

“When the Foundations are being Destroyed,
what can the Righteous Do?”
Psalm 11:3

Introduction: Several years ago, I received the call from the Lord to become the pastor of the FBC of Lebanon. It was a heart wrenching move away from hometown, church that loved us, and family who did not want to see us go. But God showed us clearly from our time in the Scriptures and in prayer, and through the circumstances, and through the people of God, that it was His will to make that move. I preached the trial message, and received over 98 percent of the vote.

So then we needed find a place to live. We had lived in the church parsonage in our hometown, and this was the first opportunity to buy a home of our own. We were excited, and my wife picked out a home we could afford, and we made an offer, and it was accepted, so we were all excited. But then came the inspection. We held our collective breaths because we really liked the house, it was in a good neighborhood, we were zoned for a good school, etc. Well the report came in and wouldn't you know it, there was a problem with the foundation. That caused some concern. A foundation problem is no small matter. It had to be fixed. We didn't want to live in a house with a bad foundation. It is not safe. Long story short, the owner had to get it repaired, and shored up.

Sometimes the foundations of homes are in need of repair and shoring up, but that is also true of a nation. I believe it is true of America. The foundation is in need of repair and shoring up. This passage asks: When the Foundations are being destroyed, what can the Righteous do?

I. WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATIONS?

First of all we need to agree on what the foundations are. I mean if the people of God are going to do something positive, make a difference, and have an impact in our nation, we need to have a laser like focus on the things that really matter. But what are the things that matter? No surprise that that question is being hotly debated today.

A. Progressive Priorities: In fact, there's a new focus within the so-called evangelical movement. Jim Wallis and other so-called progressives say that the proper focus of the church and government is the eradication of poverty, racism, and so-called "global warming." The Bible speaks clearly about the responsibility to take care of the poor and needy, the Bible speaks clearly about the fact that God created man in his image, He is not a respecter of persons, and there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, so there is no place for racism, and the Bible speaks clearly about the fact that we are to care for the creation. But I'm not sure how much the government needs to be involved in these issues. Let's take these one at a time.

1. **Poverty:** Certainly the government is very involved in fighting poverty. In fact, the war on poverty began back in the 60s and the government tells us that there is more poverty today than when they started. But let's be clear, the government definition of poverty is not exactly what we think of when we hear the word poor. Usually, we think of homeless people digging through garbage cans.

But Heritage Foundation studied the US government numbers and concluded that the average person in poverty has a home larger than the vast majority of Europeans, has a car, cable TV, microwave, etc. The Constitution says that the

government is to promote the general welfare, that means to provide an environment where people can practice the biblical work ethic, to envision, create, and produce, unhindered by a bunch of taxes and red tape. Promoting the General Welfare does not mean taxing people who do work and giving their money to people who won't work. I'm not opposed to programs that give people a hand up, but I am opposed to programs that are simply a hand out.

The government is also involved in fighting racism. And the Civil Rights movement and the legislation that followed helped complete what Abraham Lincoln started and was a much needed corrective to the unjust racism that was a shame to American life. God forgive us for segregated schools, eating establishments, water fountains, and restrooms. God forgive us for discriminating against people based on the color of their skin. Just like the children's song says: "Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight."

But you know something, just like the war on poverty, the government fight against racism has gone too far. Discrimination against people because of their race is unjust. But affirmative action that gives preferential treatment to people because of their skin color is also unjust - whether it is a scholarship in a university or a position on a job. That's not right. Maybe it was needed in the beginning, but not now. In fact, if I was in a minority group and got a scholarship or a job just because of my race, I would be insulted. It is an insult to tell any American: "Well, we know you cannot make it on your own, you are not smart enough, you're not good enough, and so we are going to give you an advantage over the rest to help you catch up." That is a dignity-stealing exercise. I like what Thomas Jefferson said in the Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal." So let's treat everybody equal and base our judgments, as Martin Luther King, Jr., said, not on the color of our skin, but on the content of our character.

3. "Global Warming": Well we've talked about poverty, and racism, but the latest and greatest issue the left-leaning evangelicals talk about is the environment and so called "global warming." With Nobel Prize Laureate Al Gore, and his Oscar winning *An Inconvenient Truth* leading the way, with its doomsday predictions, it seems like a majority of Americans have been worked into a frenzy over "global warming." And the Hollywood crowd pontificates about going green and the politicians in Washington are climbing all over each other to see who can pass laws protecting the environment and sign treaties reducing green house gasses.

Yet Al Gore, the Hollywood crowd, and the politicians in Washington are a bunch of hypocrites, because they fly around in their private jets, live in massive homes, and consume huge amounts of fossil fuels. And yet they want to preach to me about being environmentally friendly? They want to destroy our economy with ecological red tape while China and India are already blowing us away in GDP, and they aren't going to keep any environmental protocols or treaties. Beyond that, the scientific evidence is inconclusive as to whether or not man is effecting climate change. No debate that we are in a warmer cycle, but we are in a cycle has been repeated if you take the time to go back and look at the data. A generation ago, scientists were warning about global cooling. But to say that mankind is causing most of the climate change is highly debatable. In fact I'm told that flatulent livestock makes for more of an impact than our cars do. So what are we going to do, kill all the cows and just eat grass? Crazy stuff.

Now I want to be quick to say that I teach my kids to take care of the Creation. We practice catch and release fishing. We carry out what we bring in when we hike. God's first commandment to mankind was to fill the earth and subdue it. He made us vice-regents, and delegated to us control over the earth. That is we are to be His caretakers, his stewards of the earth and all that is in it. We are to care for the Creation. But we worship Father God and not Mother Earth. Man is the highest creation of God, and is not to be seen as equal to or lower than animals and plants. And it is the height of arrogance to believe that mankind can destroy the earth. The Bible teaches otherwise.

But the left leaning evangelicals among us say that we need to lobby the government to fight poverty, racism, and global warming. Usually, the more involved the government gets, the more they make a mess, and the less freedom we have. But there's no question, the church ought to see to the needs of the poor, the church ought to oppose racism, and the church ought to promote good stewardship of the creation. Yet here is the question: Are those the top three concerns as we consider the crumbling foundation of America?

B. Conservative Concerns: What do conservative evangelicals believe are the Foundations of America? Here they are as I see them: Faith, Family, and Freedom. In fact, those are the very foundational values found in FRC's mission motto, Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom. Let's take them one at a time.

1. Faith: Jude said: "Earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." Fight for the Faith. Why? Because it is not only defines the essence of who we are as Christians, but it is also defines what we are as Americans. In fact, check any poll you want to and you will find that the vast majority of American's believe in God - according to Gallup, about 90 percent. And nearly 80% of Americans still identify with the Christian faith.

How did that happen? Well, that's how we started out. That is our foundation. For example, Columbus had Christian motivations in the discovery of the Americas. He believed he was fulfilling Psalm 19:4 in the discovery of America. "It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) to sail to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because He comforted me with rays of marvelous illumination from the Holy Scriptures."¹ When they landed, Columbus knelt in the sand to pray, and planted a cross in the sand, naming the island "San Salvador" – Holy Savior.

The first settlers at Jamestown established their colony under the Virginia Charter of 1606, which called for the "propagating of Christian religion to such people as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God. And the colonists' first act, after having landed at Cape Henry, April 27, 1607, was to erect a large wooden cross and hold a prayer meeting, conducted by their minister, Reverend Robert Hunt.

The Pilgrims took their name from Hebrews 11:13 and stated that their reason for coming to America was "For glory of God and for the advancement of the Christian faith." The Puritan Governor of Massachusetts, John Winthrop, quoted Jesus' Sermon on the Mount when he spoke of his vision of establishing America as a shining "City on a Hill."

Patrick Henry said that "Righteousness alone will exalt them as a nation," quoting Prov. 14:34. George Washington encouraged the governors of the states to follow Micah 6:8, and the example of Jesus, the "Blessed Author of our Sacred Religion, without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation."²³

The Declaration of Independence mentions faith in God four times: The Laws of nature and of nature's God; All men are created equal and are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights; appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions, and concludes with a firm reliance upon divine Providence. Later, the founding fathers based the 3 branches of government in our Constitution on Isa. 33:22 – "The Lord is our Judge" – judicial branch, "the Lord is our Lawgiver" – legislative branch, "the Lord is our King" – executive branch, "it is He who will save us."

On I could go for the rest of the day with examples, the faith outlined in the pages of the Bible provides the foundation for America. That is the first foundational principle: Faith. The second is Family.

2. Family: Family is essential. Basic. Necessary. The family is the basic building block of society, and the first institution created by God. Genesis 1:27: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." Gen. 2:24 says: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Out of that union is produced children. The first commandment to humankind was to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.

The Bible tells us that children are a blessing from the Lord. God Himself is the author and artist of human life. That fact makes human life precious, miraculous, and delicate. Created in the womb by a loving God who makes every human being unique (Ps. 139:15-16). Life made in the image of God is a fundamental, God-given right. According to the Declaration of Independence, "All men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."⁴ The order is significant. Life is the first God-given right of every human being. If you don't have life, you certainly can't enjoy liberty or pursue happiness.

Further, study after study has shown that every child needs the influence of a father and a mother. Every civilization in history is built upon the institution of marriage between a man and a woman. The welfare of children, the propagation of the faith, the wellbeing of society, and the orderliness of civilization are all dependent upon the stability of traditional marriage. Family as God defines it – one man and one woman in a marriage relationship with their children – provides the foundation for America. So faith, family, and the third value is Freedom.

3. Freedom: Freedom is priceless. Cherished. Fragile. Gal. 5:1 says: "*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.*" . In the beginning, God made us in his image and his likeness (Gen. 1:26). When God put man in the garden, he said: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil..." (Gen. 2:16-17). Words engraved on Jefferson's Memorial reflect that truth: "God who gave us life gave us liberty."⁵ God made us to be free.

And the God who ordained freedom for the individual is the same God who ordained the institution of government (Rom. 13:1). Now if God created us as free beings, and God created government, doesn't it make sense that he would want us to experience freedom in the context of a nation? That's what America's founding fathers believed. They drafted a social compact on the foundation of our God-given freedom, forming a government that seeks to protect and defend individual rights as granted by God.

Obviously, the Founding Fathers were extremely successful. Today America is the nearest fulfillment of that God-given desire, that hope, that dream of freedom. Remember those Hebrew slaves down in Egypt? They dreamed of freedom. They prayed for freedom. They cried out for freedom. And God answered. He broke the chains of slavery, delivered them from their oppressors, and brought them into the Promised Land. Beginning with the Pilgrims on the Mayflower, many oppressed people have come to America and found it to be a land of promise, a place of freedom.

Another of our great national symbols is the Statue of Liberty. Emma Lazarus gave a voice to Lady Liberty, who stands with torch lifted and says to the world: "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."⁶ A closer look reveals that there are chains under the Statue's feet, symbolizing Liberty crushing the chains of slavery. That picture captures something of the Spirit of America. So the foundation of America is Faith, Family, and Freedom.

II. HOW ARE THE FOUNDATIONS BEING DESTROYED?

So the next part of the Psalm 11:3 begs the question: Are the Foundations being destroyed. Sadly, the answer is Yes! These core American values of Faith, Family, and Freedom are under assault. The Faith is faltering, Families are floundering, and Freedom is under fire.

A. Faith is Faltering: While nearly 80% of Americans say they identify with the Christian faith, you have to admit that the Faith is under attack by the cultural elites. Faith in Jesus Christ is made fun of by the Hollywood crowd in just about every movie and television program, it is ridiculed in the halls of academia, it is contradicted in the public schools....

B. Family is Failing:

C. Freedom is under Fire:

III. WHAT CAN THE RIGHTEOUS DO?

Say, well preacher, what can the righteous do about all this? I'm glad you asked.

Action Step 1: Pray: We need to *pray* for God's mercy on a nation that is speeding toward Sodom, and hurtling toward Gomorrah. Pray that God's Spirit will revive a church that is worldly. Pray that God would be pleased to send a mighty sweeping revival. But the promises of 2 Chronicles 7:14 depend on God's people humbling themselves in Prayer, God's people seeking his face, God's people turning from sin to biblical righteousness. It all begins with prayer because without Him...

Action Step 2: Proclaim: We must *proclaim* the good news. This is one of the biggest reasons for the mess we are in. See if we were sharing our faith, leading people to Jesus, and discipling them in the Word, there wouldn't be all these abortionists, homosexual activists, atheists, renegade judges,

liberal educators, and the like. We need to be unstoppable in speaking the things we have seen and heard from Jesus (Acts 4:20)

Action Step 3: Practice: We need to *practice* what we preach. Outside of the Bible, the best argument for Jesus and the best argument against Jesus is the life of one who claims to be His follower. So "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." (Col. 2:6).

Action Step 4: Participate: Jesus said to render to Caesar, and in America, where we have a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, we need to *participate*. If we don't, the devil and his people win by default. I mean, did Jesus only want us to be the Salt of the Sunday School and the Light of the Church? No! He wants us to make a positive impact and have a godly influence on everything everywhere, including government. So register to vote and vote your Christian values. Commend public servants who promote godly policies but confront those who promote ungodly policies. Consider supporting someone who lines up with how you believe on the issues and some might even be called to run for office yourself. But get off the sidelines and onto the battlefield.

I say again, the evil day is not coming to America, the evil day is here. We are engaged in a great spiritual war with the forces of evil, directed by the prince of darkness himself. And the price is too high, the cost is too great, the consequences too enormous to watch it all happen and do nothing. We need to take a stand! I want to take you back to March 20, 1775. The Second Virginia Convention had convened at St. John's Church in Richmond to get out from under the watchful eye of the Loyalist Governor. They had assembled to consider some weighty matters concerning the British tyranny and oppression of the King of England. George Washington, the Sword of the Revolution was there. Thomas Jefferson, the Pen of the Revolution was there.

A thirty-nine year old delegate from Hanover County, who became known as the "Tongue of the Revolution" took a seat in the third pew of the church. He listened as many babbled on and on in favor of continued conciliatory measures, saying things like, we need to "Give peace a chance," we need to dialogue with Parliament, we need to negotiate more with King George III. Finally, the delegate from Hanover rose from his pew to address the wavering assembly of Virginians, and with great passion in his voice, this is some of what he said:

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope... but... let us not deceive ourselves, sir... If we wish to be free... we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us! They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction...until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?

Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty... are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us [2 Chron. 32:8]. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone [Eccl. 9:11]; it is to

the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir...There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable--and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace-- but there is no peace [Jer. 6:14]. The war is actually begun! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle [Matt. 20:6]? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

When Patrick Henry finished his passionate speech, the call rang out: "To arms! To arms!" and soon the Revolution became a reality. The Christians in America need to start another Revolution. A Spiritual Revolution. The weapons of our warfare are not bayonets, muskets and canons, but a belt of truth, boots of peace, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God!

So in the name of Almighty God, and for the sake of the Lord Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, I challenge you to join the battle. Take your place on the front lines. The forces of evil are surging all around us. They believe the victory is theirs, that they have won, and that this nation now belongs to them. But let us show them that they are wrong! Let us rise up, stand up, and speak up! Never give up, let up, or shut up 'til they take us out or He takes us up!

Let's put on the whole armor of God! Let's fight the good fight of faith! Let us stand together for faith once delivered to the saints! Let's stand together for the family so we can have a healthy society! Let's stand together for our freedom, for which Christ has made us free! Let us lift up the blood stained banner of the cross of Christ, and stand up for Jesus! Stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross! Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss! From victory unto victory, His army shall He lead, til every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed!

The First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”⁷

Restart the Work Ezra 4-5

¹ Eidsmoe, *Columbus and Cortez*, 90.

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³ Circular to the states dated June 8, 1783 as found in Jared Sparks, *Writings of George Washington*, 26:496; see also John F. Schroeder, ed., *Maxims of Washington* (Mt. Vernon: Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association, 1942), 298.

⁴ *Founding Documents*, 10.

⁵ Paul Leicester Ford, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, the Knickerbocker Press, 1894), 3:267.

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<http://xroads.virginia.edu/CAP/LIBERTY/lazaruspoem.html>.

⁷ *Founding Documents*, 46.