

The Hope Of This Nation

Introduction:

1. In Psalms 9:15 – There is a statement, that may cause you to think about the current condition of our society; it says, **“The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made; in the net which they hid, their own foot is caught.”**

- A. This is not a happy topic of conversation or study - - to stop for a few moments, and think about the condition of our society, *morally*.
- B. Almost everyday – alarms are sounded about our **physical** security - - terror alerts are issued, because of the threats from evil men, who are determined to destroy us . . . Men who aspire to kill and destroy everything not in keeping with their religious dogma, and self-advancing militance.
- C. We have no choice – but to think about various realities – having to do with terror, war, attacks and loss of life.

2. But let us never forget – the underlying moral problems in our society, present around us long **before 9-11**.

- A. Consider the observation of this verse in Psalms, in terms of *moral and spiritual depravity*.
- B. “The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made; in the net which they hid, their own foot is caught.”

Body:

- I. **Our National Condition – When Judged By Biblical Values Is Alarming.** *And from time to time, that alarm needs to be sounded. I know – this exercise will not be pleasant . . . but facing reality is mature and vital. It is our responsibility to use the Bible, to understand the times.*

Here are some of the things that should cause us concern:

- A. There is an obvious **dishonesty** prevalent in our society. This is not limited to any age, to any economic level or station in life.
1. One of the easiest sins to commit, is to tell a lie.
 - a. No extraordinary opportunity is required.
 - b. You do not have to be rich, educated, highly placed . . . or a certain age.
 - c. All you have to have is, a tongue.
 - d. You can learn to lie without taking a course - - all you have to have is a tongue . . . the devil will supply daily opportunities.
 2. A few years ago, a book was published: **The Day American Told The Truth.**

- a. Peter Kim and his associate, James Patterson – conducted extensive research, interviewing 2,000 Americans – with their sample modeled after the socio-economic structure of the nation. *There sample was a mirror of the nation.*
 - b. Of 2,000 Americans they talked to – **91% of them admitted that they lie regularly.**
3. Lying has almost been institutionalized in this country. It is a sin that can be found almost everywhere.
- a. There are Politicians who lie.
 - b. Some Journalists lie.
 - c. Terrorists lie.
 - d. In recent years, we have learned of Corporate Executives involved in dishonesty for their own financial advantage.
 - e. There are Preachers who lie.
4. There is a crisis of trust in this nation –
5. And "Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; but they that deal truly are his delight," (Prov. 12:22).

B. Greed.

1. The New Testament word means:
the desire for more than is one's due, and the passion to possess it without regard for what is right or for the persons of others. The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, Commentary by Frances Foulkes, Eerdmans Publishing, page #128.

2. In the book of Isaiah – God shows His judgment against greed, in these words intended for men guilty of greed:

"They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain," (Isa. 56:11).

3. In our time, the expression has been framed: "Corporate Greed."
 - a. The Enron Scandal got our attention.

 - b. There were other cases brought into the public light – involving rather obvious corruption and raw human greed.

4. I hope we understand – "Corporate Greed" always begins in individual hearts - - *hearts not governed by God's will.*

5. And I hope – when discussions are underway regarding any kind of greed, corporate or individual – we will remember what Jesus said.

6. **Luke 12:15 says**, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."
- C. A national crisis that continues – is seen in **sexual promiscuity**.
1. I'm talking about – participation in sexual activity, before and outside of a divine approved marriage.
 - a. I'm talking about any and all kinds of behavior that is not in keeping with the will of God, as stated in Heb. 13:4.
 - b. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."
 - c. And I know this is not politically correct – but Rev. 21:8 declares: the "sexually immoral . . . shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."
 - d. The writer says – the sexually immoral will suffer this eternal fate.
 - e. What does that include?
 - 1) Homosexual behavior.
 - 2) Casual sexual events.

- 3) Pre-marital sex.
 - 4) Adultery.
 - 5) Acts of lasciviousness and lewdness.
- f. Rev. 21:8 – the sexually immoral; immoral persons – “their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”
2. I have a good friend, who is a writer – lives in Georgia; a member of the church – who just published his latest book, called **The Sexual Revolution: What We Aren’t Being Told**.
- a. I read the Galley Proofs before publication and wrote a pre-publication review.
 - b. It is alarming – the self-destruction and harmful impact of *unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, the neglect and abuse of children*.
 - c. Because people will not face the simple law of God, putting sexual activity in marriage.
3. Parents, educators, preachers – all of us, should not be guilty of giving up on this problem.

4. Our culture is in danger . . . and one serious dimension of our state of affairs is – *the continuing and increasing menace of sexual immorality.*
5. Behavior that is not love – but is the exercise of selfish carnal appetite.

D. **One of the many evils around us is the destruction of the family.**

1. A little girl – about 5 years ago – came into a church building one spring morning.
 - a. The elders, preacher and others were greeting people right inside the door.
 - b. Here came this little five year old girl – the first to enter the door from the family car.
 - c. A beautiful little girl – in her best dress; little shoes and purse to match; a bow in her hair.
 - d. But as she came in the door, tears streaming down here face.
 - e. She said to those who greeted her – “Mommy and Daddy are fighting!”

2. In addition to all the other good reasons and motives - for the sake of children, mommies and daddies need to humbly submit to the will of God.
3. I wrote this a few years ago, and have not had any reason to change my mind:

The family is the comfort zone for little children. Frightened children, alarmed by some perception of danger in the yard or neighborhood, do not run to the dog or the television; they run home to find their Mother or Father. After an upsetting day at school there is almost immediate relief when the distressed child crosses the threshold into their home, their comfort zone. There is tremendous practical value in having a stable home, with parents who are united in their love for each other and their devotion to their children. I had that, did not fully appreciate it as a child, but shudder to imagine how I would have blundered and stumbled around without two godly parents!

E. **Our time is marked by modern idolatry.**

1. When God is no longer the source and center of your life – *idols rush into your heart, and stake out that territory.*
 - a. The heart is never vacant territory.
 - b. Either God rules there – or idols rule there.

2. When a society is filled with more and more people who have no allegiance for God, **modern paganism and idolatry slowly does its' work to destroy the nation.**
 3. Idolatry and immorality feed each other – and slowly erode and destroy a people.
 4. Paul wrote of this when he said: ***When men do not "retain God in their knowledge," God gives them over to a debased mind, "to do those things which are not fitting," (Rom. 1:28).***
- F. **Then we know, there is a tolerance of evil – that always turns into a promotion of evil.**
1. A hesitation to label evil behavior as "evil."
 2. There is an exaggerated fear of offending anyone – so popular, sin is ignored; sinners not informed of their journey away from God; audiences not warned; preachers afraid to classify teaching and behavior according to Bible truth.
 3. Mark this – tolerating evil always tends toward the promotion of evil.

- a. First, Satan convinces us we should be silent about sin. *He wants us to believe that sin is not serious; it is no big deal – everybody does it.*
- b. Then, Satan takes us a step further – suggesting we actually promote sin.
- c. And if you tolerate sin, then promote it – the next step will be, your personal participation in sin.

4. Isaiah Chapter Five, Verses 20 and 21

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

²¹ Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

G. And in our society – there is the continuing presence of **religious institutions – authored and ordered by men instead of God. Religion made by men glorifies men – not God.**

1. Our society prefers forms of religion – which can easily be changed and suited to human desire and cultural popularity.

2. To use the Bible – to inform your response to God; to use the Bible – to learn of Christ and what it means to obey Him . . . *the use of the Bible as a guide – is not the preferred approach in our society.*

3. Several years ago, D.A. Carson wrote what he predicted would be the future of religion in this nation:

“Few people will be offended by the multiplying new religions. No matter how wacky, no matter how flimsy their intellectual credentials, no matter how subjective and uncontrolled, no matter how blatantly self-centered, no matter how obviously their gods have been manufactured to foster human self-promotion, the media will treat them with fascination and even degrees of respect. But if any religion claims that in some measure other religions are wrong, a line has been crossed and resentment is immediately stirred up: pluralism has been challenged. Exclusiveness is the one religious idea that cannot be tolerated.” *(See Melvin Curry's FC Lecture; '99).*

4. His observations – sadly correct.

5. **There is right religion, and there is wrong religion - - the only way to tell the difference is, to use your Bible.**

H. So our culture – when judged by God’s Word – is in trouble; the terror we have never faced is sin and rebellion against God.

1. Dishonesty . . . Greed . . . Sexual Immorality . . . Family Decay . . . Idolatry . . . Tolerating and Promoting Evil, and the continuing presence of false religion.

2. The work of Satan in our nation is sad – but real - - and it would be immature and naïve to ignore what is so obvious.

3. This list I’ve supplied is only partial . . . only a few samples of the moral crisis around us.

II. **Where Does Our Hope Lie??**

A. Regarding **the spiritual terror** that threatens us – and that can be traced back before 9-11 . . . concerning these signs of danger, **where does our hope lie?**

1. Legislation?

2. More Government?

3. Military Might?

4. The media?
 5. Education?
 6. Organizing?
- B. All of these things have important roles to play in secular society – in the daily operation of a free society.
- C. But I'm talking about **our moral and spiritual battle**; the signs we have observed, showing our departure from God.

III. **Our Real Hope Lies In Reverence, Repentance And Responsibility.**

- A. First – **Reverence** ~ *By that I mean, the respect of your heart toward God.*
1. Without this, you cannot make any substantial, lasting contribution to the restoration of this nation.
 2. Individual Reverence is where you begin – to make a difference.
 3. Reverence means – you see God in His perfect glory and sovereignty; it means – you want to live, respecting Him; you want to worship Him as He directs; you want to obey His Son.
 4. Without this – I am a part of the problem.
 5. With this – I can make a difference.

6. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him," (Psa. 89:7).
 7. This reverence means – you know certain things clearly:
 - 1) You were made by God and for God.
 - 2) Life will never make sense without God.
 - 3) It is only in God that we discover our origin, our identify, our meaning, our purpose and our destiny.
 - 4) Only in the gospel of Christ – are we able to learn what our problem is, and what God's solution is.
 8. All of this involves and defines Reverence.
- B. Second – **Repentance** ~ *Turning from sin to God, with all that turning means.*
1. Once there is genuine reverence in your heart – there will be genuine repentance in your life.
 2. If you stop short of repentance – you participate in the problem of

societal decay.

3. The only hope is to repent yourself, then you are in the best position to reach others and urge them to repent.
 4. This is what God expects.
 5. The Bible says, "He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man (Jesus) whom He has ordained," (Acts 17:30,31).
 6. The Entire Passage: **Acts 17:30,31.**
- C. Third – **Responsibility** ~ *The individual, daily practice of what is right.*
1. If there is genuine reverence in your heart – followed by genuine repentance in your life – you will desire to be right in your daily behavior.
 2. The make a difference – we must, as individuals, take responsibility to do what is right before God . . . day in and day out . . . 24 hours a day; 7 days a week; every day, every month, every year – until we die.
 3. Responsibility means – you learn what is right from the Bible, then you live that way.
 - a. You get up every day – ready to do what is right.

- b. That way of life may sometimes seem boring and weary – it may sometimes be challenging and exciting . . .
- 4. But in the end – you will not have any regrets about personal responsibility to God.
- 5. “Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin,” (Jas. 4:17).

Conclusion:

1. The question is stated in Psalms 11:3 - “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

- A. Reverence, Repentance and Responsibility.
- B. Respect God . . . Completely give up any and all sin . . . Take responsibility, to obey the gospel, first in baptism – after that, by a faithful life.

2. Finally, let me remind us – in the word of David:

A. “God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne,” Psa. 47:8.
That will never change!

B. And so – our prayer can be, as David wrote in another place:

“Arise, O Lord, Do not let man prevail;
let the nation be judged in Your sight.
Put them in fear, O Lord, that the
nations may know themselves to be
but men,” (Psa. 9:19,20).

- C. Perhaps now is the time – for you
... to express your reverence for
God . . . repent of your sin . . . and
take responsibility to obey the gospel
of Christ.

- D. We would love to help you make that
decision, while we stand to sing.

Warren E. Berkley

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Resource – Melvin Curry's FC Lecture, 1999.