

A Nation Worth Preserving

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Date: 12 July 2026

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[0:00] And all God's people said, Amen. Thank you so much choir and orchestra for leading us this morning. If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 6.

Deuteronomy chapter 6. Well, the world has come to America recently to see the World Cup. I don't even know where it is.

But soccer is not the main sport around here, but it is in the rest of the world, or football. And I have had fun listening to people's impressions of America as they visit it for the first time.

It is something that Americans need to listen to, quite honestly. A Scottish fan described Bucky's as a, quote, gas station mixed with Disney World wrapped in a gift shop.

Freddie from Germany called Taco Bell the Holy Land. Elsa from Sweden tasted ranch dressing and said, I won't ever be able to live without it.

[1:07] And I will tell you that I always ask missionaries what they need and what we can bring. And many times I'll take an extra suitcase full of stuff that they can't get overseas, but they can get here.

Many times they ask for dry ranch dressing because it is not available anywhere else around. It really, it's a rarity. Kenny asked for ibuprofen.

And he said, can you find me 500 caplets of ibuprofen? And we took him 1,000, praise God. So anyway, over and over again, European visitors are shocked at the vastness of our country and the friendliness of Americans.

I saw a South African that was amazed at a truck stop did not have an armed guard and had bottled water and an ice machine on the sidewalk in front of the store and nobody was even taking it.

I didn't tell him the rest of the story. I didn't tell him the rest of the story. But anyway, that's what he thought. One Scottish fan woke up his Bostonian neighbors playing the bagpipes at 630 a.m.

[2:19] And he was greeted with breakfast and gifts. Another Bostonian said of the Scottish, he said, the Tartan Army is the best thing in Boston since Tom Brady.

Listen, friend, I love to travel the world. I do, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to go and serve the Lord in Dublin and to be able to see some things along the way. But I'm telling you, I love to come home.

We live in the best country in the world, period. And for those that don't believe it, you are welcome to leave. And for those of us who stay, I want you to know we've been entrusted with much.

We must protect it. We must preserve the good of our country and root out the bad. A month ago, Dawn and I gave our oldest daughter away in marriage, and it served as a stark reminder to me that every generation eventually hands the future over to the next generation.

I'm not the only one who understood that. Moses understood that. And he shared that. And we still need to keep it before us. May this ring in our ears, our hearts, our minds, as strong as it did in those that heard it for the first time in person.

[3:43] Deuteronomy chapter 6, beginning verse 1 says, Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the rules that the Lord your God commanded you to teach you.

That you may do them in the land to which you're going over, to possess it. That you may fear the Lord your God, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all of his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

Hear, therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. These words that I command you today shall be upon your heart.

You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

[5:01] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates. Those words that I just read once could not be read because a man's hand was lying on top of it.

Whose hand was that? George Washington. Upon his swearing in, George Washington placed his hand on an open Bible and made an oath to the Lord as his fingers touched this very scripture.

Now, does that surprise you? I'm sure that the forefathers of our nation did not intend for our laws to be interpreted as they are today. Today, the men that founded this nation were not like many of the men and the women that lead our nation today.

The few good, godly leaders we have are in a fight, folks. How do we protect what we have and prepare the next generation for what's to come?

I believe we have to look in three directions. One is I think we have to look back. My great, great, great, great grandpa was the chief justice of the South Carolina State Supreme Court and a governor of the state of South Carolina.

[6:30] He was voted down by the Senate when he was recommended by Washington to take John Jay's place as chief justice of the Supreme Court. That's what happens when you say dumb stuff days before a vote.

My great, great, great grand uncle was the youngest to sign the Declaration of Independence and was also a governor of South Carolina.

I got Rutledge in my blood. Do you know that some of the men who signed our Declaration of Independence declaring our commitment to break ties with Great Britain were also men of God that were responsible for founding the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, as well as the Philadelphia Bible Society.

Many times our founding fathers are made out to be deities. In other words, those that believe that God was the creator, but that he does not value a relationship with us, or that we need not value a relationship with him.

They don't think it's possible. They believe that after creation that God took his hand off the earth. A deist believes that we can't commune with God, that we have no relationship with him, that he is simply a cosmic creator with no relation or concern for our world.

[8:09] I want to ask you this morning to begin with, do you think these men sound like deities?

Patrick Henry said, it cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians.

Not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. John Adams, when speaking of the general principles of which the fathers achieved independence said, I will avow that I then believed and now believe that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God and that those principles of liberty are as unalterable as human nature.

End quote. They believed our leaders ought to be men of Christ. Benjamin Franklin said, he shall introduce into public affairs the principles of Christianity that will change the face of the world.

John Quincy Adams, our sixth president, said the highest glory of the American Revolution was this, it connected with one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government and the principles of Christianity.

Sadly, at least in my perspective, that bond seems to have dissolved somewhat in our society.

Noah Webster, as in Webster's Dictionary, said this, the religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and his apostles, which enjoins humility, piety, and benevolence, which acknowledges in every person a brother, a sister, a citizen with equal rights.

[9:57] This is the genuine Christianity. And it is to this Christianity that we owe our free constitution of government. Eat that up, ACLU.

These wise men understood that liberty is all about Christ. You can't separate it. In 1796, the Supreme Court of Maryland ruled, by our form of government, the Christian religion is the established religion, and all sects and denominations of Christians are placed under the same equal footing and are equally entitled to protection in their liberty.

All denominations of Christians, is what Maryland said. In reality, the First Amendment was added to make sure that one Christian denomination didn't rise above other Christian denominations. And the assumption was that Christianity was a given. In the beginning of the nation, there was no conflict with the First Amendment and having Washington lay his hand on the Bible open to Deuteronomy 6.

There was no conflict with the First Amendment and having chaplains of Congress lead the worship service that concluded Washington's inauguration. There was no conflict with the First Amendment to be supporting ministers and missionaries with federal money, listen to this, for the first 100 years of our nation.

[11 : 33] My! Times have changed. In 1781, a publisher petitioned Congress for permission to print Bibles. And Congress approved of it and stated this, the Congress of the United States approves and recommends to the people the Holy Bible for use in schools.

End of quote. When it was challenged, the Supreme Court responded, why not the Bible, and especially the New Testament, be read and taught as divine revelation in the schools?

Where can the purest principles of morality be learned so clearly or so perfectly as from the New Testament? The state of Delaware's Constitution, 1776 stated, everyone appointed to public office must say, listen to this, I'm going to repeat this, the state of Delaware, the Constitution of 1776, stated, everyone appointed to public office must say, I do profess faith in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forevermore.

And I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration. End of quote. John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and one of the many contributors to the Constitution stated this, Providence, when he spoke of God, has given to our people the choice of their rulers and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.

He went on to write, the right to hold office was to be extended to persons of any Christian denomination.

[13 : 35] That's a lot, folks. That's the foundation of our nation. And I say that today because that's not information that you're going to find in your typical history book.

You're not going to hear that. These truths have to be preserved and carried on to the next generation. But I don't think we only look back.

I believe we also look up. Scripture says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. The issue is not simply what our founders believed, although it needs to be known and I believe it needs to be celebrated.

the issue today is what we believe. The issue today is what we're going to do about it. George Washington may have placed his hand upon Deuteronomy chapter 6, but the greater question today is if Deuteronomy 6 is in our hearts.

Placing your hand on something is one thing. Placing God's word in your heart is another thing. Verse 6 of Deuteronomy chapter 6 says, And these words that I command you today shall be upon your heart.

[14 : 57] God's word in our hearts is what really changes a nation. Having a burden for God's word to be paramount in all that we do will lead God's people to pray.

And when we pray as we're instructed to pray, God moves. 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 1 through 4 says this, First of all, then I urge you that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

This is good and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Christians, we need to pray for those that lead us and pray for our lives will not get in the way when God wants to do a work in us and through us.

We need to pray that we are peaceful. What a difference it makes when we pray for God's leadership in our land.

[16 : 26] Friend, it is time we throw up our hands, but not in disgust, but we throw up our hands to God in prayer. That we look up to Him. That we turn to Him.

That we don't get sour on the changes that have happened in our world and in our nation. It's not really about that. It's got more to do with how that's affected us.

Are we salt and light in the world in which we live? What are we doing for the cause of Christ in the way in which we live? in the way in which we talk?

In the places in which we go? What are we to do? I think we look up. But not only that, but I also think that we look ahead. For Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 7 says, teach them diligently to your children.

And I talk a lot about this. It was Deuteronomy chapter 6, the Shema is a key part of Jewish life.

[17 : 31] It was central to what they stood for in the days of the Old Testament. It is central in Judaism today.

They look back to this passage of Scripture. Scripture. It is key. It teaches us what our home ought to be like.

Jesus said in Matthew 28, 18 through 20, that we need to make disciples in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and the uttermost.

We have a story to tell. And that story starts at home. To trust the power of the gospel and share that gospel.

Share it faithfully at home. Share it as you go. pray that God will convince you that what America needs and what this world needs is a godly generation that is protecting our freedoms and sharing our love for what we can be in Christ to our children.

[18 : 48] I want you to hear me today. Every generation is only, excuse me, every nation is only one generation away from forgetting what made it great.

Every nation is only one generation away from forgetting what made it great. And that's why Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 6 wasn't talking to politicians.

He was talking to parents. He was talking to grandparents. He understood that what happens in the living room today determines what happens in the nation tomorrow.

The future of America will not ultimately be determined in Washington, D.C. It'll be determined in our homes.

It'll be determined around our kitchen tables. Listen to me, church. It'll be determined in our churches and in our hearts that love the Lord their God with all of their heart, all of their soul, all of their mind.

[20 : 16] It'll be determined by people that look back to see how God led us to this point. and who, let me add, trains their children in that knowledge.

If the history books don't tell it that we use in schools, then let's buy some different books and do it at the house so they'll know it anyway.

it'll be determined by people that make sure the truth is known.

It'll be determined by people who look up to the Lord and bless this country with their prayers for not only its greatness, but also pray for its godliness.

Amos chapter 5 verse 24 says, The future of America is determined by those that look ahead and invest in the gospel, invest their lives in godly character, invest in godly principles in the coming generation.

[21 : 32] My prayer is, oh dear God, may we be found faithful in doing all we can do to reach as many as we can and to make this nation as great as we can.

My friend, that's where we came from. Let's do everything we can to get back to that and live it out in every aspect of our lives.

Before we point fingers at everything else that's wrong in the world, let's seek God's face at what's wrong with us. Let's get that right.

When that's right, may God by the power of his Holy Spirit influence those around us more than we could ever imagine. Amen? Amen.

Let's pray.