

Text: Psalm 33:12-15

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance. 13 From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; 14 from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth-- 15 he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do."

In Jesus' name, citizens of the United States and citizens of the Kingdom of God,

If history repeats itself, and we have no reason to believe that it won't, the day is coming when America will no longer be number one. This once-great super-power will either disappear into oblivion, or, it will become like most of the other nations of the world, godless, immoral, rebellious, and dependent.

A little research, however, would clearly indicate that this is not the way this country started out. Those who would study our history would find that every coin and every piece of paper money ever printed in this country carried the words, "In God We Trust." If they read the writings on the walls in some of the memorials in our nation's capitol, they would find messages of trust, gratitude, and dependence on God written in granite. Our history books would reveal that the two most prominent reasons our founding fathers came here to America were -- to find relief from oppression, and a place where they would worship God as they pleased. The minutes of every congressional session would state that they were always opened with prayer. They would find that every community, no matter how small, had at least one church, and that there were at least two of three Bibles in the average American home.

As they look back they'll see evidences of our engineering and technological ability. They see what we accomplished in art, science, medicine, transportation, computers, and space exploration. Our libraries, colleges and universities would reveal what a cultural and intellectual people we were.

If the pattern of nations rising and falling is true also for this nation, the day is going to come when people look back at us and ask, "**But where did they go wrong? The United States seemed as if it had everything going for it.**" And the only answer anyone will be able to come up with is, "It started out as a nation whose God is the Lord, and it ended up being a nation whose god was all kinds of gods.

Monday marks the 240th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. How many more anniversaries we will be privileged to celebrate will depend entirely on God's grace and this country's relationship with Him. It's most appropriate on this Fourth of July that we who call ourselves Christian Americans talk about:

You and Your Country!

Our text today urges us as Christian Americans:

- 1. Acknowledge your blessings as citizens of heaven and America.**
- 2. Assume the responsibilities that accompany this dual citizenship.**

1. Acknowledge your blessings as citizens of heaven and America.

David wrote this Psalm during some of the "glory years" in Judah's history. His predecessor, King Saul, led the country into spiritual and moral decay by committing spiritual adultery and idolatry with the gods of the land, and led His people into doing the same.

At the same time David could not help but think of God's People in the years following the Egyptian Captivity. They were "on again - off again" followers of His. When God gave them tangible evidences of His presence, when things were going

right they trusted Him. When they refused to see Him or when things weren't going right, they didn't. And immediately they became guilty of committing spiritual adultery, of fearing, loving, and trusting in other persons and other things as they should fear, love, and trust in God alone. David remembered God's judgment on the nation of Israel, and he knew that if God wanted to, He could do the same to Judah.

But David was a man in tune with His Lord. In spite of the fact that he was a sinner and had to live with both the memory and consequences of his sin for the rest of his life, he knew the grace of God's forgiveness. He knew what it meant to have a God who loved Him, who was always near, and who supplied all his needs. In other words, David knew what it meant to be a citizen of heaven. David knew how important God was to him personally, and as a leader of His people. David knew the meaning of the words, "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.*"

Many Americans today have the impression that we are a Christian nation. Actually, we never were a Christian nation – a godly nation perhaps – but never what you would call a Christian nation. And people think that we have some kind of written guarantee from God that we will always exist as a nation. The only guarantee you and I have is that this nation will continue to exist only as long as God is our Lord. God blesses a nation only because of the people in it who confess Him as Lord and Jesus Christ as Savior. And they are blessed because He's chosen them for His inheritance, citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. Even in that, there are limits. Think of how Lot at Abraham's time, asked God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if even a few believers remained. God agreed, but He still destroyed the cities.

You hear a lot of talk these days about how God isn't blessing America like He used to. Things like wars, violence in schools, people in difficult economic straits, and people militating for rights for gays and lesbians, give us reason to feel that way. The only explanation is that there must be fewer and fewer people in our country who confess God as their Lord and Jesus Christ as their Savior. Promoting abortion, rampant use of drugs, and encouraging child pornography are things that didn't normally come from people who call God, Lord. The rather negative attitude toward hard work, paying our taxes, worshiping in our churches, and toward our country and our churches in general is hardly in keeping with a people who believe that Jesus died for them and rose again.

And yet the fact remains that this is **your** country, and God has made you one of its citizens. The question is, "**What kind of Christian American are you?**" I can't answer for you. Only you can do that. All I can tell you is what David says here in our text. God blesses a nation who call Him Lord, and because of the people in it, the believers, who will some day receive His inheritance. And God will continue to bless us as a nation only as long as we acknowledge the blessings He gives us as American citizens and future citizens of heaven.

Maybe we don't always agree with His timetable. Maybe we think we should have gotten a better promotion by now, or we had hoped to be living in a better house. Maybe a job loss or sickness in the family wasn't included in our schedule. Or maybe we don't think they're calling the right shots in Washington D.C., or that my church is disappointing to me. A wise Christian once said, "**This is the way life is. But just remember, that if you had nothing, not even the clothes on your back, you'd still have every reason in the world to say 'thank you.' With Jesus as your Savior, you're the wealthiest person in the world.**"

When you think of **You and Your Country**, think of yourself as not just an American, but a Christian American, who acknowledges your blessings as a citizen of America and a future citizen of heaven.

2. Assume the responsibilities that accompany this dual citizenship.

If **You and Your Country** are to continue to be blest, **you will also assume the responsibilities that accompany this dual citizenship.**

If you ride in an airplane on a clear day, you can see for miles and miles. You get what we call a panoramic view of what's below. In a much larger way this must be how God sees us. It's like David says here: "*From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; 14 from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth-- 15 he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.*" Our Lord echoes these same thoughts -- the last thing He said before He ascended into heaven was, ". . . surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

Do you understand what this means? This means that there isn't a thing you do, think, or say -- without His knowledge. He who knows the whereabouts of every sparrow and the number of every hair on your head, made your mind and knows everything it thinks, created your hands and knows everything they do, and formed your heart and knows everything in it.

And He's also the same one who knows if you assume the responsibilities that accompany your dual citizenship in this country and in heaven.

It was former President John F. Kennedy who said, **“Ask not what your country can do for you, but rather, ask what you can do for your country.”** I have heard, over the years, numerous words of approval for that statement from almost every segment of the American population. But as a nation we've still held out our hands and continue to want more than we give. Presidents since have said the same thing. If our nation is going to survive it is going to require sacrificing on the part of every American. And when leaders call for sacrifice, the response they almost always get is, **“Make him sacrifice, but don't ask it of me.”** Alton Newell, a Texas businessman, sums it up rather well when he says, **“Our forefathers gave us a good prescription when they based the structure of our society on the value, the rights, and freedom, and the responsibility of the individual. We all know what our rights are, but we seem to have forgotten our responsibility. If Johnnie can't read, it's the teacher's fault. If he gets into trouble, it is the school's fault. If he gets on drugs, it's the community's fault. If he gets into trouble with the police, it's society's fault. Every right and every freedom comes with responsibility attached.”**

This is true of both our citizenships -- the one we enjoy here in America and the one we will some day enjoy in heaven. God will continue to bless this nation of ours only as long as this nation acknowledges Him as Lord, and only as long as God looks down on us and sees us willing to assume our responsibilities that accompany this dual citizenship. That responsibility includes **1.)**Being model citizens of our nation, state, and community, as well as **2.)**being witnesses, living examples, of what citizenship in heaven is all about.

History says that America will take its turn among the nations of the world that have risen and fallen. My prayer is that God might have something else in mind for America. I hope this is your prayer too!

May God bless America!

Amen.