this week we are in the mood for something really sober, so we go to a particular serious-minded group

The next week, perhaps, we want to fellowship, and the people at the sober place are not really entertaining socially—but the people at another place nearby really have a rip-roaring time after service every week!

Then the week after that, we hear that "Minister X" is in town, so we go there

Is that the way we are? [Get yourself where God is moving – Gods Activity and get involved]

This is very much like *"hey heap up to themselves teachers"*

When our Faith becomes tainted – when our mentors become many – when our life is more about heaping teachers instead of doing the work of the ministry – everything in our life becomes a quest to sooth our itching ears – simply our morals become tainted – our politics becomes tainted and we move from doing Gods will and set about doing our will.

James 1:8 reads, "He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways"

*** How true that is!**

*** One cannot trust a double-minded person because he is unstable; he flits from here to there**

One never knows what corner he will be in that week

Matthew 6: 24 - No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other

*** You cannot serve God and mammon.**

Consider the principle here:

*** God is interested in loyalty**

*** He wants us to be loyal to Him**

*** Today's church is very guilty of heaping up to themselves teachers**

*** The basic motivation of doing so is *self-satisfaction***

*** And how often does that get us into trouble?**

Today in America it seems that the church's are growing but the kingdom of God is not being established

*** Jesus said the only requirement for us to see revival is that we be one, so that the world may believe [[John 17:20-23](#)]**

The missionary paradigm of each one doing [his] own thing did not work

*** We have to go back to a biblical paradigm**

*** The Biblical Paradigm – The Pattern – The Model Gods Word sets for us**

*** When we do this our life will be totally engulfed with Gods Presence**

Matthew 6:33

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”

Do not worry, but "seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"

* The word "*seek*" means to seek; to go after; to strive; to pursue; to desire; to aim at; to search for; to endeavor to get.

The believer's life is not to be preoccupied with material things, as necessary as some things are

* The believer is first of all to be seeking after the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

* He is to seek to become a citizen of God's kingdom

* And he is to seek others, encouraging them to become a citizen of God's kingdom

This is to be the first pursuit of his life

* More than 100 years ago, Alexis de Toqueville, a famous French political philosopher, visited our nation to uncover the secret of our greatness

* He traveled from town to town, talking with people, asking questions, examining every facet of our society

* Returning to France, he wrote these amazing words, "I sought for America's greatness

I found it not in her fields & forests. I found it not in her mines & factories. I found it not in her Congress & great tribunals"

* It was only when I entered her churches and heard her pulpits thundering against sin and preaching righteousness that I discovered the secret of her greatness

* Then he added, "America is great because America is good - If America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great"

The soul of America is God

- * O beware, America, lest we lose our soul!
- * If we put our trust in education, we'll get what education can give us
- * If we put our trust in money, we'll get what money can give us
- * If we put our trust in oil, we'll get what oil can give us
- * If we put our trust in government, we'll get what government can give us

But if we put our trust in God, we'll have everything we need, for all eternity

Illustration

- * A few years ago a picture of the historic flag designed by Betsy Ross appeared on the front page of a Chicago newspaper, underneath it was this caption, "It's time to check our stitches again."
- * Maybe it is time for us to check the stitches and to make sure that we are still the home of the brave, and the land of the free
- * Maybe its time for us to check the stitches and make sure we do all we can do to keep America One Nation Under God!

Three temptations Americans are facing today

The temptation to enjoy fruits of citizenship without tending the tree of liberty

- * The first is this, there is a very strong temptation to enjoy the fruits of citizenship without tending the tree of liberty

Illustration: Harry Emerson Fosdick preached a sermon a number of years ago entitled "Parking on Someone Else's Nickel." Now obviously the sermon is pretty old because you don't park anyplace for a nickel anymore. But the point is true

I wonder if that is a problem in our country and our churches today?

- * Most of us haven't earned the freedoms we enjoy
- * I am thankful to be a citizen of these great United States
- * But as a citizen, you see, I have a responsibility to tend the tree of liberty
- * I am thankful to have a church and church family, I have a responsibility to tend the tree of liberty

A better place because you are a citizen of this country, city and church

- * Is our community a better place because you are a part of it?
- * Is your church a better church because you are a member of it?
- * What are you doing, for heaven's sake?
- * Or are you like many, enjoying the fruits, but not tending the tree of liberty?
- * Don't be a member of the "Heaper Club"

Temptation to enjoy benefits of capitalism while ignoring conscience

- * I'm glad that we live in a capitalistic country.
- * I don't think that is a dirty word
- * Capitalism means free market
- * We are free to buy, sell, make a profit - to earn our own living

But capitalism without conscience becomes a cruel and ruthless form of life

Competition and success and greed and materialism corrupt and we lose our concern for others

* When our forefathers came to this country and founded our system of government, they were convinced that God was involved in the destinies of men and nations

* They believed that men were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights and that among these were life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Evident in the way they wrote, the way they lived, and the way our nation developed

* There was a moral fiber, a moral strength in our nation

* Today it seems that by and large our society is so caught up in greed and materialism that we're only interested in ourselves

It is survival of the fittest, and all we're concerned about is making more and more

* The result is increased crime, increased drug addiction, increased immorality.

Illustration

* A man sent a letter to Ann Landers. He wrote, "This is for the woman who was distressed about her son

* I would like to ask her some questions about the boy. Is he disrespectful? Has he been arrested for drunk driving? Has he been kicked out of college for cheating? Has he made his girl friend pregnant? Does he get failing grades? Does he steal money from your purse?"

"If you can answer 'No' to all these questions, stop complaining. You have a great kid." It was signed, "Ralph N., Oakland, CA."

Ann Landers replied:

"Your letter showed just how much times have changed.

*** You said that if a kid today isn't on drugs, doesn't get failing grades, hasn't been arrested for drunk driving, or kicked out of college for cheating, hasn't made his girl friend pregnant, or stolen from your purse, that he's great.**

*** But you make no mention of achievement**

*** There's not a word about integrity, a sense of responsibility, decency, morality or service to others"**

*** Then she went on to add, "What a sad commentary on our times**

*** Good Lord, where is our nation headed, and who is going to lead us there?"**

The soul of America is God and we're in danger of losing our soul!

Temptation to ant Christianity without commitment

*** I'm not talking about an emotional experience**

*** I'm talking about a commitment and surrender to God that results in a changed heart and life**

Somehow along the way, in our celebration of independence and freedom, we have forgotten the greatest freedom of all

Jesus Christ went to the cross and gave His life to gain our freedom from sin

This is a message that our country needs to hear again and again today

So let's salute the flag. Let's allow our patriotic juices to flow freely and get goose pimples up and down our spine. But remember this, we didn't earn our freedoms.

We may not even deserve them

Chuck Swindoll, in his book, "Living Above the Level of Mediocrity," tells about a church in the Soviet Union a few years ago that was forced to meet secretly because the holding of house church services was illegal

*** One Lord's Day, right in the midst of their worship service, two soldiers broke into the room, and at gunpoint lined the Christians up against the wall**

*** One shouted, "If you wish to renounce your faith in Jesus Christ, leave now!"**

*** Two or three quickly left, then another, and then two more**

*** Again the soldier spoke, "This is your last chance. Either leave now and renounce your faith in Christ, or stay & suffer the consequences."**

*** Another left, and then another, almost hiding their faces in shame as they went out.**

*** But the rest stood their ground, children standing beside their parents, trembling, some even crying as their parents stood with their hands in the air, fully expecting to be gunned down or imprisoned.**

*** After all had left who chose to flee, the other soldier closed the doors, looked back at those who stood against the wall and said, "Keep your hands up - but this time in praise to our Lord Jesus Christ.**

We, too, are Christians." The two soldiers explained that some time earlier they had been sent to another house church to arrest the Christians there. But in the process, they had heard the gospel and had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, too.

But they explained, "We have learned that unless people are willing to die for their faith, they cannot be fully trusted"

One Nation Under God – Is but only by People who have One God!