

What America Needs

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to Micah chapter 6.

Micah chapter 6. God's allowed me to serve on five continents through mission trips and those type things. And although I've enjoyed most moments on every trip, I don't want to live anywhere else besides America.

I also happen to believe I'm in the best part of America with the best people in America. So I get to enjoy the best of the best. And I am for America.

I don't worship America. I worship God. And I don't want to try to institutionalize Christianity as a religion in people's hearts that don't want it.

That does not work. Constantine tried that in Rome after he felt like God spoke to him in a dream and he had victory in battle.

[1 : 09] And so he institutionalized Christianity as a religion. And the reality is you can't force conversions. You can't force manipulations. You can't make people do that.

And it led in that day and age to a weak and fake and watered down church filled with more tears than wheat. And that's very much what it would do.

Folks, I want to be clear. America is not a Christian nation. It's a nation that was founded on Christian principles. But you cut the TV on when you get home, if you dare.

And you'll find that this nation that was established for us to have the right to worship the way we're to worship was a nation that was started the right way, even though it was flawed at the time, 248 years ago.

It is now a nation that went far away from its foundation. It's a nation where Christianity is freely shared, and I'm thankful for that.

[2 : 11] But most Americans are not Christians. I'll go as far as to say that most that claim to be Christians are not Christians. Verbal agreement with something is not enough.

You've got to be hooked into the vine. You've got to be, you've got to know Jesus Christ. And we can't legislate that. Pass all the laws you want to and enforce them so that everyone does what's right.

But listen, if we get all the laws straight and everybody behaves and don't break any laws, if they don't know Christ, they'll spend eternity apart from him.

I believe as American citizens we have a responsibility to vote. The vote is not really about making America Christian.

It's about participating in the process to do everything we can to get the best, most godly decisions that we can for America. And when leadership in America appears to have no moral compass, at least from a godly standpoint, Did you watch the debate?

[3 : 26] You may have to hold your nose when you vote. America is desperate for good, godly leadership. And you may have been like me and looked at the television and said, How in the world can a nation, as great with opportunity as America is, not have good, godly leadership in place to carry through?

I'll tell you why. Our country senses it. It is. You can smell it and all the liberal, perverted godlessness that fills the news stories.

But I want to be clear about something. Jesus said the devil is the ruler of this world. You know what that means? That means that people listen to evil influences more than they do godly ones.

However, we're not the first nation to deal with poor leadership. We're not the first nation to have an ungodly atmosphere. We're not the first nation to be plagued with lostness.

It's not a new thing. It goes way back. Sin sickness is one of the main reasons why Israel fell in 722 B.C. Sin sickness will lead a nation to fall.

[4 : 49] And in that day, God allowed the Assyrians, which was a very evil people among themselves, to overtake the capital of Israel and lead to the fall of a nation.

And the prophet Micah predicted it would happen. The word of the Lord came to him. In Micah 1 verse 6, he said, Therefore, I will make Samaria a heap in the open country, a place for planting vineyards, and I will pour down her stones into the valley and uncover her foundation.

Their turn from God led to their demise. Because God does not hide the heartache that comes from waywardness. And we ought to learn from that example.

I believe he put it in scripture for us to see so that we'll learn from that example. Not only did Micah speak of the fall of Israel, which he lived right in the midst of, but he also spoke a concern of the same nature for Jerusalem, the capital of Judah.

And his message was one of warning. I believe we live in a day when America needs a warning. And if America is going to be renewed, I got news for you.

[6 : 08] Renewal starts with God's people. Not by voting it in, although we have a responsibility, again, as citizens and godly folks to vote appropriately.

But by living and watching God bless that faithfulness. Micah makes it clear what our priority is in such a situation as he lived and in the situation as we live.

And it's actually the key passage in all of the prophecy of Micah. It's found in our key passage, Micah chapter 6, verse 6 through 8, and says this, With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He has told you, O man, what is good. Key verse in all this book. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

[7 : 22] Micah was a country preacher that went to a big city in Jerusalem with a burden and a message. He described his situation in Micah chapter 3, verse 8, But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might to declare to Jacob his transgressions and to Israel his sin.

Micah was just a common man with a burning message, and he knew if his nation didn't change their ways that it would not last. And his prophecy came true.

Within these nations, there were a lot of unfair treatment. There were corrupt leaders in business, corrupt leaders in politics, and in every way of life. And their fatal sins involved moral corruption, violence, deceitfulness.

In Micah chapter 3, verse 9 and 10, he reveals the sad lack of loyalty among the leaders. When he says this, Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who detest justice and make crooked all that is straight, who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. Micah predicted disaster would come to a nation, and such disgrace would come to the whole nation, would cause them to blush with embarrassment.

[8 : 46] Proverbs 14, 34, and I always think about this passage on July the 4th and the week of. Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach, also translated a disgrace to any people.

With the moral corruption, the unfair treatment, the riotous living, the lack of purity, and the lack of loyalty that characterize these nations.

Their profile, sadly, but surely, resembles some things we see in our country today. It does. And let me imply, therefore, if we heed their warnings, we can be helped.

In a day when we celebrate sodomy for a whole month, and are proud of our sin, and parade our shameless sin around, when we have outward demonstrations of hatred toward God's chosen people, when somehow you can be racist toward some people, we have looked to an amoral, incapable, ungodly host of leadership in our country.

And we've traded bedfellas like baseball cards to the nation in so many ways as a disgrace. When illicit sex is celebrated, and drug moderation is promoted, and by the way, alcohol is still the most deadly of them, homosexuality is condoned and celebrated, abortion is ignored, lying is expected, most marriages fail, and most kids are parentless.

[10 : 35] When government is helpless and crime is relentless, Christians too often are gutless. The church has little influence in those atmospheres.

So how does the church respond to America? What can we do to change a nation? Well, I encourage you to learn from our past because we can continue to protest, we can picket, we can sue folks, we can march, we can pass laws, we can publicly pray, we can hold vigils, we can make posts, we can retweet stuff, we can write books, raise money, wear t-shirts, we can even smack on bumper stickers.

It's not making a lot of difference in America. it's on a downward moral spiral. And the church is too often influenced by the culture instead of influencing the culture.

And that's the exact opposite as to how Christ told us to respond to our world. So don't hide the light of God's love and truth under a basket. As Jesus said, let it shine.

Shine forth. We are the spiritual zest of this nation. the guiding lights. It is our responsibility as the salt of the world to flavor our society.

[11 : 58] And the best options that Americans have is the same options that all Americans have. The best option is salvation through Christ. And we must do everything we can to honor and glorify Christ.

We have a message the world needs to hear through our mouths, through our lives, through our love. We grow disgusted often because we're looking at a world that lacks hope, that lacks peace, and we're wondering why they act like they do.

We're expecting righteousness to come from people who don't know the Lord. That's a bogus thought, folks. Don't expect godliness from those that don't know the Lord. It's not going to happen. It's not going to happen.

America cares little about Christianity because most that claim Christ are not living for Him. And the world sees the difference in that in too many lives. Faith's not merely associating with Christ.

It's having your life changed by Christ. It stirs what we do. It stirs why we do it. And I believe to win the world, we have to do what verse 8 instructs us to do.

[13 : 10] Christians, this is how you can make a difference in your nation. act justly. Uphold what is right in our lifestyle.

Take on spiritual responsibility seriously. I want you to hear what John says in 1 John 1, 5-7. He says this, this is the message we've heard from Him and proclaim to you that God is light.

In Him there is no darkness at all. Listen to this, if we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all of our sin. If our lives are not marked by our fellowship with God, by our fellowship with His people, we're not in fellowship with the Lord. It has to show forth in our lives.

And any time that we proclaim to have the Lord and feel secure about that, but yet don't resemble that in our life, it's shady at best.

[14 : 22] Our lives are to be marked by acting out our faith and that is described here as justly. So how do you do that? Well, you surrender your lives to Him. It begins in one day when you surrender your life to the Lord Jesus, asking Him to forgive you of your sins, to come into your life and to cleanse you.

There has to be a starting point to this relationship as any other relationship. There has to be a starting point to that. And so one day you surrender your life to Him and do you know what you do the next day? You surrender your life to Him.

No, you don't get saved again, but you get renewed once again. You spend the rest of your days giving the Lord your life, surrendering our lives to Him.

Not one time just, but all the time from this day forward. seeking His will in prayer. We live our lives by His word where His will is revealed.

We grow together with His people because you will not be everything that you need to be for the Lord if you try to go it alone.

[15 : 30] Jesus came to go on a cross and die for sinners. rise again and promise eternal life found in Him.

And He came to establish a church to reach the rest of the world and to give us strength to do everything that we can for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We act justly. Second thing is we love mercy. There's a difference in grace and mercy. Acting gracefully is giving to people what they do not deserve. treating people better.

Mercy is not giving people what they deserve. And God calls us to be merciful. To treat people better than they deserve.

It is a word, this word for mercy is a word that is used in consistency to talk about the consistent, reliable, kind, love that God has for us.

[16 : 36] And when we love mercy, we share His love with other people. I want you to hear me clearly. There's no greater need on earth than the love of Jesus Christ.

And so we love folks in the Lord and when they ask us why we're doing it, we tell them why. Because Jesus changed my life and He changed yours too. We love mercy. Lastly, we walk humbly before our God.

How much time do you give the Lord each day? You don't have to be honest with me, be honest with yourself, be honest with the Lord. How much time do you give the Lord each day? When He reveals what you ought to do in your life, either through the precepts of His word that you're familiar with or in your own time with Him when He reflects and uses His word to speak into your life, how much do you obey His will?

How much do you even ask of His will? A humble walk before God is one where we put God first, then we put others before ourselves and then we come along.

Now, if you look at this whole passage and you look at everything that it calls for to do justice and love kindness and to walk humbly with your God, if we do those things, that means that humility, obedience, and mercifulness proclaimed in a total lifestyle is not only our Christian duty, but if being a good American means loving your country, leading it in the right direction, helping all Americans to succeed, and letting everyone enjoy their rights without the infringement of others, then our American duty is to share Christ.

[18 : 32] I believe our greatest infringement as Christians, our greatest infringement to America is failing to tell them their house is on fire.

It's failing to tell them that the smoke of our nation's activities are choking them. Now, let's just get real. The fires of damnation are licking at their feet. But that's exactly what we do when we don't share Christ.

We just don't bother to get involved. Jesus said, what does it, what does one prosper if he gains the whole world yet loses his own soul? And because of that, we have a responsibility to share Christ with our nation, sharing the greatest love possible.

We have a responsibility to sharing Christ with our neighbor, pointing them toward righteousness. We have a responsibility to sharing Christ with our coworkers, giving them the opportunity at true success because true success can't be found outside of Christ.

We do not have the right to stand in the way of one's opportunity in Christ. And when we know the answer and don't give it, would you warn a child playing in the road that a car was coming?

[20 : 03] If a family was asleep in their house and you noticed their house was on fire, would you bother to wake them up and tell them? much of America, much of America does not know that they'll spend eternity apart from God.

They're just not aware of it. They haven't listened. So let's not yell at them. Let's tell them of our concern. Let's live it out before them and walk it before them and tell them your story.

Has Christ changed your life? best person to tell that story is you. And you need to trust not your eloquence in being able to say it.

You need to trust that God's instructed us to do that. And he gets in the middle of it. And the Holy Spirit gets in the middle of it. And your humble, somewhat broken testimony of what Christ did to you somehow impacts somebody else's life, not because of the power of what you say, but because of the power of the Holy Spirit of God working between you and working in their lives.

You never understand the timing of God. I question it sometimes. But I'll tell you what's special about it. What I do know is that God's working in people's lives that I don't know anything about and God's working in my life that people don't know anything about.

[21 : 41] And when he puts us in contact with one another, special things can happen sometimes. Divine appointments where lives can change. And that's our responsibility. So my hope and prayer this week of the 4th, may we be stirred by the power of the gospel more than the power of politics and more than the power of our own selfish priorities.

may we be stirred by the power of the gospel. Never head bowed, never I could...