



Sunday, July 4, 2021

Rev. Dr. Michael R. Fitzgerald, Senior Pastor



“A Holy Nation”

Exodus 19:1-6 (King James Version)

Welcome to all of you on this July 4th Sunday! On this 245th Birthday of the United States of America, I want to begin my sermon with this starting point. From its beginnings, this country has stood on the foundation of godly principles and the Word of God. This nation was formulated and begun on that connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. The center of our government in Washington, DC, is saturated with verses of Scripture on the walls of its structures and on the paperwork of our government. At the very top of the Washington Monument, 555 feet in the air, is an aluminum plate with the Latin inscription “Laus Deo” which means “Praise Be to God.” Those who erected this monument gave the glory to God as it stood as the highest point over the District of Columbia. This city was originally laid out in the form of a cross: The White House to the north, the Jefferson Memorial to the south, the Capitol to the east, and the Lincoln Memorial to the west. This country has stood on the paragon of godly freedom since its birth—a truth history cannot hide! Millions of people from nations all around the world have only dreamt to be a part of the United States of America and its blessings. Over the years, I believe God’s hand of favor and blessing has rested on this nation because of our beginnings of faith in Him. Praise God we are still free today!

However, I do believe our nation is at a critical point right now. Out of the last 245 years we have seen such a redirection of our country, especially in the last fifty years. Scripture is being removed from the walls of Washington and from the law books. The Word of God is being criticized more and more and ignored by our government leaders as being out of touch with modern thought. The Bible was once the primary teaching book in public schools; now it’s not even allowed in the classroom. Praise God for the Christian teachers in our classrooms! In my years in the pulpit, I’ve seen so many changes in the way America thinks about God’s word as it applies to a man and woman getting married. His word has been stretched all out of context in the way marriage is now considered. Living together without being married has sadly become a very accepted lifestyle. The value of human life is outside the Word of God—it’s not considered a gift of God rather it’s considered as a convenience that can be erased by abortion in a moment. The central place the church has played in American culture is now fading. Churches are more and more emptying out, and the Word of God is less and less effective. Praise God for the families of Christ who continue to worship, serve, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves through the love of Jesus Christ.

Sadly, we see a nation headed toward self-rule rather than God’s rule. If you don’t know this, your head is in the sand! More and more, we’re setting aside the Word of God and the principles upon which we were raised. Today, we’re going to see a warning of God to the people of God. These are the people He created and chose—the nation of Israel. God has brought Israel to freedom out of the clutches of slavery that had been in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years. Israel had crossed the Red Sea; they had gone through the desert and arrived at the base of Mount Sinai. For the first time in generations, they were a free people. The nation would camp there for eleven months; the rest of Exodus takes place while they’re in camp. In

Chapter 19, God meets Moses at Mount Sinai and gives a warning to his newly-freed nation. Through Moses, God says “If you want to remain free, this is what you have to do.” Keep in mind, these words are 3,000+ years old but they speak to us today because God’s word does not change—it’s immutable, perfect, and will remain so for all eternity.

“¹In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. ²For they were departed from Rephidim and were come to the desert of Sinai and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. ³And Moses went up unto God and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁴Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagles’ wings and brought you unto myself. ⁵Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. ⁶And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” Read verse 5 again. Circle the words “if” and “then”—these two words are very important. The new nation of Israel has set up camp at the base of Mount Sinai; Moses goes up on the mountain to confer with God face-to-face. God sends a message back to His people that’s encapsulated here in verses 4, 5, and 6. In verse 4 God tells Moses “Never forget where you came from—your Egyptian slavery and the horror you lived through. Never forget the way your taskmasters worked over you and drove you into the work day after day. I freed you and bore you on eagles’ wings. I brought you out of slavery unto Myself.” What God wants Moses to relay to his people is to never let them forget where they came from and who saved them. Never let God’s history in them slip away.

I did some research on “eagles’ wings” (verse 4). Eagles teach their young to fly simply by pushing them out of the nest. The eaglet has never used its wings before; it’s a long way down as the nest is built so high off the ground! As the baby is flopping around and trying to figure out how to use its wings, its mama is flying underneath it all the time catching the little one until it can fly on its own; she bares it up on her wings. God said “Israel, you came out of Egypt by Me. I am the one who opened the Red Sea, gave you manna to eat, opened the rock and gave you water to drink. Even when you whined and complained and wanted to go back to Egypt because you didn’t have all the variety of food, you would rather go back into slavery so you could eat well. Even then I loved you, carried you, made sure you were safe. I brought you out of slavery Myself simply because I love you, chose you, and you belong to Me. I bore you up even when you were weak. God expresses His greatest desire for Israel to be a free nation in Him—under His protection, under His grace, His leading. His simple request to them—never forget Me. Never lose me.

In verses 5 and 6 we find an extremely important moment in Biblical history because God expresses the believers’ relationship to Him with an “if” “then” statement. It’s called a “conditional statement” where God says “If you will do this for Me, then I will do this for you.” Read these verses again. God says “If you, Israel, continue to obey My voice, keep My Holy Word, remain true to the covenant between God and His people, then you will be a special treasure to Me on all the earth. Your nation is going to be My witness to freedom. My chosen people are going to show the world how to be free and holy. Israel will be a model of godliness; you should never forget Me.” God calls Israel a “treasure, priests, an holy nation.” He wants His people to be “one nation under God.” He’s asking us to be the same.

Today, it's our turn to be that nation and that model to the world. Thirteen years after Mount Sinai Jesus walked the earth. He expressed the same commission—Matthew 28:19-20. **“19Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”** Our Savior says to us “Claim the world; change the world with the love and the Word of Jesus Christ. Reach, teach, baptize, disciple new believers.” In response to our faithfulness, Jesus says **“If we will go out to lead the world to Jesus, then I will be with you always even unto the end of time.”** It's a conditional statement. We're to carry out a holy work under the leadership of God Almighty and the Lord will be with us through every day we live. Throughout the Bible, God teaches people to show the world freedom. We believers worship and live in this Word. We raise our families in the Lord Jesus Christ and walk daily with Him. God can change the world through us. If the church ever loses “one nation under God”—the passion to stay true to our Holy God, remember and follow Him, not just “go through the motions” (which sadly, I think many churches are doing right now) then it's going to result in the loss of our freedom. Israel failed in being that holy nation and lost their freedom again.

God lays down the principle in Exodus, again in Matthew; it's still in effect today. On this Sunday, July 4th, 2021, we celebrate our nation's 245th birthday. I believe if we're going to remain free, a special weight rests on our shoulders as the church. We are the model for our nation; the people of God in our country to lead it back to the Lord. If there's ever been an age where God's people need to be true and faithful witnesses of the freedom of forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ and to stand on His word, it is now! If there's ever been a time for revival in the church, it is now! If there's ever been an age where we say we will not follow the ways of the world but will continue to follow our Lord, it is now! In the midst of this country, it's really up to us church, to be the models of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can stand in courage, or we can sit in compromise. We can worship in faith or we can stay home and let somebody else have our seat. How sad! We can model Jesus Christ to our children and grandchildren, or we can throw them out in the world without any foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ—the world will eat them up! Are you giving them that foundation and allowing the church to help you? They will desperately need it in days to come!

The future of our nation does not rest in the President, a Governor, or the government. It rests on what God's people do. The Bible's emphatic—true freedom comes from God. In 2 Chronicles 7:14 it says **“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.”** (The choir then sang a beautiful anthem “If My People.”) It's up to us, church. God says **“If you do this for Me, then I will heal you, bless you, lead you, and you will be My people in this world.** I don't know how other pastors are leading their churches today or what sermons are being preached across our nation, but I'm asking my church, my flock to say the same thing that Joshua said in 24:15 “...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Before we partake of the Lord's Supper this morning, can we approach the altar of our hearts or this physical altar here and say “Lord, help me be a model of Christ where I walk. Help my church to be a model of Christ in my land. Help us to remember what You've done for us. Help us to be thankful for forgiveness. Help us to have Your purpose. Help us change the United States of America for the Lord Jesus Christ.” I

pray we will make that commitment. If there's someone here who's never come to Him, praise God we have freedom in America. We pray that in the future we'll have that freedom to live our lives and to worship according to the Word of God. One of these days when our physical lives end on earth, those freedoms are done. But there's another freedom that overrides that—freedom of forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the debt of our sin on the old rugged cross and took our place there. He took my name and yours to that cross; He died to forgive our personal sin against Him. Through His blood shed for us He purchased our forgiveness that we might be free for eternity in Him that He would fulfill the words of John 14:3 "...I'm going to prepare a place for you, and one day I'll take you home for all eternity." That's freedom! If you don't have that freedom or know Him as your Savior, this is the moment you can say "Yes, Lord Jesus, I do believe." Believers, may we keep America free to be the model of the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray we will make decisions that please Him.

Let Us Pray: Father God, bless us in these moments I pray. As we come before You ready to take the elements of The Lord's Supper, bless us as we prepare our hearts to be the models of Jesus Christ in this world. Bless us to receive whatever You have for us, and bless us in these moments of decision. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*At the end of the service, the Celebration of the Lord's Supper
and Commissioning of the Pastor Search Committee
took place.*