

Sermon Title: **Blessed is the Nation**

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Vessel: Russ LaFlamme

Scripture Reference: **Psalm 33:1-15**

Thesis: **This Psalm celebrates what it takes to be a nation blessed by God;**

Purpose: **We will look today at how we as a country can be blessed by God as a nation.**

Key Word: **"Patriotism & God's Blessing"**

Key Points: #1 **Blessed is the Nation "whose God is the Lord."**

#2 **Blessed is the Nation that seeks Righteousness**

#3 **Blessed is the Nation that Trust in God**

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Psalm 33:1-15**

A) The Setting:

- 1) **A pastor from San Diego, Ca. by the name of Brad Rigney preached a message by this title in June of 2006.**
 - (a) Pastor Melvin Newland of Siloam Springs, Arkansas also preached 2 messages, (Part 1 & 2) with this title in July 2009.
 - (b) Both used the same scripture from **Psalm 33** as the basis for their message.
 - (c) The title as we will see for ourselves actually comes from **verse 12**.
- 2) **When writing about such common topics as a national holiday and using like scriptures there is only so much to say without being repetitive.**
 - (a) I am using the basic outline from the first, and excerpts from the second in the creation of this message with my own edited comments included.
 - (b) I want to be upfront about this when I do this as it is only right and fair to give credit where credit is due.
- 3) **While it may not seem much like it these days I think many of us could agree that God has blessed our Nation over the years.**
 - (a) We have been blessed materially, geographically, educationally, and technologically.
 - (b) And I believe that God's blessing has been largely due to our Christian heritage and our support of God's chosen people in the Nation of Israel.
 - (c) In fact, as I have pointed out several times in other messages the Bible promises a blessing on those who bless the children of Abraham and curses on those who curse Israel.
- 4) **I believe we have seen this worked out in our recent history in Syria.**
 - (a) They have been fighting a civil war now for the last 5 years.
 - (b) Do you remember what they were doing in the 2 previous years before that war broke out?
 - (c) They were supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon and Palestine with ammo, training and troops to wage attacks on Israel to annihilate and drive Israelites out of their homeland.
 - (d) Since that time, instead of Israelite being driven out, thousands of Syrians have been killed or forced to flee their land as refugees.
- 5) **When we look at World events through the Word of God much of it makes a lot more sense.**
 - (a) As we celebrate the birth of our Nation this week, on July 4th, we need to be mindful of the Lord; thanking and seeking God for His continual blessings for our future.
 - (b) We need to remember that our nation was settled by a people who were looking for Religious Freedom.
- 6) **They no longer wanted their Government telling them how to worship God.**
 - (a) When the taxation of England became so oppressive and burdensome with little or no representation; no voice in their governance; it became an intolerable situation.
 - (b) Listen to the words of the Preamble to our Declaration of Independence: **"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."**

- (c) Created by a Creator, not slaves to a dictator King with no representation in the British Parliament, and no voice.
 - (d) Our forefathers envisioned a nation that was not run by a single king or dictator; but would be "**a government of the people, by the people and for the people.**"
 - (e) One Nation under God!
- 7) **Psalm 33 is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for all of God's blessings on a Nation.**
- (a) The New Revised Standard Version Bible which we have in our pews uses the word happy in place of Blessed; happy is the nation.
 - (b) But I think the word happy is too cheap to use in expressing God's care for a Nation.
 - (c) **Blessed means happy; but it means so much more:**
 - (d) The Greek use of the word "**blessed**" is meant to express the deep emotion felt in praising God; thus glorifying God for all His goodness and faithfulness in keeping His promises.¹
 - (e) Of course we are happy; but it is deeper than that, it is being completely filled with joy to the point of having to express our thanksgiving.
- 8) **So keeping this in mind, let us turn in our Bibles to our scripture reading for today in Psalm 33:1-15.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **This Psalm celebrates what it takes to be a nation blessed by God; we will look today at how we as a country can be blessed by God as a nation.**
- 2) **Scripture is not silent about Nations.**
 - (a) First we see that God is greater than all Nations.
 - (b) That as Nations rise and fall . . . God uses Nations in His plans and that there will be people from all Nations that will be present as part of His coming Kingdom.
- 3) **I believe that every American President including President Obama has given a speech ending with a call for "God to Bless America."**
 - (a) Why would God bless a Nation that turns their back on the creator God?
 - (b) Why would God bless a Nation that does not seek to please and Glorify Him?
 - (c) In a Nation with such diversity should we be seeking the blessings of God if we are not going to live our lives in submission to Him?
- 4) **Well, Psalm 33 teaches us a few specific things that a Nation can do in order to receive continued Blessings from God.**
 - (a) It can't just be a sound bite that will please the listeners.
 - (b) It must be sincere and clearly sought after.

TS: **Let us begin by looking at the first reason . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **Blessed is the Nation "whose God is the Lord."**

- 1) **Verses 1-3; of Psalm 33 are the praises of People who acknowledge and Worship the Living Lord.**

¹**Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous!**

For praise from the upright is beautiful.

²**Praise the Lord with the harp;**

Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.

³**Sing to Him a new song;**

Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

- (a) A Christian Nation praises their God, lifting their voices to sing His praises.
 - (b) They make music to express their joy in their trust and praise.
- 2) **Verses 4 & 6; Are from people seeking to know and do what the Word of God calls them to do.**

⁴**For the word of the Lord is right,
And all His work is done in truth.**

⁶**By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.**

- (a) These words acknowledge the authority of the Word of God over their lives.
- (b) And acknowledge our place before God as part of His creation.
- (c) This is what separates us from the animals; in that God breathed life into us.

3) **Verse 8**; represents a People who FEAR the Lord showing reverence out of a great respect for God.

⁸**Let all the earth fear the Lord;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.**

- (a) This is not the trembling fear of terror; but an expression of immense reverence.
- (b) God is the Almighty and must be shown the proper level of respect.

4) **Verses 10-11**; shows that it is wise to seek the Lord's plans, not their own.

¹⁰**The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.**

¹¹**The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.**

- (a) That is wisdom for us as well.
- (b) Who knows what is better for your life than the one who knows the beginning from the end, the one who created it all and desires what is best for us.

5) **Verses 13-15**; just reinforces what we said before representing People who know that they are accountable to the Lord; He watches and considers everything they do.

¹³**The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men.**

¹⁴**From the place of His dwelling
He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth;**

¹⁵**He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.**

6) **When a Nation has God on their side; nothing can defeat them.**

7) **Someone might be thinking then why was Israel defeated and why did God let them suffer so during their exile?**

- (a) The Bible says it was because they turned to other gods and failed to keep the commandments that God gave them to live by.
- (b) Time after time God warned them and they ignored God and did what they thought was right in their own mind.
- (c) In other words, they let situation ethics rule their decisions; anything they could reason out to justify their actions they did.
- (d) Sounds like people today does it not?

TS: **Second, . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **Blessed is the Nation that seeks Righteousness**

- 1) **Proverbs 14:34** says "**Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.**"
- 2) And **Isaiah 60:12** says, "**The nations and kingdoms which will not serve the Lord will perish, they will be utterly ruined.**"
- 3) **Righteousness is about doing what is Right, not sinning - it is about serving the Lord.**
 - (a) That is why we have to pray for our leaders that they will serve the Lord and do what is Right; because it is God's way and not just politically correct.
 - (b) It is about doing what is Right within our country as well as our dealings around the world with other countries.
- 4) **Here are 3 Biblical principles concerning Righteousness:**
 - (a) 1) We are not Righteous by nature... we are sinners.
 - (b) 2) We do not become Righteous just by doing what is good.
 - (c) 3) We are made Righteous only through asking Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior.

- (d) **"God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the Righteousness of God."** (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- 5) **Check out this prayer recorded in the personal diary of George Washington, and in his own handwriting:**
"Let my heart, gracious God, be so affected with Your glory & majesty that I may ... discharge those weighty duties which thou requirest of me ... Again, I have called on thee for pardon & forgiveness of sins ... for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered on the cross for me. Thou gavest thy Son to die for me; and hast given me assurance of my salvation."
- 6) **Regardless of what you may have heard about George Washington from those who are trying to rewrite our history.**
 (a) He was a devout Christian!
 (b) And he wasn't alone in his faith!
- 7) **Illustration: Over a 10-year period, political-science professors at the University of Houston collected & cataloged 15,000 writings by the founding fathers.**
 (a) Their goal was to determine the primary source of ideas behind the Constitution by identifying the sources quoted most often by them.
 (b) Can you guess what that primary source was?
 (c) It was the Bible; 94% of the quotes of the founders of our nation were based upon the Bible.
- 8) **The point of all this is that the cultural environment on the eve of the American Revolution was undeniably spiritual.**
 (a) And this focus dramatically affected the men and women who gave birth to this nation.
 (b) God Blessed our nation because we had a heart for God and we sought to do what was right before Him.

TS: **Third, . . .**

- C) Key Point #3: **Blessed is the Nation that Trusts in God**
- 1) Psalm 33:21 says, **"In Him our hearts rejoice, for we TRUST in His Holy Name."**
 - 2) And in Psalm 20:6-7 in the Living Bible it reads, **"Some nations boast of armies and of weaponry, but our Boast is in the Lord our God. Those nations will collapse and perish; we will arise to stand firm and sure!"**
 - 3) **In what do we put our trust in as a Nation? Is it:**
 (a) Our Military?
 (b) Our intelligence?
 (c) Our technology?
 (d) Our history?
 - 4) **According to Psalm 33:12, "Blessed is the Nation whose Trust is in the Lord."**
 (a) That Trust has to be more than a slogan on our currency.
 (b) It has to be an ever present dependence upon the Lord.
 (c) If we cannot practice our belief that God will take care of us in our personal life;
 (d) How are we going to ever trust that God will take care of us as a Nation?
 - 5) **Illustration: At the first Constitutional Convention, the delegates were frustrated due to the burdens of the hour.**
 (a) They were burdened and harassed facing a tremendous crisis.
 (b) They were so fragmented that they were just about to throw out the whole concept of a constitution completely.
 (c) Just then Benjamin Franklin rose to his feet and said: **"Gentlemen, if it is true that not one single petal from any flower falls to the ground without escaping God's attention, will the distress of this nation go unheeded? Let us therefore determine to seek His face."**
 (d) They promptly got down on their knees and when they arose from prayer, the slogan, **"e pluribus unum"** was born: **"One out of many!"**

- 6) **Just as our founding fathers found unity in the one true God; our Nation must return to this same unity or we are doomed to fail and fall as a Nation.**
- Our Government was built on this type of compromise where we elect people to represent us **AND** then they have to work together in order to accomplish anything.
 - No one gets everything they want; but they put their trust in God to work things out for the best.
 - When the elect fail to find compromise the Government comes to a standstill.
- 7) **This is what we have been experiencing for the last 15 years.**
- People wanting it to change are so willing to do so that they are putting forth candidates that they think will bully their beliefs through the stagnated system.
 - Unfortunately, that will not work in a democracy that doesn't call on the Lord for guidance and help.
- 8) **We are called to Trust in the name of the Lord!**
- We as His people are called to do the same.
 - We are to pray for our leaders and for wisdom in electing our representatives.
 - We are not electing CEO's or kings.
 - But because of the checks and balances in our Government we need to elect leaders who will best represent our beliefs and be willing to work together to get things done; **we need to be praying about this.**

TS: What must we do if we want to be a nation Blessed by God?

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

A) **God has blessed us as a Country!**

- We celebrate that fact this 4th of July as we have for 240 years.
- But what about His Blessings for us a Country tomorrow and the years to come?

B) **The Lord not only gives us His Word to teach us about the Blessings of God for a Nation, but also provides us with a test:**

- How are we as the United States of America doing at making God the Lord of our Nation?
- How are we doing at Seeking Righteousness?
- How are we in Trusting His Name, more than ourselves or our economy or our military?

C) **What can we, as His People, do for the future Blessings of America?**

- We can live for Christ and be the salt and light where we are.
- We can pray: for our leaders, for revival.**
 - In fact we need to be praying now and together for God to straighten out this mess.
 - One way that you can do this is to set aside time to come to the **Capital Park in Augusta across from the Capital building at noon on August 23.**
 - Come to hear Franklin Graham preach the Word of God to challenge us to pray for our Nation and to boldly live out our faith trusting in the Lord.
 - 2 Chronicles 7:14** says, "***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.***" (NIV)
- We can depend on the Lord to be our true source of Freedom, courage, and spiritual power.

D) **I pray you will all have a wonderful safe 4th of July Celebration.**

- More importantly, I pray that we all have made Jesus our Savior and Lord, seeking to be right with Him;
- And Trusting God to lead our lives, families and our Nation!
- That once again we can return to being a Nation Blessed by God.

IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**

V) **Bibliography**

¹ Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Unabridged Edition, MacDonald Publishing Company, Pg.134