

Make America Great Again?

Call to Worship: Psalm 150

1st Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

2nd Scripture: Psalm 146

Hymn #133- *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*

Hymn #574- *Have Thine Own Way*

Hymn #678- *Christ Shall Have Dominion*

Introduction

Toward the latter end of George W. Bush's presidential tenure, you'll recall that the housing market crashed and created significant economic problems in our country. Add to that fact, the unexpected drawn-out nature of the war in Iraq, with all of the problems surrounding our inability to find chemical weapons there...etc, and it is easy to see how people were thirsting for change. And, in fact, our current president, Barack Obama, ran his entire campaign, appealing to the emotions of our disgruntled country, on that very theme of "Change," didn't he? The momentum was already with him, without him really having to try. All you needed to see were the bumper stickers and the logos, plastered all over the place, which stated, "*Change* you can believe in." And this was followed up with repeated chants of "Yes, we can!" "Washington is broken, and we can fix it! Yes we can!" Whether or not he had a realistic plan of action was irrelevant. He offered "change" of some sort, and the people went for it.

At his speaking events, people were crying and passing out, simply because they thought he could do what no man can do, and that is, solve all of the problems of our broken nation. He became a "messiah" to many. No, really, people actually equated him with the "messiah," thinking that he could somehow take what he was saying (so eloquently with his lips), and simply speak it all into reality, as if he were God Himself. Eight years later, and the president himself, certainly acknowledges that he had sold himself, far, far above his true value...or the true value of any human being for that matter. Now, please understand, my intent is not to pick on our president, because I realize, after all, that whether you are a republican or a democrat, the goal is just to sell yourself into the office; make any and every promise that will get the votes, and then deal with reality, after you have secured the office. That's just "politics," right? Well, at least in a country that has lost its moral fiber, to the point that even our leadership is the polar opposite of our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to lay down our lives for others (to actually love

and care for others), rather than expense others for the sake of securing your own advantage. That's the political norm for all political parties, isn't it?

Now brethren, where am I going with all of this? My desire here this morning is to get us thinking biblically, so that we don't get swept away in all of the election buzz, and so that we can identify and seek out the Christ exalting opportunity that we have before us, right now, as we prepare to live under the leadership of a new president. I want us to avoid the danger of doing exactly what others did eight years ago, in setting our hopes on any man. Please understand, I'm not at all seeking to rain on the parade of Mr. Trump's fascinating win, but I want to exhort us to have real expectations of the man, so that we can rightly grasp his true nature and abilities, leading us to act in a way that is realistic, and more importantly, biblically, so that we might benefit our new president, ourselves, and our country as a whole, for that matter.

The new famous slogan is, "Make America Great Again." And we ought to ask ourselves the question, "What does that look like?" "What does a great America look like?" Is it a country that is simply thriving economically, while moving further and further into the wrath of God, which has already enveloped this nation? Is it avoiding wars with other nations, while minding our own business, as we continue to flippantly war against God? Is it fixing our physical health care problem, so that healthcare is more affordable, while our spiritual health continues to plummet dramatically? Is it building a wall and keeping all of those illegals out, while ignoring the much bigger wall that separates us from our God? Is it getting back to the glory years of Ronald Reagan, while millions of babies continue to be slaughtered and offered to the molech of convenience, right in our own backyards? How do we make America Great, "period," let alone "again?" Brethren, we ought to have a biblical answer to that question, rather than simply joining the voice of the majority. Or, at the very least, while we may agree on many issues, our priorities ought to be different.

I want to divide our main text into four parts, with the hope of answering the question, "How do we make America great?"

I. We Adopt a Proper View of God (vs. 1-2)

We seek to maintain a steadfast spirit of continuous, ongoing, daily, praise to God, remembering who He is, no matter what happens in this world, even at those times when we are electing new leadership. We recall that God is eternal; that His glory is greater than the highest heavens; that He is all sovereign, and that He is always, eternally, worthy of all praise, no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in. With the Psalmist, we cry aloud,

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live (while there is breath and life in this body) I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being" (vs. 1-2).

Notice, brethren, the Psalmist's praises transcend all seasons of life. No matter what happens, no matter what man plots or does on this earth, God is always worthy to be praised! President Barrack Obama is in office..."Praise the Lord, O my soul!" George Bush, Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, indeed, Caesar Nero himself, reigns on this planet of dust, "Praise the Lord, O my soul!" While I have breath, while my soul lives, I will praise my God...because He is always worthy to be praised! The whole world may mourn, may curse, may rejoice in anything, but I will proclaim the name of my God, from the rooftops, by my praise!

Habakkuk, the prophet, knowing that God was preparing to destroy his own nation; knowing that the temple would be destroyed and the wall of Jerusalem would be torn down; knowing that his people would soon be exiled for their persistent rebellion against God, could yet say, "Though the fig tree may not blossom. Nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls-- (though every staple need of our people is cast away, evidencing God's severe judgment upon us), yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deers feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills" (Hab. 3:17-19).

And so, brethren, if we want to make America great, first, we must adopt a proper view of God! We look above the chaos and ruin of fallen men, and we behold our eternal God and Savior, and we sing and shout and proclaim His praises!

II. We Adopt a Proper View of Man (vs. 3-4)

If we want to make America great, we must stop putting our trust and confidence in men; in all men, individually and combined. We have to stop looking for King Saul, who although he is broad shouldered and a head above everyone else, is but dust, and we have to start looking to Jesus Christ, maker of heaven and earth, the Lord of glory, who holds the Name, which is above every Name; that Name, to which, every knee (Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Vladimir Putin, and all people from all times) will bow!

Hear the Psalmist again, in verses 3-4:

"Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is NO help (not very little or some or a tiny bit....but, NO help!). (Why?) His spirit departs (he can't even help himself. He can't even keep his own life together. He has no power over his own soul, even), he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish."

Look at all of the greatest and most powerful leaders that this world has ever known. Look at all of the magnificent plans they had, and all that they sought to accomplish. But, where are they now! Go and find them! Dig them up! They're rotted, decayed, decomposed dust! And their grandiose plans have come to a screeching halt, that moment their spirit, uncontrollably left them. Most didn't realize that they had a time clock, set right within arms length of the throne of God. And at just the right time, God reached over and clocked them out! And they were gone from this world! And they met their maker! And their visible form returned to the earth!

But, not so with Christ! Death could not hold Him! He rose from the dead, ascended to glory, and is presently seated at the right hand of the Father! And through His shed blood, by faith, we can carry our hearts and requests and pleas before His throne! And, unlike this world's leaders, who offer to give us a chance to win a meal with a candidate, if we donate so much money to his campaign, Christ bids us to come, freely, and as often as we desire! And we can be certain that He is not a politician, aiming to tickle the ears of his supporters. For, He already holds the highest office, in heaven, on earth, and over every realm that has existed, presently exists or will ever exist in the future. And His throne is a throne of righteousness!

And so, if we want to make America Great again, we would do well to stop putting our trust in false messiahs, in whom there is NO help. We must stop looking to the dead for help,

and we must turn our eyes upon our Lord and our God! We must turn and look upon Him, who is eternal! We must steer our confidence away from this world's leaders, and we must, "turn our eyes upon Jesus, look full at His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace!"

III. We Must Bring to Mind Who Exactly Our God Is (vs. 5-9)

No, we don't look to finite dust, but rather, we look to our God, and we remind ourselves of who He is, contrary to who we are. And as we do this, we recall that He is our Creator, Sustainer and Savior!

1) He is our Creator: [Read verses 5-6a]

Who are those who are happy and blessed? Not those who put their trust in princes and man (they will always disappoint, even the best of them, and again, they are but dust), but those who have the God of Jacob (not a generic god, but THE only true and living God, the God of Jacob) for their help; those who hope in the Lord their God. Why are they happy? Because they hope in the One who breathed out creation. He is the Creator of heaven and earth and all things! The logic is not too difficult to grasp, is it? If your hope is in the uncreated, eternal Creator, who brought everything into existence (ultimately out of nothing), as opposed to the fallen creature who dies and returns to the dust, then you have every reason to be happy! Why? Because He is capable of doing anything, and He is willing to help those who call upon Him in truth! Look around you! He did all of this! And look in His Word, and see how He covenants to welcome, receive and bless those who trust in Him.

2) He is our Sustainer: [Read verse 6b-9]

God is our Provider and Protector! He sustains our lives, such that we have our needs met, and nothing can harm us beyond the boundaries of His will, and that, for our sanctification. We count on the One who keeps truth, executes justice, provides food for the hungry, frees prisoners, heals the sick, lifts up the downcast, watches over the strangers, relieves the fatherless and the widow, and turns the way of the wicked upside down, to sustain and uphold us, in accordance with His glorious will. Because He loves us (the righteous, in Christ), His caring eye is always upon us. He is our refuge and strength; a VERY present help in times of trouble. He is

with us and for us, and though we cannot see Him, He sees us, and watches over and directs our every movement. He is both our beginning (our Creator) and our continuing forward (our Sustainer)!

3) Finally, He is our Savior! Through His Beloved Son, He has covenanted with us, such that we can be called children of the living God! We cry out, "Abba, Father," and He hears us. We are the apple of His eye, His church and His body. And because of this, nothing in this world (visible or invisible) can separate us from His love, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord! Brethren, nothing in this entire world can shake us from His eternal grip! We are fixed on the immovable Rock of Christ! And though we suffer greatly in this world, it is not beyond the scope of His sanctifying grace. And though we die, perhaps even a terrible death, that is only a temporal means/vehicle, suited to carry us right to glory, where we will be with our God forevermore! And there will be no more pain or suffering or tears or death there! And precious in the sight of God, is the death of His saints. Even the process of our crossing over into His arms, is something that is precious to Him, such that our sufferings themselves are something that moves His heart compassionately toward us.

And so, brethren, we make America Great again, by remembering who God is, as our Creator, Sustainer and Savior.

IV. We Remind Ourselves of the Fact that God Reigns Forever (vs. 10)

Finally, brethren, if we want to make America Great again, we do so, by having a Proper View of God, a Proper View of Man, by Reminding Ourselves of Who God is, and then lastly, we Remind Ourselves of the Fact that God Reigns Forever! God is on the throne, brethren! He always has been, He is, and He always will be! He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last!

Recall that glorious picture in Revelation, which precedes all of the complicated visions and pictures of historical realities. Remember that glorious scene, with angels and cherubim and all manner of heavenly servants sitting in concentric circles. At the center of it all; the first thing that John saw in the vision, was a throne, God's throne! And by this means, God reminds us that He reigns supreme over all things! And we take this from that scene, brethren: Every single iota

of life and history, rests securely beneath the feet of God, such that all things; every last detail of good and evil, will ultimately serve His glorious purposes! Not a drop of anything will be wasted! Every single puzzle piece of this large, complicated purpose of creation will fit together perfectly, without a single rough edge, and the glorious picture that is revealed on that final work of magnificent beauty, will contain an infinitely large choir that sings forth, loudly and gloriously, the praise and worship that is due our Triune God! Not a single piece will be missing! Our God reigns! And He will reign forever! [Read verse 10]

V. Conclusion

How do we make America Great again? You might say, "But pastor, all that you have gone over; all of these points are good and all, but they are directed to us, the church. America is not a large church." You are right. And so,

We make America Great again by making *the church* Great again! Donald Trump cannot save this country. Only Christ can. And only the church is called to be, and can be, the beacon of light and hope, which can bring this lost, dying, blind nation to Christ! Brethren, we are the lampstand in the sanctuary of God, which lights up the Most Holy Place, where Christ resides...in us! If our light is dim; if the salt loses its flavor, then what good are we?

We must separate ourselves from the desires and ideals and thoughts and convictions of the world, and we must show them that there is a better way! We must show them the Only Way, the Only Truth, and the Only Life, in Christ! Because they are looking for the way, but they are looking in all of the wrong places. Their sin has deceived them (as it once did us), and they are in a stubborn and deceptive denial (under the sway of the devil himself, who deceives the whole world), suppressing the truth of God in their own unrighteousness.

And so, we must shine light on the truth! We must alleviate the suppression, by the grace of God, praying for our nation and our president. And we ourselves must come out of the world, adopting a Proper View of God, a Proper View of Man, remembering who our God is, and remembering that our God reigns forever! And we must live out of these realities! What you believe will affect how you live! And we must show the world that there is a place of rest and peace, beyond the reach of all of this world's threats, in the City of God; the City that is called by

the Name of our God! Brethren, in these ways, by our words and our actions, the short form is this: We must make Christ known!

This isn't about liberals and conservatives...both are going to hell, if they are not in Christ. This isn't about democrats and republicans...both are going to hell, if they are not in Christ! Conservative and liberal and republican and democrat labels do not lead to heaven. Only those who are united to Christ, find peace with God, peace right here and now, and eternal peace in the age to come. And so, brethren, don't get swept away in all of the debates. Don't get caught up in attacking liberals or democrats or republicans or conservatives. There are far bigger things at stake here. Be kind and gracious to all! Pull out of the rat race and look for ways to make Christ known! This country is running out of messiahs, because they haven't found the right One! Make...Christ...known!

The Gospel!

Amen!!!

Benediction: Revelation 4