

### Wake Up America

The theme for this year's National Day of Prayer is wake up America. And although I would certainly agree that America needs to wake up, I don't want this to be a political posture this morning. I want to be clear, I truly believe that as followers of Christ, we are instructed to be good stewards of everything that God has entrusted to us. As such, I believe that it is our responsibility to be engaged with the society around us. To know the makeup of the political culture surrounding us, and to make informed decisions and vote! I am aware that there are numerous Christians that don't think they should be involved in politics and don't vote, but I vehemently disagree. On this National Day of Prayer, we certainly want to pray for our nation and our leaders, but I truly believe we need to get in the game.

So moving away from politics, I would like the focus this morning to be; "Wake up church in America". I don't believe that there are very many true scholars of the Bible that don't agree that we are living in a time of apostasy. Churches have moved away from not only the costs associated with following Jesus, but worse yet the danger of not following Christ. They focus on everyone having a warm fuzzy feeling, that all is well and no need to worry about anything. But Paul warned Timothy and he warned us when he said; "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables".

June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1962, the Supreme Court ruled for the removal of prayer in public schools, and the church did virtually nothing. A year later, they removed the Bible from public schools, and the church did nothing. 1973, abortion became legal in the United States, and once again the church grumbled and complained, but did virtually nothing. In 1980, the Supreme Court in spite of the fact that these appear throughout the Court building, ruled in favor for the removal of the 10 commandments from public schools. Once again, the church did virtually nothing. Same sex marriage is now the law of the land, transgender bathrooms is now the hot button topic, and the church remains virtually silent. Even today, as Christians around the world are being persecuted and even martyred for their faith, we sit back and shake our heads and say what a shame what is going on, but essentially do nothing.

Ez. 22:30 says this; "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none". I found none! What a terrible commentary on the nation of Israel. They had fallen into the clutches of apostasy. They had become indifferent to the ways of God, and they couldn't figure out why everything was going so horribly wrong. But they were asleep at the switch.

Mark Hall and Casting Crowns wrote a song that really expresses this thought. Listen to the lyrics.       While You Were Sleeping!

Oh little town of Bethlehem/ Looks like another silent night/ Above your deep and dreamless sleep/ A giant star lights up the sky/ And while you're lying in the dark/ There shines an everlasting light/ For the King has left his throne/ and is sleeping in a manger tonight.

Oh Bethlehem, what you have missed while you were sleeping/ For God became a man/ And stepped into your world today/ Oh Bethlehem, you will go down in history/ As a city with no room for it's king/ While you were sleeping/ While you were sleeping.

Oh little town of Jerusalem/ Looks like another silent night/ The Father gave his only Son/ The Way, the Truth, the Life had come/ But there was no room for him in the world he came to save.

Jerusalem, what you have missed while you were sleeping/ The Savior of the world is dying on your cross today/ Jerusalem, you will go down in history/ As a city with no room for it's king/ While you were sleeping/ While you were sleeping.

United States of America/ Looks like another silent night/ As were sung to sleep by philosophies/ That save the trees and kill the children/ And while we're lying in the dark/ There's a shout heard cross the eastern sky/ For the Bridegroom has returned/ And has carried his bride away in the night.

America, what will we miss while we are sleeping/ Will Jesus come again/ And leave us slumbering where we lay/ America, will we go down in history/ As a nation with no room for it's king? Will we be sleeping/ Will we be sleeping?

So what can we do to make sure that we aren't caught sleeping when we should be speaking out for the Lord? Well the first thing seems like a contradiction but it truly is not. First, we need to be well rested. Craig in his recent letter to the Band of Brothers wrote; "Lack of rest leads to poor attitude, apathy, vulnerability to temptation, laziness, and a lack of productivity, moodiness, pessimism, depression, bitterness, procrastination, a short temper, anxiety, escapism, poor performance.....infrequent prayer, and a closed Bible. All sins and far from the foundation of a strong Christian faith. Ouch!!! Obviously he's been talking to my wife. But the painful truth is that fatigue makes cowards of us all, and when we do not get enough rest, we are not prepared to take on the trials of this world, much less Satan who wants to destroy us.

The second thing we need to do is to remember that all things were made by him and for him. That means that we are to be his hands, his feet, his voice bringing hope and truth to a lost world all around us. As such, he has given us everything that we need in order to do his work and bring glory to him. That should be our goal. However, far too many of us have settled for a lesser goal, the goal of mere survival. The pressures of the lives we lead, with so many things pulling us in different directions, tempt us to make our aim to simply make it through the week with no major catastrophes. Instead of boldly doing the work of Christ, we slink around waiting

to see what evil might overtake us. This goal is disastrous to our faith. When mere survival becomes my goal, the work of God and his purpose for my life gets choked out and will not survive. God gave to us his very best, don't settle for anything less. Survival must not be our goal!

Next, spend time in prayer. Jesus spent every waking hour, doing the will of his Father. There were many a time when after a long exhausting day of ministry, it would have been easy to just lie down and go to sleep, but he didn't. He spent time with his Father in prayer. That is where he got his direction, that is where he got his strength, and that is where he got his rest. Perhaps you are like me, wandering a bit aimlessly, lacking any real power, exhausted, and the fire that once burnt bright in your heart, just a mild glow. Perhaps your time with him has become more abbreviated, postponed, or even canceled. If so, I urge you to spend time in prayer and rekindle that flame. Without that regular time with God, that sweet relationship is replaced with a stressful rat race. Make time for communion with God.

Then lastly, bring back the Gospel. Completely, unencumbered, uncompromised! See the Gospel is the life saving message that the world desperately needs. The Gospel message is that my sin is so bad that I deserve eternal punishment, but his love is great enough to forgive my sin. The gospel, or good news is that Jesus Christ is the only person to ever walk out of his own grave by his own power. The Gospel is Jesus, and he is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through him. Jesus is the only name under heaven by which we may be saved. So proclaim the Gospel message near and far. **Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet!**

It is critical that the church wake up. Because if we don't then there is no hope for America. However, the good news found in II Chronicles 7:14. 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 will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Let's pray.