

03. “What’s Next for America?” Pt.3

“The Rebirth of America”

(5/24/20)

As I said last week—I am very burdened for our nation.

Jesus said that the closer we get to His return—“*Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.*” (Matthew 24:12)

Have you seen the video of the young man who works at a nursing facility beating and beating an elderly patient with his fists while he videoed the whole thing to put on His Facebook page?—and that is by no means an isolated incident.

We see that kind of cold-hearted behavior everywhere in our nation—most recently from some governors callously mandating that COVID positive elderly patients be placed in nursing homes and assisted living facilities where they infected other elderly residents resulting in the deaths of thousands and thousands of the most vulnerable among us.

We saw an interview several months ago of Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, a pediatric neurologist, advocating killing babies even after they’re born if it is decided they don’t deserve to live.

It seems that life is meaningless today—whether we’re talking about the very young or the very old—and seemingly everyone in between—life is no longer precious because selfishness abounds and the love of many has grown cold.

And we could go on and on citing one story after another of how our society is breaking down and how that, more and more—evil is being called ‘good’ and good is being called ‘evil...’ (Isa.5:20)

2 Timothy 3:1-4 (NLT2)

¹ You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God...

I feel like the psalmist—

Psalm 12:1 (NKJV)

¹ Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.

Because of this, I felt compelled to do a series which I have entitled, **“What’s Next for America?”**

We started this series with a message entitled, **“Looking Back to Move Forward”** where we focused on the founding of America and our godly heritage as a nation under God.

Last week we continued with part 2 of this series and a message entitled—**“If the Foundations are Destroyed...”** where we looked at how the devil has been chipping away at the foundation our nation has been built upon (God’s Word)—and how our nation has been crumbling as a result.

This morning I’d like to finish this series with a message I’ve entitled—**“The Rebirth of America”** as we explore the cure for the moral sickness and social decay that is destroying the nation we love.

As I’ve already said, in this series we have been talking about the birth of our nation and the faith of our Founding Fathers—men who openly declared this nation a place where the gospel could be proclaimed, and God would be glorified.

But even before the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War—our nation went through some pretty black periods not unlike what we see going on in our country today.

Back then, God saw fit to answer the moral decay in the colonies by raising up two preachers: Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.

Their preaching changed the spiritual direction of America before the Revolution and became the catalysts for what came to be known as—“*The First Great Awakening.*”

Jonathan Edwards, as a young man and a new husband, took over his father-in-law’s prestigious church in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Edwards’ description of the condition of the young people in Northampton when he first got there sounds much like the conditions among young people today:

“Licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town: there were many of them very much addicted to night walking and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices wherein some by their example exceedingly corrupted others.”

But in 1734, while Edwards was preaching a series of sermons on justification by faith alone—something began to happen—people started getting saved!

It started with the youth and then spread to the adults—both young and old.

One reporter noted—
“...in the spring and summer of 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God; it never was so full of love, nor of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then.”
(‘distress’ because so many were under the conviction of God!)

By 1736 Edwards’ church had 300 new converts, and news of the revival had spread throughout New England.

The revival shifted into high gear in 1740 when George Whitefield arrived in America.

Whitefield had already risen to a place of prominence as one of the key figures in the Wesleyan revivals in England.

In those days' evangelists didn't have microphones and sound systems to amplify their voices, but Whitefield didn't need it—God gifted him with a powerful voice.

At Bristol, England, he had preached to 20,000 people in the open air and it was said that *all* could hear him. (Comment)

In New England, the revival reached its peak in 1741—and it was in July of that year at Enfield Massachusetts, that Edwards preached his most famous sermon, "*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.*"

In a little over two years, from 1740-1742, some 25 to 50 thousand people were added to the New England churches—out of a total population of only 300,000!

The revival eventually spread from New England into New Jersey, Pennsylvania and the middle colonies—and then into Virginia and the southern colonies.

Unfortunately, these movements of God don't last forever—and so sadly, by the close of the 1700's, this nation, once again, seemed headed for disaster.

You see up until that time thousands of colonial Americans clustered mostly along the Eastern seaboard—but now they began to pull up roots and head west through the Cumberland Gap.

Conditions at that time didn't exactly promote spiritual passion.

You see, they had all left their communities and home churches behind them (and the critical accountability they afforded them) and once out into the frontier, life became rough and the result—morals declined, and lawlessness abounded.

One writer describes what it was like:

“Corn liquor flowed freely...gun and rope settled far too many legal disputes. The West was crowded with thieves and murderers, with neither courts of law nor public opinion to raise a rebuke.”

Another author, in writing of this period, said,

“Christians who cared about the souls of men and the future of the country saw the peril. If such a spiritual drift should continue among the thousands of settlers already in the Alleghenies and beyond, it could bring down the judgment of God upon the entire young nation. Yet only a thin system of trails and waterways connected the colonies with that vast wilderness beyond the mountains. Humanly speaking, it seemed impossible for godly men to change the course of events.”

Yes, impossible for man—but God graciously intervened in a mighty way with what is now known as, *“The Second Great Awakening.”*

Most historians pinpoint Kentucky’s Logan County about 1799 as the beginning of the revival, when several Methodist and Presbyterian preachers joined together to preach the gospel with a strong emphasis on repentance.

Soon word of a mini revival began to spread as Kentuckians came from miles around.

The crowds grew, and soon visitors had to camp out for one, two and even three nights.

Men chopped down trees and made split log benches to accommodate the crowds creating a *“church in the wilderness”*—and *‘camp-meetings’* were born!

Everything came to a climax at a great meeting that took place in Bourbon County’s Cane Ridge in August of 1801.

It extended over several days and drew crowds estimated as high as 15,000—an incredible number of people in view of the small population in the area at that time.

The revival spread and had a profound effect on the lives and morals of society as thousands were swept into the Kingdom (and into churches)—more than 10,000 in Kentucky alone between 1800 and 1803.

But the *greatest* revival our nation has ever seen to date began in 1857—and its effect was felt for 40 years!

It began in a movement of prayer—and was sustained by a movement of prayer.

History records, that the spiritual conditions in the United States deteriorated in the middle of the 19th century as people were making money—“*hand over fist.*”

And as often is the case—their prosperity led to apathy and apathy led to apostasy—as the people began to turn their backs on God!

But a man of prayer named Jeremiah Lanphier, who was a stockbroker on Wall Street and who was grieved by all the carnality and depravity he saw going on around him—started a prayer meeting in the upper room of the Consistory Building of the Dutch Reformed Church in Manhattan.

He had advertised it, but that first week only 6 people out of a population of one million showed up, but the week after there were 14, and then 23—then they decided to meet every day.

Soon they filled the Dutch Reformed Church and the Methodist Church on John Street—and then every public building in downtown New York!

Famed newspaper editor Horace Greeley sent a reporter with horse and buggy riding around to the prayer meetings to see how many men were praying.

In one hour, he could only get to 12 meetings—but he counted 6100 men praying!

Then the spiritual damn burst and a landslide of prayer began!

Soon, it seemed that the whole city of New York was shutting down at noon for prayer!

Then people began to be converted—10,000 a week in New York City alone!

The movement spread throughout New England—church bells would sound calling people to prayer at 8am, 12noon, and at 6pm.

The revival went up the Hudson and down the Mohawk rivers—every church was packed beyond capacity!

The Baptists had so many people to baptize, they couldn't get them into their churches—so they went down to the river, cut a big square hole in the ice, and baptized them in the cold water!

The revival spread through much of the United States—in one year, more than a million people were converted.

The revival crossed the Atlantic, broke out in Northern Ireland and Scotland, in Wales and England, and then in South Africa, South India—and wherever else there were evangelicals there was revival!

There were other preachers used by God during this time to help spark or fan the fires of revival—men like Charles Finney, D.L. Moody and later on Billy Sunday.

Of course, the last great revival our nation has seen was the Jesus Movement that started in the 1960's (some trace its roots to the Azusa Street Revival in 1906)—it was that revival that gave birth to the Calvary Chapel Movement (our church heritage).

Now I bring all of this up because I believe that our nation is ripe once again for revival—in fact we stand on the precipice of judgment and the only thing that is going to save us is another revival and great awakening.

But where and how does revival start?

In the late 1800's there was a great evangelist known as Gypsy Smith who traveled around the world twice preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ on every continent and in many different countries—and wherever he preached revival broke out.

One day a delegation of people from a certain community came to him and said—“*Rev. Smith, we desperately want to see revival in our area, what can we do?*”

Gypsy said, “*I'll tell you exactly what to do and how it will come about. You go home, lock yourself in your bedroom, take a piece of chalk, draw a circle on the floor, kneel in that circle and pray fervently and brokenly that God would start a revival in that circle.*”

Folks, that's always where revival starts—with you! Not with your spouse or your neighbor or your co-workers—*but with you and me personally!*

Remember the famous injunction and promise the Lord gave us in 2Chronicles 7:14—

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV)

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.

God has given to us in this verse—the steps on the road to revival!

I. What We Are Commanded to Do

“If My people...”—Revival is something that happens in the heart of a believer—not an unbeliever.

The word itself means to, “*restore or return to consciousness or life; to make active or flourishing again.*”

There are a lot of *comatose* Christians in the Church who need to be revived and made to flourish again in their walk with God.

A. Humble themselves

James 4:6, 10 (NKJV)

⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “*God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.*”... ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

This involves the acknowledgment of guilt and confession of sin. (Explain)

Jeremiah 3:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: ‘Return, backsliding Israel,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I *am* merciful,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not remain angry forever. ¹³ Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the LORD your God, And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,’ says the LORD.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

B. Pray

Isaiah 59:14-16 (NLT2)

¹⁴ Our courts oppose the righteous, and justice is nowhere to be found. Truth stumbles in the streets, and honesty has been outlawed. ¹⁵ Yes, truth is gone, and anyone who renounces evil is attacked. The LORD looked and was displeased to find there was no

justice. ¹⁶ He was amazed to see that no one intervened to help the oppressed...["that there was no intercessor"]

Ezekiel 22:30-31 (NKJV)

³⁰ So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land [*to pray, an intercessor*], that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. ³¹ Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

General Robert E. Lee—

"Knowing that intercessory prayer is our mightiest weapon and the supreme call for all Christians today, I pleadingly urge our people everywhere to pray. Believing that prayer is the greatest contribution that our people can make in this critical hour, I humbly urge that we take time to pray—to really pray.

Let there be prayer at sunup, at noonday, at sundown, at midnight—all through the day. Let us all pray for our churches. Let us pray for ourselves, that we may not lose the word 'concern' out of our Christian vocabulary. Let us pray for our nation. Let us pray for those who have never known Jesus Christ and redeeming love, for moral forces everywhere, for our national leaders. Let prayer be our passion. Let prayer be our practice."

C. Seek My face

To seek the face of God is to get His attention and His help (as a little child does with his mom or dad).

You see God cannot look upon sin, so when a person or a people turn their back on God and start living in sin, God turns His back on them—and '*seeking His face*' means to, once again, find favor and fellowship with God!

Hosea 5:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim, And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, *even I*, will tear *them* and go away; I will take *them* away, and no one shall rescue. ¹⁵ I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense [sin]. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."

Hosea 10:12 (NKJV)

¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For *it is* time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.

We have forgotten God; we have taken His blessings for granted. We have become self-willed, self-sufficient and rebellious—sin has hardened our hearts.

We need to break up the *fallow* (neglected, dormant, hard) soil of our hearts—how?—thru repentance—

D. Turn from their wicked ways (Repentance)

“We must repent for judging the wickedness of our nation, while ignoring the sin in our own homes.”

What is repentance? (Use the highway illustration)

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT2)

¹⁰ For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

II. What God Promises to Do

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV)

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:

A. Hear from heaven

B. Forgive their sins

C. Heal their land

This is a promise that implies revival and is conditioned on our faithfulness to do our part—and then God promises to do His part!

On January 9, 1795, in a letter to William Smith, Edmund Burke made the statement—
“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”

So, is there any hope for America? What if God has already pronounced judgment upon this nation?

Jeremiah 18:7-8, 11 (NLT2)

⁷ If I announce that a certain nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down, and destroyed, ⁸ but then that nation renounces its evil ways [repents], I will not destroy it as I had planned.... ¹¹ “Therefore, Jeremiah, go and warn all Judah and Jerusalem. Say to them, ‘This is what the LORD says: I am planning disaster for you instead of good [judgment is coming]. So, turn from your evil ways, each of you, and do what is right.’”

Joel 2:12-14 (NKJV)

¹² “Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” ¹³ So rend [‘tear’] your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He *is* gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. ¹⁴ Who knows *if* He will turn and relent [not bring judgment], And leave a blessing behind Him...?

“But I’m only one person, what can I really do to change what’s going on around me?”

Everette Hale, Chaplain of the United States Senate and grandnephew of Nathan Hale (a Revolutionary War hero) said, *“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I should do and, with the help of God, I will do!”*

A Prayer for America

This was delivered on the eve of the Fourth of July 1947, by Peter Marshall, the former Chaplain of the United States Senate.

“God of our Fathers, whose Almighty hand hath made and preserved our nation, grant that our people may understand what it is they celebrate tomorrow.

May they remember how bitterly our freedom was won, the down payment that was made for it, the installments that have been made since this Republic was born, and the price that must yet be paid for our liberty.

May freedom be seen not as the right to do as we please but as the opportunity to please to do what is right.

May our faith be something that is not merely stamped upon our coins but expressed in our lives.

Let us, as a nation, not be afraid of standing alone for the rights of men, since we were born that way, as the only nation on earth that came into being “for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith.”

We know that we shall be true to the Pilgrim dream when we are true to the God they worshiped.

To the extent that America honors Thee, wilt Thou bless America, and keep her true as Thou hast kept her free, and make her good as Thou hast made her rich. Amen.”

What’s next for America?—hopefully REVIVAL!!