Hope for the Future of America sermon for 7-03-16

Here is a breakdown of a Gallup poll based on telephone interviews conducted March 6-9 of 2016 asking Americans what they think is the biggest problem our nation faces.

* 3% Income gap between rich and poor
* 3% Personal lack of money
* 4% Immigration
* 4% Poverty
* 4% Foreign aid/Focus overseas
* 4% Ethics/Moral/Religious/Family Decline/Dishonesty
* 5% Education
* 8% Government Debt
* 11% Health care
* 17% Economy
* 18% Dissatisfaction with government/Congress/politicians; poor leadership/corruption/abuse of power
* 19% Unemployment

You may or may not be surprised at these statistics, but it’s clear to all of us that our nation is facing significant challenges and many Americans are angry or scared or both.

So with all of these intimidating challenges that we are affected by as Americans, what is the Christian to do?

What is the hope for the future of America?

## We are the hope for America when we pray.

2 Chronicles 7:14

**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 sin and heal their land.

**God will respond to humble, consistent prayer and repentance with healing.**

Are all Americans God’s people? No, but if any American follows this passage with all of their heart, they will be saved! They will become instantly one of God’s chosen people. **2 Chronicles 7:14 is a recipe for salvation.**

This idea of humbling themselves shows us a picture of bending the knee. It’s not just a body position when you pray, it’s a heart attitude of submission.

**God’s people must submit to God’s way of thinking and living or all our prayer for America is a waste of time.**

* Abortion
* What sexual activities are right
* Definition of marriage
* High esteem for marriage

## We are the hope for America when we participate.

Biblical instructions for Christian participation in society:

* Live peaceable with all men as much as is possible
  + Romans 12:18

**18**If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

* Solve problems and disputes between Christians in the church, not in the courts
  + 1 Corinthians 6:3-6

**3**Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! **4**Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? **5**I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? **6**But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

* Obey the laws of the land unless they clearly tell you to sin
  + Acts 5:27-29

**27**And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, **28**saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”

**29**But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.

* + - We will have to be bold when confronted by anyone or any organization that attempts to stop us from preaching about Jesus.
* Pay taxes
  + Matthew 22:17-21

**17**Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

**18**But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, *you* hypocrites? **19**Show Me the tax money.”

So they brought Him a denarius.

**20**And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription *is* this?”

**21**They said to Him, “Caesar’s.”

And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

* Be in the world but not of the world
  + We are not to try to get the world to like us at the expense of the truth.
  + John 17:14-15

**14**I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15**I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

* Show neighbors the love of Christ by good deeds
  + Our involvement should not be motivated by a need to be a good Christian or to make all Americans Christians, but by a desire to make a positive mark on our nation for the good of all of our citizens; because doing good things shines light into an otherwise dark world.
    - Matthew 5:16

**16**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

* Act righteous and promote righteousness in society
  + We are in this world to slow the decaying effects of sin in our society.
    - Matthew 5:13

**13**“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

* + - Proverbs 14:34

Righteousness exalts a nation,

But sin *is* a reproach to *any* people.

The Word of God gives us timeless principles of how to participate in our society as citizens; these principles give us freedom to live and influence society based on the new desires He places in us when we are changed into new creatures at salvation.

I believe that we Christ followers should be involved in society to the extent of our interests, abilities, and faith.

## We are the hope for America when we evangelize.

Acts 17:5-7

**5**But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. **6**But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. **7**Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.”

**The Gospel message is simply this—that any man who humbles himself and seeks King Jesus will be forgiven of their sins, saved from eternity in hell, and transformed into a new creature that can have an ongoing, intimate relationship with the Creator of the world.**

**As simple as this message is, when the Gospel is preached, the world is turned upside down!**

**Society changes! The course of nations change!**

When the Gospel is preached boldly in a nation…

* Lives are drastically improved.
* The quality of life of the citizens of a nation improves.
* The economy becomes healthier.
* Innovation is increased and goodwill permeates society.
* The sick, down and out, and marginalized are noticed and supported.
* Neighbors look out for neighbors and giving increases in our society.

**The Gospel confronts the evil inside of individuals that make up the families that in turn constitute the whole of society.**

* This confrontation is necessary to provide a peaceful existence because it causes men to restrain their evil passions and desires.
* This confrontation is more powerful than the confrontation of a law because it restrains a man in the heart before evil is committed whereas the law only can restrain a man after a crime is committed.
* The Gospel can confront a motivation unacted whereas the law can only confront a behavior. Meaning, the Gospel is an internal force producing good deeds while the law is an external force that can only control the amount of damage caused by evil deeds. Damage-control.

**The Gospel offers hope as an antidote to the purposelessness in people that drives them to self-destructive behaviors and decisions that affect everyone in our nation.**