

## Three Pillars Needed To Restore Our Nation 2 Chronicles 7:11 – 16

**Intro:** I would have to say that since about April or May our world has been turned upside down. First our gas prices went through the roof going from a national average of \$2.35 in Feb 07 to a high of around \$4.20 by mid August. Then on September 29<sup>th</sup> the market began a decline that has yet to be curbed with the DOW standing just below \$8,500 today which is about a 40% loss for the year.

The government has tried to stem the tide of this decline by providing financial assistance to hurting companies to the tune of, depending upon who you listen to, somewhere between 2 and 4 Trillion dollars. Now we hear that the three big auto makers are in need of billions of dollars of government assistance or they will be forced into bankruptcy.

Then just about two weeks ago, the course of our nation took a dramatic turn. After a long and often bitter campaign, we went to the polls and, after over 100 million votes were counted, a new President was selected. The vote generated a lot of interest, a lot of discussion and the realization that we are a nation of people with greatly differing values. One political party now will have power in the White House and both houses of Congress. The ability to make policy and drive the direction of the nation will be as one-sided as it has been since 1964. People voted with their values and they voted with the wallets. They voted out of anger, frustration and a desire for a new direction. Both candidates' parties and supporters believed that their candidate was the one who could bring the change people said they want. One won and one lost – The consensus is that a more liberal, what is called "left-leaning" agenda will be the direction of the country.

Some are concerned that this could go so far as to threaten the liberties we have as Christians. Tony Perkins, head of the Family Research Counsel, said *"We are going to see, I think, unprecedented attacks against our faith through measures like the hate crimes [legislation] to the Employment Non-Discrimination*

*Act," he says. He goes on to say, "We're going to see attacks on innocent human life through the Freedom of Choice Act, trying to erase all the gains that have been made in the pro-life movement. And I think even our freedoms are going to come under attack."*

Others believe that this is a challenge to Christians to quit looking to politicians and Washington for life's solutions and start to look to God.

In this time of change, when what we have known could be different, when the values that have been foundational are challenged, when holding to biblical values can be called hateful, when a cultural tsunami is possible, what do we do as the church – how can we have an impact – how can we try to persuade people about the eternal importance of a relationship with Jesus Christ?

In our text today I think we have the answer.

**[Stand/read 2 Chr. 7:11- 16/pray]**

After the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin made a haunting statement that comes again to each new generation of Americans: "We have given you a republic — if you can keep it."

The winds of dissent, discord, and deception that have blown across our land in the last decade or so have made the answer to that question uncertain. No one can honestly evaluate our country today without realizing that it is a dangerous time.

What is the heart of the crisis? Is it political? Economic. Sociological? No, we are in a spiritual crisis. You can't help but read our founding documents and see that this nation was founded on biblical principals and dedicated to God. The Mayflower compact, November, 1620.

"In the Name of God Almighty, we whose names are underwritten . . . having undertaken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, . . . a voyage to plan the first colony in northern

Virginia (they were in Massachusetts); do by these present, solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politick . . .”

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.

America was dedicated to God and in a sense promised to set up a godly nation but has America broken that promise?

On the Legal front:

1. Prohibited the reading of Scripture in public school.
2. Prohibited prayer in public school.
3. Prohibited a manger scene during Christmas in public places.
4. Prohibited the posting of the 10 Commandments.
5. Prohibited the teaching of Creation in public schools along with evolution.
6. Allowed abortion (Roe v. Wade, 1973).
7. Allowed homosexuality in the military (Don’t Tell, Don’t Ask).
8. And now Gay marriage

On the Social front:

1. America is turning away from Christian values of family, sexual purity, correct speech, and church attendance.
2. Turning to and embracing filthy speech, state approved gambling, and allowing the distribution of X-rated movies and books.
3. America is turning away from recognition of Christian holidays, Christian worship and Christian symbols.
4. Turning to and allowing demonic expressions, New Age rituals, and embracing secular humanism.
5. America is turning away from recognition of God as Creator and embracing atheistic evolutionism.

6. America is turning away from recognizing our Christian heritage, while turning to those who are re-writing history to exclude any reference to the influence of God or the Bible in our past.
7. In the 1996 Presidential election, 68% of the electorate said character in the President was NOT an issue. The problem is not the lack of character in the American President, the problem is 68% of Americans voted against character and morality.

What can the church do to turn our country back to its founding principles and become faithful to our original promise?

Our text today gives us at least **Three Pillars Needed To Restore Our Nation back to its Godly roots. We need to...**

- I. **Reprioritize The Place of Worship** Vv. 11-12 (cf. Chp. 5 & 6)
  - A. When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.
    1. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, “*he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.*”
    2. The temple was complete - It was a great accomplishment of the Lord.
  - B. God intended the Temple to be at the center of Jewish life
    1. Daily Sacrifices; Daily meetings
    2. All of Jewish life took place in and around the Temple
    3. When the temple began to be neglected – things went bad for the nation
    4. Even a fast overview of the events in 1 & 2 Kings will demonstrate this truth; every time a bad king began to reign he would turn from Temple worship to worldly and pagan gods and things would deteriorate.
    5. Then a good king would come to the throne and reinstate the daily sacrifice and Temple worship and things would turn around (See 28 – 29)

6. **III:** Ahaz came to power and “made molten images for Baalim....burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom...” (28:1ff). When his son Hezekiah came to the throne the very first thing he did was “*He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them*” (29:3ff). If you read on in chap 29 you find that Hezekiah again dedicated the temple and reinstated Temple worship. The nation began to prosper again.
- C. The same is true of our nation and the church's important role in keeping it on the right course.
  1. As I said in the introduction, this nation was founded upon Christian principles, but the church – you and me – have allowed our nation to drift away from those principles.
  2. All throughout history the truth has been that the stronger the Christian church was the stronger the nation was.
  3. It is well said that, “*As man goes, so goes the family. As the family goes, so goes the church. As the church goes, so goes the nation*”
  4. I would have to say that there is a direct correlation between the faithfulness of attendance in church services by professing Christians and the strength and weakness of our nation.
  5. Consider these facts:
    - a) The *Barna Research Group* reported that in 2005, “*47% of American adults [said that they] attend church in a given weekend, not including a special event such as a wedding or a funeral.*”
    - b) Christianity Today, in Sept 2007 that church attendance has been at about 25% since the 90s.
    - c) 66% of 18 -22 year olds are leaving the church
  6. All of these statistics point to one truth – church is no longer a top priority among professing Christians.
- D. There was a time when church was at the center of our home and social life.

1. Noting would get in the way of our time at church, wheatear it be a Sunday service, a mid-week service or a fellowship, nothing would get in the way of it
  2. Work did not hold a priority over the church
  3. Sports, leisure time no matter they simply were not as high on the priority list as church attendance among born again Christians.
  4. Today the church has become just one of many other things that vying for our time.
  5. This didn’t happen by accident however, we allowed it to.
  6. When the Christians began to ditch church for school sporting event or other school activates the world found out just how important the worship of our God truly was.
  7. When business told Christians that they had to work on Sunday’s and Wednesday nights they found out who they really trusted to supply all their needs.
- E. If we are going to ever turn this country around the corporate worship times have got to be reprioritized to their rightful place
- F. Least we begin to think that church attendance is not that important to the NT believer remember what Hebrews 10:24-25 says, *“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”*

**We need to...**

II. **Restore The People To a Right Relationship** V. 14a

- A. The text says *“If my people...”*
1. "if" - is a conditional statement. .
    - a) It implies that there are options.
    - b) It also means that there is a choice involved on our part.
    - c) A choice by us takes an act of the will.
    - d) We can either take the offer or we can refuse the offer and accept the consequences.
  2. It is an opportunity from the Lord.

- a) He is almighty God.
  - b) He does not have to offer us anything.
  - c) The great part of this offer is He desires to give us a chance, an opportunity that would not be offered if it were not for Him.
  - d) It is freely given with no obligation on His part.
- B. *"my people, which are called by my name"* – What a phrase
- 1. They imply a personal relationship, not ownership, but relationship.
    - a) It is a love relationship.
    - b) He created us to love.
  - 2. Today believers are His chosen people.
    - a) The chosen are those who have received Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives Gal3:26 says that those who receive Jesus as savior are called the children of God.
    - b) It is a choice to accept or reject His offer of salvation.
    - c) He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.
    - d) Once we receive Jesus Christ we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as God's people.
    - e) Scripture says that nothing can separate us from His love in Christ Jesus - Romans 8:38-39 says, *"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"*
    - f) Once we are His, we are His.
    - g) But remember the choice? It requires a volitional act on our part, an act of the will to choose one or the other.
- C. *"shall humble themselves"* - If we will humble ourselves is the first step to fixing things.

1. Humility does not mean we walk around all day with our eyes to the ground or with a whip smacking ourselves on the back or allowing someone else treat us that way.
  2. It means we recognize that we are not God and in life, we are powerless to live apart from Him.
  3. We admit that we have sinned and apart from Him there is no remedy.
- D. *“and pray”* - We are to pray.
1. Prayer is talking, communicating with God.
  2. We recognize we can’t do anything in life apart from Him and so we turn to Him in humility.
  3. He is God, we are not.
  4. A love relationship requires constant communication, most of which is listening.
- E. *“and seek my face”* - Next we seek His face.
1. We desire to know Him on a deeper level.
  2. Statistics say 90% of Americans know about God.
  3. I will guarantee that most do not seek His face nor do they desire a love relationship with Him.
  4. Why, because most of America doesn’t want to admit their lost and in sin.
- III. ***Finally We Need To Repent***
- A. *“and turn from their wicked ways”* - Lastly we need turn from our wicked ways.
1. What are wicked ways?
  2. It is anyway that is not God’s way.
  3. Those are wicked ways.
  4. The people of Israel were constantly calling upon God to rescue them from their own mistakes.
  5. When He would redeem them they would worship and follow Him.....for awhile.
  6. Then they would go back to wickedness and sin and leave God out entirely.
  7. Of course, they would then get in trouble without the Lord and they would be right back to square one calling on to rescue them.
- B. Why didn’t they remain in His will?

1. It is because "all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory".
  2. We are just like the Israelites.
  3. When times are bad we call on His name but when times are good we forget about Him.
- C. God desires a love relationship with us in Christ.
1. In Christ, we have His indwelling presence.
  2. He says, "*will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*".
  3. He will not quit on you or me.
  4. But, we need to acknowledge by our actions that we love Him.
  5. He says, "If you love me you will obey my commands".
  6. We demonstrate our love for Him by following His word and obeying all He has commanded us.

**Conclusion:** What does God promise us if we will simply **Reprioritize His Place of Worship, Restore the people and Repent from our wicked ways?** He says that he "*will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*" **THANK GOD THAT HE STILL HEARS THE PRAYERS OF SINFUL MAN AND FORGIVES THEIR SINS.**

As we look forward to Thanksgiving in a couple of weeks lets not take for granted the wonderful truth that God desires to hear from us and heal our land.

There are 6 Things I want all of us to do this morning:

1. First, We must commit to have right living . . . right thinking . . . right solutions . . . and right principles; all are found in God's eternal Word and God's absolute morality.
2. Second, we must commit to pray that America return to to her obligation to the Creator, the One originally recognized in the Declaration of Independence. We must pray for God's providential care of this nation and His blessing on our people.
3. Third, we must repent of our sin and rebellion. We must forsake the pursuit of selfish pleasures just for the sake of pleasure. We must forsake the selfish indulgence in financial pursuits, just for the pleasure financial security. We need conviction to be ashamed of our sin of greed and materialism

- and we need guilt that makes us afraid of God's punishment on those sins.
4. Fourth, we must confess our national sin in Identificational Repentance. We must recognize that our national sin will bring God's judgment on the nation. So we must confess it and beg God to turn His judgment from this nation.
  5. Fifth, we must fast and pray for revival. Fasting is not just making it hard on yourself at meal time. The Hebrew word for fast describes what happens to us when we go through an emergency. In the middle of a hurricane, we don't think about eating, we work to survive. When our car breaks down in a snow storm, we don't look through our pockets for something to eat. We look for a shovel, or warm clothes; we concentrate on survival. America is in danger. We must fast . . . go without food . . . we must pray . . . begging God to forgive us and send revival – this we can begin on Monday.
  6. Sixth, we must not give up hope. As bad as our nation is because of abortion, America is the best place to worship God in the world. As bad as drug-abuse, robberies, rape and violence is in America, this is still the best place in the world to live. As terrible as America is in turning away from Bible reading and prayer in the public schools and embracing atheistic evolution; America can have revival.