

*“Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.”*

Dear Fellow Redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and fellow Americans by the blessing of our God,

Yesterday Americans celebrated July 4<sup>th</sup> with fireworks, picnics, and parades, as we have always **done**, in remembrance of the freedom our nation’s first **patriots won!** But freedom will not endure if our nation’s **patriotism** is only a distant memory and we continue to rebel against God in unrighteousness.

When I graduated from High School in 1965, our nation was in the midst of the Viet Nam War. At that time the government **required** all 18 year-old males to register for service in the military. Many young men had already fled to Canada to **avoid** the draft.

Since I was in my first year of college at Immanuel, studying for the ministry, I was given a **deferment from** serving in the military. But the scarey lady at the **draft board** glared at me and said, *“If you drop out of college or seminary, **we will get you!**”* She was questioning my motives and my patriotism.

Several of my classmates did show their **patriotism** by their military service and by dying for our country. But I suggest to you this morning that the Christian may be a true patriot, not only if he is willing to **die** for his country, but also **if he is willing to LIVE for his country!**

### What is **THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT?**

#### I.

**First of all, the Christian patriot gives thanks to God for His blessings on our nation.** The American revolution was more than a rebellion against King George of England; **It was a rebellion against the God of heaven!**

The *“Boston Tea Party”* and the *“spirit of 1776”* were **against** the Word of God in Romans 13: ***“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that exist are ordained by God. Whoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God.”*** When Paul wrote these words, the Roman Christians were under the rule of Emperor Nero, one of the most evil and treacherous rulers in human history!

The colonial Americans wanted to be **free** from King George and England because they were being **taxed** without being **represented** in the British parliament. ***“No taxation without representation”*** they cried! In our own day, some have argued that we should not pay taxes to a government that funds abortions, gender transformation, or other anti-Christian activities. But Romans 13 **still** says to the *Christian patriot*: ***“Pay taxes to the powers that rule over you.”***

In the hundreds of years of Israel’s slavery in Egypt and 70-year captivity in Babylon, the Lord did not permit His people to rise up against the government. Where does God’s

Word tell us that political freedom and independence is man's "**inalienable right**"?

As **Christian patriots**, celebrating America's "*Independence Day*," we give all praise and thanks to our God! For by the mysterious working of His will, **He used the sinful rebellion of our nation's leaders for His own saving purpose!** He directed the framers of our Constitution to guarantee "**freedom of religion**," so that the Gospel of Christ might be proclaimed more widely than ever before since the days of the apostles!

From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the churches of Europe were being influenced and dominated by state governments and rationalists. Thousands came to America where they were **free** to worship God according to the teachings of His Word **without persecution**.

Tens of thousands of Lutherans came to plant the pure message of salvation by grace alone in this new land. **As Christian patriots, we give thanks to God for our political and religious freedoms for the sharing of true and lasting freedom in Jesus Christ!**

## II.

**As Christian patriots we also grieve over the sins that plague our nation.** A European visiting America in the early 1800's wrote: "*I looked for the greatness of America in her harbors and rivers and fertile fields, and her mines and commerce. It was not there. Not until I went into the churches and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the greatness of her power.*"

Today, those who visit America from other countries **do not see righteousness**, but sexual sins of all kinds, the murder of unborn children, unchecked greed and materialism, the rebellion of youth to all authority, and political corruption at every level!

A foreign visitor could attend a **hundred churches** before he ever heard the Law and the Gospel rightly preached! He could visit a **thousand churches** before hearing that the Bible **IS** God's Word from Genesis to Revelation, completely without error! The reason for the **sinfulness that disgraces our nation is the failure of America's churches!**

In the late 1800's church leaders began caving in to the belief of Atheists and humanistic evolutionists that there is no Creator-God. By the early 1900's the pew-people began to accept the idea that the origin of man and the creation account of Genesis are **not factual history, but a collection of myths from past civilizations**.

As the years passed, the authority of the whole Bible was being questioned. For why be so concerned with **exactly** what the Bible says, **if a person can't be sure that the Bible is actually God's Word?**

So, more emphasis in the churches was placed on "**Deeds, not creeds!**" In other words: "*We won't teach you what to BELIEVE from the Bible as long as you DO what is good!*" But no one can be "*good*" before God **without faith in Christ and the power of His Gospel!**

As the churches have failed to offer the correction, direction, and power that God intended through His Word, many Americans have come to believe **that nothing they do is really sinful as long as it suits them!**

The warning of our **Proverbs** text was echoed by General Douglas MacArthur 60 years ago: *"History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster."*

Now, as we grieve over the sins that disgrace our nation, and hasten its judgment, let's not think that **Christian patriots can do nothing!**

### III.

***We can go to work for our God and our country!*** Over the years, hundreds of thousands of American soldiers have taken up arms to defend our borders. But who can defend us against the greater evil *within our borders*, that threatens to bring the judgments of God upon our nation? **"YOU are the salt of the earth,"** Jesus says (*Matt. 5:13*). Because of His saving Word of truth in Jesus Christ, the Christian patriot is the **preservative** of the earth and the nation where God has placed him.

Not only are you the **preservative** of the earth and the nation, **"YOU are the LIGHT of the world,"** (*Mt. 5:16*) and the light of this nation! You can go to work for your God and your country! As true Christians, you been given **the wisdom of God, "the mind of Christ,"** as Paul wrote the Corinthian Church. (*1 Cor. 2:15-16*)

Teach your children to **think like Christ** by giving them His Word and they will also be the best of citizens. Be **good examples** to them by obeying the laws of the nation! **Pay taxes that are due. Give thanks** to God for our blessings in this country. **Use the wisdom** your God has given you to serve your government wherever possible, **especially by informed voting.**

As we share Christ's heart-transforming message of grace and forgiveness to our neighbors we are both salt and light to our fellow citizens. As we proclaim by our words and actions that Jesus Christ alone is **"the Way, the Truth, and the Life,"** fearful and troubled sinners are **freed** from their bondage to sin and the **fear** of death. They are enabled to know and love the true God and to follow His commandments. **From the joy of salvation in Christ 's sake comes the joy of living righteously for His sake!**

Finally, brethren let us not neglect to **pray** for our nation. ***We have the ear of God*** because of Jesus. **We have** the promises of Christ in the gospels that He will hear us. **We have** the command of God through Paul that we are to **"pray for kings and all who are in authority. . ."** (*1 Tim. 2:2*) Remember, God would have spared even Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of 10 righteous people, because ***Abraham prayed!***

Oh yes! We can go to work for our God and our country. ***Lord, forgive us and make us better Christian Patriots!*** Amen.

