

Lukas Stoltzfus
My Country, 'Tis of Thee

America. What do you think of when you hear the word “America”? Do you think about pilgrims, patriots, brave men and women of the past and present? Or do you think about the events happening in America today? Do you see the things that American citizens do, the way they act? I see changes in America that are leading us away from what our founding fathers had envisioned for us, a sweet land of liberty.

Imagine that we are in the year 1620 and we are on the Mayflower. We are sitting in the room where the *Mayflower Compact* is being written. What are they writing? What principles and values will be used to establish this America? As long ago as 1620, Christian principles and values such as honesty, integrity, personal responsibility, courage, and hard work were the basic models for America. These core beliefs are what made up an American. They were central to the Pilgrims, our founding fathers, and to Christians today. The Pilgrims and the Founding Fathers believed in and trusted God. George Washington once said, “I believe in God and He is the center of my life.” The writing of the *Constitution* was based on Isaiah 33:22; it says, “The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king.” This verse was the model of our government: the judicial, legislative, and executive branches all stem from this idea. America was based on Christian principles and values. The evidence is clear that it was, but that is not how it is today.

Do you remember the attacks of 9/11? The day after the attacks, Americans showed incredible character by helping strangers, donating money, volunteering, and, most importantly, praying. During a crisis, we always rise to the occasion but quickly go back to our normal lives. Sadly, many Americans pursue a life of pleasure and entertainment. They have neglected their responsibilities as citizens and neighbors. They want to play, play, and play a little more. In that pursuit of pleasure and indulgence, many have become selfish and self-centered. They overindulge in food and fun and then complain when their health fails or they fall into debt. Hard work and service are looked down upon. Pleasure and power have replaced God and country.

Early America revolved around a strong sense of community. If someone was in trouble or needed help, everyone would pitch in and get involved. It is our responsibility as individuals and members of the church to care for those in need. Now many Americans put their trust in the government rather than in God and their fellow man. Their expectation is that the government will provide everything from housing to health care. By doing this, the people have forgotten God, and the government has become too powerful. America has become one nation under man. Since the Bible and prayer have been removed from public schools, children are not taught morality. They do not see it in their homes or communities and have lost their moral compasses. Now, they make up their own right from wrong. America, as bad as it is now, could get far worse.

In 1831 Alexis de Tocqueville came to America from France to study the people. He wrote:

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there; in her fertile fields and boundless prairies, and it was not there; in her rich mines and her vast world commerce, and it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

America is in jeopardy of losing her greatness because she has ceased to be good. She has forgotten God. After signing the *Constitution*, Benjamin Franklin was once asked by a woman, “What have you given us, sir?” He replied, “A Republic, if you can keep it.” Can we as Americans hold on to that Republic? John Adams states, “Our *Constitution* was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” Adams is saying that a republic could not exist without a moral and religious people. Peter Marshall wrote in *The Rebirth of America*,

The choice before us is plain, Christ or chaos, conviction or compromise, discipline or disintegration. I am rather tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as American citizens. The time is come; it is now when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship. America’s future depends upon her accepting and demonstrating God’s government.

America has become a lost nation. In Revelation 2:5, Jesus says, “I will come quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place—unless you repent.” This verse tells us that if we do not turn back to God, we will fall like many others.

We need to reconnect to God as individuals and then as a nation. If we turn back to God, we can turn this country around. Some ways that we can accomplish this is to vote for the good, Christian-minded politicians so that they can repair our government. We need to live solid Christian lives and follow the teachings of the Bible. We can educate ourselves by listening to the truth, reading history, and supporting people who want to restore this country’s conservative values. We can look to our Christian leaders for guidance and we can support Principal Approach education. God allowed America to be born because she was devoted to Him and gave Him the glory. It is time for all of us, young and old, to get on our knees and pray for this country. It is our duty to defend what God has given us, to remain the shining city on the hill and a beacon of hope for all people. What are you going to do to help restore America, to once again become our sweet land of liberty?

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