

**A SINFUL AND TROUBLED COUNTRY - July 26, 2020**  
**Steve Hogan - Sermon Notes - Hope Bible Church of Tampa**

I believe every person knows these are troubled times in our country, for there's been riots, violence, murders, and all this unrest and division. Then there's this pandemic, and now this question of whether children should go to school in the fall, or just stay at home and learn online.

- Yes, it's been a difficult year, but it's a time when we as Christians need to have God's perspective on all these things, and see that He is sovereign, and that what's at the heart of all this are spiritual issues.

Let's look at some vss that will help us to learn what God wants us to know.

**1 Chron. 12:32** - *"The men of Issachar understood the times and knew what they should do."* The example of these men is instructive, for I believe God wants us to know what's going on in our country. We're not to have our heads in the sand, we're not to be ignorant or naïve. Now of course, we can't know all the details, but God does want us to have an overall understanding of what's happening.

**Romans 1:18-31.** This whole passage shows this progression of sin in a person's life. It speaks of how people turn away from God, and don't worship God, and then turn to idols - they turn to loving themselves, others, animals, or things. This sin of rejecting God, the Creator, and then loving self or the creation is the general sin. Now a whole list of specific sins is given in **vss 29-31. Jer. 2:5, 12-13**

We also see that impurity and homosexuality. i.e. sexual sin, is highlighted, and this progression of sexual sin in a person's life is the main way we know that a person, or for that matter, a city or country is in grave spiritual decline.

**Gen. 19** - Sodom / Gomorrah. **Lev. 18** - Canaanites. **Rom. empire** - their sin.

- **Rom. 1:18.** God judges and pours out His wrath on those who turn from Him and head down this road of sin described in **Rom 1**, and don't then repent of this sin.

**Romans 1:24, 26, 28.** It says that *"God gave them over."* God was saying, *"OK, if you persist in wanting to sin in these ways, then I'll let you do it. I am not going to try to restrain you anymore. I am not going to try to keep you from sinning - I will let you do what you want."*

- Now we know that parents are to train their child to do what is right, and to not do what is wrong and, in fact, are to restrain him from doing wrong. But if the parents go away for a day or two or three, what usually happens? The child most always will do those things he shouldn't do; he'll be unrestrained.
- And I really wonder if the reason we are now seeing all this sin is because God is letting us do whatever we want, in that He has taken His restraining hand off this country, He is given us over to our sin.

**Romans 1:28.** This says God gives these sinning people over to a depraved mind, a reprobate mind. This word depraved means God doesn't approve of this kind of mind, and must reject the person who has this kind of mind, this person who has rejected Him. And a person like this is one who is not thinking right. Many times in life you will hear someone say something that is just wrong, just evil, that just doesn't make sense. And you might think to yourself, "*that person is out of his mind, has lost his mind, is not thinking right, is crazy.*" People who continue to reject God are hardened sinners and have a depraved mind. And you see this in people's lives, and in our country. **1 Tim. 6:5, Is. 5:20**

Here's the question: "*Has God given up on this country?*" I believe He has. Last time we talked about this increasing sin in our country, and that this progression of sexual sin, immorality and then homosexuality, is a sign that this country is at the point of no return, that this country is sinking because of her sin, that we are like the Titanic and will soon go under because of the weight of our sin.

Now some might say, let's ask God to be patient with us, to have mercy on us. And I believe it's good to pray for mercy, and sometimes God shows mercy. But regardless of whether God shows us mercy or not, He is a holy God, and sooner or later, we will go down because of our sin, and we will then lose our status as a world super-power - and whether we will just be weakened or completely disabled, none of us know.

**2 Chron. 15.** It was about 900 BC and Asa was king, and Judah wasn't doing good, but God moved in Asa's heart, and so Asa had all these idols torn down, and he gathered the people and they sought the Lord, and God had mercy on them. - **Ezek. 14:13-14.** Judah continued to sin, and this was about 300 years later, and God said, "*That's it, no more mercy.*" I believe God's been showing us 100 years of mercy, but I think our time as a strong and stable country is coming to an end.

Now as I said, we can pray for God's mercy, and pray for our country as a whole to repent, but the main thing is that we pray for individual people to turn from their sin and turn to Christ. We are not here to seek an earthly kingdom, we are here to seek the kingdom of God, a spiritual kingdom. We are here to work with Christ in building the church. **Matt. 6:33, 16:18, 24:14, 28:19-20**

I want to now talk about the specific kind of sins we are seeing in this country, sins that show us why, as a nation, we are in big trouble. And one of the best places to help us see our sins is the Ten Commandments. **Exodus 20:1-17**

1. *"You shall have no other gods before Me."* This is the most important commandment, for there is only one true God, and we are to worship and love Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. **Mark 12:30, Jer. 10:10**

2. *"You shall not make for yourself an idol."* This is like the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment, but this relates to making a physical idol, an image, and we are not to love, worship or serve any created thing. Now this is a huge, huge sin in our country, for we have so many idols, so many things we love. **Eph. 5:5, 1 John 2:15-17**

3. *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."* We are not to swear, or blaspheme, or use God's name in a wrong and demeaning way. When we misuse God's name, we are not showing Him honor and respect.

4. *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."* This conveys an important principle, that we are to put God first with our life and time, that we are to actually set apart time for God so we can exclusively be devoted to Him, and that we are to join with other believers so we can worship Him and learn from His word. And most people in this country aren't doing this.

5. *"Honor your father and mother."* We are talking about children honoring, respecting, and obeying their parents. It means not talking back to your parents, but submitting to them, and doing what they want you to do.

- This area of respect needs to start in the home but then carries over into respecting your employer, government authorities, law-enforcement officers, and teachers. **Eph. 5-6, 1 Pet. 2-3.** And not respecting our authorities is a major problem in our country, one of the biggest problems we have. We have talked about law and order in our country, and we're seeing a huge breakdown in this area, for many people aren't respecting those in authority, and when that happens, there's disorder, crime, confusion, and no peace.

6. *"You shall not murder."* This means we are not to kill others, unless it's in self-defense. Now in **Matt 5**, Jesus says this also means we are not to get angry with people. And this anger is also a major problem, for people have so much anger and hate, whether it's towards parents, children, or those in authority, or towards those of a different race, or towards those who hurt you. Racism. We need to see every person as made in God's image, that God made them and loves them, and that we are to then love and accept them. **Col. 3:12-13**

7. *"You shall not commit adultery."* Adultery can relate to all sexual sin and we have talked about this. Now we know this is a major problem in our country, and is the main way we know this country is in a steep spiritual decline. **Matt. 5:27-28**

8. *"You shall not steal."* You are not to take and keep someone else's property, whatever it might be. Now we have seen these riots and people going into stores, and just taking what is not theirs. And that is stealing. Now stealing also relates to the destruction of property. And we're seeing a lot of that in our country too - people destroying and burning cars and buildings, and tearing down statues.

Minneapolis - \$500,000,000 of damage

But this also means you are not to be lazy. For example, if you are not putting in a full days' work, then you're stealing from your employer. The Bible also says you're not to eat if you don't work. (**2 Thess. 3:10**). There are many lazy people in this country who can work but don't work, who depend on others and, in fact, are then stealing from them, taking what they don't deserve. **Matt. 25:24-28**

9. *"You shall not bear false witness."* You are not to lie, you are to tell the truth, and this doesn't just mean in the courtroom. It means in all areas. There's so much lying on a personal level, in marriages, in politics, in the media, in false advertising, in tweets, in texts. And then there's all this gossip, slander, and deception going on all the time, and this is lying too. Now when I say lies, sometimes it's flat out lies, and other times, it's half-truths, which means a person is leaving out part of the truth. **Proverbs**

10. *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife."* This speaks of greed, of wanting something that's not yours, or that you don't need. But greed also relates to people wanting possessions, thinking that having possessions makes them successful and content. **Luke 12:15 - 1 Timothy 6:8-10**. This means you are not to be greedy for money, you are not to want to get rich, to think that money is the answer in life. It means being content with knowing God, and being content with what God gives you.

I share all these commandments for 2 main reasons, so you can see the collective sin, which is the main problem in our country, but also, so you can look at your own life, and examine yourself, and see if there are areas God wants you to deal with, and confess, so you can be more holy. **2 Cor. 7:1, Eph. 4:20-24**

**2 Chron. 15:6**. God troubled them with every kind of distress. Now God says it this way because He wants you to realize that He's sovereign over all that's going on, whether it's the pandemic, the riots, or any of the sin that's taking place. Now God troubles this country for two reasons, first, to wake up the Christians, so we love Him and are living for Him, and second, to wake up the unbelievers, to help them see their need to repent and trust in Christ for forgiveness of sins. - One final thought - **2 Chron. 15:7** - *"As for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."* God wants you to know that He has a great plan for your life, and He wants to use you, and as you serve Him and work for Him, then His work will be done, and you will be rewarded. **Phil. 2:12-13**