

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon Title: What America Needs, 2 Chronicles 7:11-15

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INTRODUCTION: “What America Needs” is the title of my sermon this morning, but before I tell you what America needs, I want to tell you why I am proud to be an American. Loving my citizenship and my country makes me want to make it better, and this brings me to what I think America needs.

There are five points to my message today:

1. I am proud to be a citizen of country which has been a beacon of hope for the rest of the world.
2. I am proud to be a citizen of a country where I have religious freedom.
3. I am proud to be a citizen of a country with free elections.
4. I am proud to be citizen of a country which is revered around the world as unique and different.
5. What American needs is repentance, which leads to another Great Awakening.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Chronicles 7:11-15 ¹¹ *When Solomon had finished the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the LORD and in his own palace, ¹² the LORD appeared to him at night and said:*

“I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices.

¹³ *“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, 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 I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵ Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.*

First, I AM PROUD TO BE A CITIZEN OF COUNTRY WHICH HAS BEEN A BEACON OF HOPE FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD.

I am proud to be a citizen of a country which has eliminated tyrannical dictators from many countries. Some of you felt the call to arms, or maybe you were drafted and didn't have a choice. But, you became a part of a mighty machine that has rolled over evil through the decades. I am proud to be part of it in a really small way. But, our military is threatened today. Our country is plagued with the debts of the high cost of fighting wars overseas.

Second, I AM PROUD TO BE A CITIZEN OF A COUNTRY WHERE I HAVE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Religious freedom is the cornerstone upon which all other freedoms are founded. Free speech comes from the American dream of our forefathers who wanted a country founded on religious freedom. So, free speech stems from religious liberty.

There is so much ignorance about the term "separation of church and state." I just cannot stand it when someone misuses this phrase. I'll hear someone say, "Oh you can't do so and so...you know...separation of church and state..." The Constitution says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."

Do you know when this statement was written, it was quite an original statement? All over the world, countries had state religions, and many still do today. It was a radical idea a country could be founded without a state run church or a church run state. Yet, it's worked all these years.

Today, however, religious liberty is on the cusp of being threatened. Free speech and religious liberty are close cousins. I believe we'll see a day when it's against the law to speak out on certain things. It will happen rather subtly at first. Here's my prediction. Harassment toward the Church will enter the national conversation over the tax exempt status of the Church. This has already started on a small scale.

You may not know it, but churches must follow some rules about political neutrality in order to be tax exempt. There are rules which must be followed so you can get a charitable contribution statement, which helps you out at tax time. I believe the list of rules will grow...until one day, it will be clear that if the Church wants to take a stand on anything, then the Church will have to forfeit its tax

exempt status. I wonder if people will quit giving if they no longer got a charitable contribution statement. I certainly hope not. In the Bahamas, they have what's called the duty, which is just a sales tax. At one time, the churches were duty free, but according to a Bahamian friend of mine, churches abused it until the government did away with it.

My exhortation to you is to vote for candidates who understand religious liberty is the cornerstone on which all other liberties are founded. Listen to me, if you vote for a candidate who does not revere religious liberty then you are aiding in the downfall of America.

Third, I AM PROUD TO BE A CITIZEN OF A COUNTRY WITH FREE ELECTIONS.

Anyone can run for office that has the determination to do it. Every president is heavily criticized. It's just part of the job. During my lifetime, I remember criticisms of Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush 1, Clinton, Bush 2, and Obama. I've said Ford was my favorite president because he was only in office two years. When the criticism becomes strong enough, the pendulum swings from one party to the next. And, then the cycle starts all over again.

I don't recall any real peaceful time between Democrats and Republicans in Congress. We've been promised all kinds of things by candidates, and many times, they are not able to deliver on their promises.

Fourth, I AM PROUD TO BE CITIZEN OF A COUNTRY WHICH IS REVERED AROUND THE WORLD AS UNIQUE AND DIFFERENT.

There is no other country in the world like the United States. There is no country as unselfish, giving, and sacrificing as the United States. What seems normal to us seems unique to the rest of the world. I have a friend who lives in England. He's active in youth ministry development around the world. He never wanted to come to the United States until he came here. Now he travels here as often as he can.

ILLUSTRATION: I have some friends in Germany. One of them was here a few months ago and visited the church. I was there for a wedding a few years ago and did not know I would become known as "the American who came to the wedding." The bride was from the educated class. The groom was from the working class.

(This was new to me; I didn't know they had two classes of people.) Before the wedding, the groom's family had a group of people to their home. When we went to the house, I was treated like royalty. They knew no English, and I knew no German, and someone translated our brief exchange. We had lunch and left. Later, the groom told me his parents were proud that an American had been to their home. He told me his dad went to work at his factory, bragging that now he had an American friend. From time to time, I send them postcards, and I've learned they've made a collage of all their postcards from America.

I've also learned that all around the world, people hear news from America every day. Why? Because they still see America as hope for the world, and somehow, if they can just connect with America in some way, if even through the news, they can share in that hope.

Now, why am I saying all this? I am saying it because if you're putting your hope in the military, religious freedom, government, and elections, and in Americans, then you're sure to be disappointed.

Fifth, WHAT AMERICA NEEDS IS REPENTANCE WHICH LEADS TO ANOTHER GREAT AWAKENING

I want everyone to hear what I am about to say. The main need of America is not a better military, more freedoms, or new politicians. What American needs is repentance which leads to another Great Awakening.

BACKGROUND: The First Great Awakening—

In the late 1730s, when this country was just colonies and frontier, there was an evangelist named George Whitefield, who along with other evangelists, swept through the country preaching powerful sermons. This revival lasted until around 1743. The results of these campaigns were so tremendous the period of time was known as the Great Awakening.

Interestingly enough, historians believe the Great Awakening helped in developing democratic thought, aided in the idea of a free press, and helped create a demand for religious freedom, which gave way to the American Revolution.

The Second Great Awakening—

In the late 1700s until the mid-800s, there was another time when America went through a long term spiritual revival. This is known as the Second Great Awakening.

Some historians believe the revivals of the last 1960s and the 1970s were part of a Third Great Awakening, but others disagree. I do remember those times, the revivals, all the people saved, and so on. I am inclined to believe a Great Awakening started but did not continue. As I recall, the big issue preached about back then was men having long hair and women wearing short skirts.

The First and Second Great Awakenings were characterized by people who repented of sin. And, this is what we need in America. We need to repent of sin. We don't need new Supreme Court Justices. We need a repentant country.

I don't believe our American government, as we know it, will last forever, because no government lasts forever. Only by God's grace has it lasted this long, and only by God's double portion of grace will it continue. But, while it's here and while I live in it, I want every day to count. I want to use my freedoms for the good of others.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

Find me at www.thbc.com Click on sermons or YouTube channel: Pastor Paul Gunn
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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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