

O Say, Can You See?

A few weeks ago, I noticed this poor bedraggled flag hanging on one of our rose trellises, which itself is no shining example of well-maintained garden beauty. Both are old and tired, kinda like me. My body is getting old even though inside I feel like I'm still 39, like Jack Benny. (If you don't know who Jack Benny was, that means you're under 60 and deprived! Look it up on your "smart" phone.)

That poor flag brought to my mind a number of thoughts. The first and most obvious is how sad it looks, and how it reminds one of the way our nation is becoming that flag: torn to shreds, hanging limply, filthy, neglected, done. Is that how things stand, really? Are we done as the United States of America?

Who are we as a nation and as Americans anymore? Compare this pathetic piece of cloth to this poem that was written about it in its early life as the proud emblem of a nation bringing God's light to the world (first and fourth stanzas):



Does that bring a tear to your eye? It does to mine. My life began during the height of our nation's greatness and I have had to watch it become the tattered wreck of that little cloth at our house over the relatively short span of one lifetime!

Are we supposed to fight to restore our nation to its former greatness in the world and to its once strong relationship with the God who called it to become the light that it was? Many of God's followers seem to think so. Some pastors urge us to do so. Will it make any difference, as far down the road to decadence, disobedience, and rebellion against God as we have gone? At what point does God do to this nation what He did to Israel?

As you probably know, I am of the opinion that collectively we have gone well beyond the limit of God's tolerance morally, spiritually, and every other way. We have allowed worshippers of false gods, gods of self-worship, whose sacraments are child murder and sexual perversion, to take over our key institutions – education, entertainment, political leadership, and the institutions of "justice".

From David's Psalms:
"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.

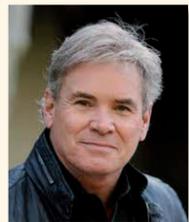
The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one." (Psalm 14:1-3)

At this point in history, along with our precipitous decline and so many other threats coming to fruition at an alarming pace – war drums around the world, loss of freedom and ascendancy of socialist/communist tyranny, government takeover of our personal health – we'd best be turning our attention to a place we can find hope, security, Truth, and a safe road ahead for our eternal future. We'd best trust the Creator of the Universe for our own lives and encourage those around us to do the same. We had better leave this sinking world behind and get on board with our Father. He loves you, you who are reading this, and knows you by name, and wants you in eternity with Him!



"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 —Matthew 11:28-30



Pastor Jack Hibbs
 Calvary Chapel Chino Hills

Luke 8:39
"Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him."

Once when I was leaving a store, a man had set up a table outside the man and was offering something to passersby – what it was, I'm not sure because he didn't seem to care about his product. He could have been giving away gold, but his lack of passion made me say, "No thanks," and walk away.

Then the thought hit me. I've seen Christians who act that way about Jesus.

But how can this be?
 Charles Finney, the great American evangelist, said, "From the moment I believed, all sense of condemnation had entirely dropped from my mind; and from that moment, I could not feel a sense of guilt or condemnation by any effort that I could make. My sense of guilt was gone; my sins had been forgiven. I felt as if I had never sinned at all."

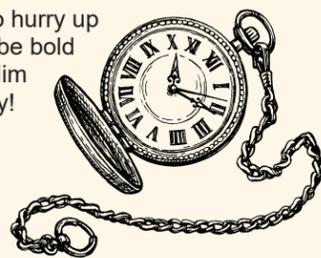
Finney went out from that experience to tell anyone who would listen about the Lord Jesus Christ. Finney knew what he had received and resolved to share it whenever God gave Him an opportunity. Why are some believers excited and enthusiastic about sharing Jesus with others while others are not? I cannot judge, but may I ask you: How convinced are you of the value of your salvation?

We are a saved and rescued people! Jesus loved us so much that He willingly offered in payment for our sins – past, present, and future. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and our eternal home in heaven is guaranteed. (Ephesians 1:13) That, my friend, is a message worthy of being shared!

Awaiting His return,
 — Pastor Jack

"You LORD have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer."

So hurry up and be bold for Him today!



(1) O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light, What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming, Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight, O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming? And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. O say, does that star spangled banner yet wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

(4) O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand Between their loved homes and the war's desolation! Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n rescued land Praise the Pow'r that has made and preserved us a nation! Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto, "In God is our trust." And the star spangled banner in triumph shall wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!



David again, Psalm 27, portions:
"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,

to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!"

Linda Gammel

HOW DID WE GET FROM THIS? - TO THIS?

