Will the Real Church Please Stand Up?

2 Chronicles 7:14 / 1 Peter 5:8

6/5/22

This past week I have been very heavy hearted for many reasons, but one of the main reasons I think is due to the current condition of our nation. Last week I made a comment that the United States though at one time stood upon Godly principles and morals, cannot be called a “Christian Nation” today as it has blatantly turned its back on God and His ways.

In recent years modern historians and secular humanists have denied the fact that America was founded as a "Christian Nation." But America’s Christian roots run deep and wide. Research America’s founding documents, the Mayflower compact, The Declaration of Independence, the writings of the Founding Fathers, and see for yourself.

* You will see that 95 percent of the 200 Founding Fathers were practicing Christians and exercised their faith in public office, and at home. And the other 5 percent acknowledged God and the Bible as divine truth.
* In 1774 the first official act in the First Continental Congress was to open in prayer, which ended in these words: "…the merits of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Savior. Amen." They then went on to read four chapters of the Bible.
* All but two of the first 108 universities founded in America were Christian.
* In 1782 the United States Congress declared, "The Congress of the United States recommends and approves the Holy Bible for use in all schools."
* In 1789, Congress, in the midst of framing the Bill of Rights passed the first federal law touching education, declaring, "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."
* In 1854, the House Judiciary Committee said: "in this age, there is no substitute for Christianity…That was the religion of the founders of the republic, and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants."
* In 1892 the Supreme Court conducted an exhaustive examination of America’s heritage, starting with Columbus, and then cited 87 precedents to conclude that this was a "Christian nation."

Many Americans are ignorant of these historical facts. For centuries, we were taught a providential view of American history that presented our Godly heroes and moral foundation upon which our nation was built. However, in recent decades, a new version of history has assaulted the fiber of our nation, censoring the core values of our past as we’ve watched our nation slip into the direct opposite of what we were built upon. Sin.

What has happened to America? How has a nation that had chosen God as it’s ultimate foundation, find itself so far from where it began? The church at one time was a good reason the nation stayed the course in Godly values. Preachers preaching the whole Word of God, people applying that preaching to their lives, and living accordingly. If we took a snapshot of where our nation is today, we see a much different place. We see a place where:

* In 1962. With its 6–1 vote to make public recitation of the Regents' Prayer in public schools unlawful, the U.S. Supreme Court made its first-ever decision on prayer in public schools. It made its second in 1963—the [*Abington School District v. Schempp*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abington_School_District_v._Schempp) ruling, which made the corporate reading of the Bible and reciting of the Lord's Prayer unlawful in public schools.
* On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court issued a 7–2 decision in favor of "Jane Roe" (Norma McCorvey) holding that women in the United States had a fundamental right to choose whether to have abortions without excessive government restriction and striking down Texas's abortion ban as unconstitutional. In recent years this has gotten worse with the notion now that the human life inside the mother isn’t even a life, so it’s ok to kill even in the 3rd trimester.
* The recognizing of same-sex marriage being legal in the United States expanded from one state (Massachusetts) in 2004 to all fifty states in 2015 through various court rulings, state legislation, and direct popular votes.
* Now we’re telling God that if I don’t like how He created me I can change that and that a man can become a woman and vice versa, thus messing with Gods design of life.

What happen to the “Christian” nation that was built on “In God we Trust”?

* Show picture of quarters
  + The American Women Quarters™ Program is the current U.S. 25-cent coin program, spanning 2022 to 2025. The reverse (tails) features five designs each year honoring American women and their contributions.

Where is the church? The real church, not the one where you get your ears tickled, why you sip on a latte and call it good...No the one that stood in the face of sin and called it for those partaking in it to repent because God is a Holy God! One that found itself on it’s knee for longer than 2 minutes crying out the social issues of the nation it lived! Today I want us to look at the church.

* How has the Church responded?
* How should the Church respond?
* And what happens if the church doesn’t respond?

If you were to ask the person in the street, “Why is the church important?” you would probably get a wide range of answers.

* Some would laugh at the question, because for them the church is not important in any way.
* Others might see the church in the same category as museums: They both preserve things from the past. They’re a nice place to visit on rainy days, where you can observe how quaintly people used to live, but they’re out of touch with our modern world.
* Others might couch their answer in political terms: They view the church as a powerful voting block to oppose the erosion of morality and to preserve the family.
* Or some might respond to our question by saying that they see the church’s importance as a social institution. It helps meet the physical needs of the poor and the emotional needs of the lonely and distraught. It ministers to people at the pivotal times of life: birth, marriage, death, and times of crisis.

A group was out interviewing on-the-street, and they came to a short, balding man with a beard, who looks decidedly Jewish. Somewhat hesitantly, they ask him, “Sir, we’re asking people the question, ‘Why is the church important?’ Would you care to comment?” They hardly were prepared for his answer.

He said, “I believe the church of Jesus Christ is the most important force in the world today. Its task is more important than all the governments and universities of the world combined. There is nothing to compare with it!” The interviewer replied, “That’s a pretty strong statement, sir! Why do you say that?” He responded “Because the most significant event in human history was when the living God took on human flesh and lived among us as the Lord Jesus Christ to bear our sins. And since He ascended into heaven, His church now reveals Him on earth, even as He revealed God when He was on earth.”

Throughout its long history, the Church has been a major source of social services like schooling, medical care; inspiration for art, culture, and philosophy; And until recent times s we discussed, it was very influential player in politics and religion.

1 Peter 5:8 tells us to “*Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.*

Has the church lost its sensitivity? Has the church ignored the things that are happening against God? Are we ok with the way our nation has become? This morning I want to look at 3 examples of cities and nations rebelled against God and how God used, or in some cases tried to use His people to get the people of these cities/nations to turn around before it was too late...

Sodom & Gomorrah

In Genesis we see the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, notoriously sinful cities The exact nature of the wickedness of the cities has been the subject of debate. But the scriptures are quite clear they were very much associated with homosexual acts. The mob of men that approaches the angels had demanded of Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them” (Genesis 19:5). Other biblical references to Sodom and Gomorrah, including Jude 1:7, which mentions sexual immorality and “unnatural lust,” and the “abominable things” of Ezekiel 16:50, are seen as support for this view.

Nevertheless Lot, Abraham’s nephew had found himself living within the city. I have to think that when he got there, He was right with the Lord, or at least in the sense of knowing right and wrong. But as he continued to live there, he became numb to the wickedness and even became influential at the city gate. Unfortunately, not influential for the Kingdom of God, He had allowed to overlook and accept the sins of the city. Becoming comfortable and accepting of what was happening if Lot wasn’t righteous anymore as the Lord couldn’t find anyone righteous to save the city.

Nineveh

Now take away the knuckleheadness of Jonah who ran away, was swallowed by a great fish, and then was angry after God kept His Word, but Nineveh was saved. Jonah after he tried to run the 1st time finally delivered the message God had for this city and we see in Jonah 3 they repented and were saved!

* *Jonah 3:4 On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: “Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!”****5****The people of Nineveh believed God’s message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow*.

Israel (Jerusalem & Judah)

In Jerimiah we see a man who wept for his nation. God had chosen him to declare that the nation of Israel, Gods own people, would be destroyed and taken into captivity if they would not tune from their wicked ways. His message was one of hope and warning. The Israelites were running away from God and God was trying to call them back. Jeremiah was faithful when God gave him a strong word and challenged him to execute that word. They called him the Weeping Prophet because his heart was so tender.

But even though he was ridiculed, mocked, and not listened to, he continued to urge the nation to repent. But they didn’t listen, and God allowed His people to be overtaken, the Temple be destroyed, and fall into captivity.

Closing:

God has always used His people to warn people and nations to repent before it’s too late. Even Sodom & Gomorrah were given a chance, even if it had found 10 righteous. Where is the urgency for the church to step up and cry out for God and His Kingdom? Have we as the Church of the last days become a church that has changed our view on sin...”It’s ok here, it’s ok there”, Has the Church become numb to sin and just choose to live within it? Well, I know this... GOD HAS NOT CHANGED ON HIS VIEW OF SIN AND WILL NOT AND CANNOT STAND FOR IT. If He wouldn’t stand for it for Sodom & Gomorrah, Nineveh, and His own nation Isreal, who do we think we are as America to think we’re not testing His patience.

And I believe that this is where the church has fallen short.

2 Chronicles 7:14 –

* If my people
* Who are called by my name
* Will humble themselves
* and pray and seek my face
* and turn from their wicked ways,
* THEN I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.

This Word is to the church, not the sinning nation, but to God’s people...

How WILL the Church respond?

By accepting that we are Gods people and are specifically CALLED by Him as His church for this day to stand for righteousness and truth no matter the cost.

How SHOULD the Church respond?

* Humble ourselves before our awesome and mighty God
* Desperately pray and seek Gods direction in how, where, and to whom we share the Gospel.
* To turn from our wicked ways.... OUR WICKED WAYS...

And what happens if the church doesn’t respond?

If the church doesn’t cry out AND BEGIN TO STAND UP AGAINST the things it is partaking in, then we leave this nation in the Hands of God who is a just God, who is a fair God and who is a Holy God and cannot and will not allow His name to be wiped away with the sins of a nation that chooses not to recognize Him as such.

We as Gods people, His Church, His bride needs to stand up against sin, stand up against the things that mock, try to disprove, and even erase our God and His ways. We’re in a rough day as a nation. The church cannot afford to be numb or comfortable as Lot was, we cannot tell God not me, like Jonah did, but as Jeremiah, we must pray, weep, and tell others about the Gospel so that true, heart changing, life changing revival comes to America and the Church retakes its rightful place in leading a “Nation Under God”

So with this said this morning...” Will the Real Church Please Stand Up?

2 Chronicles is to the church