

# 7 Toxic Ideas – Sunday School 11/1/2020 | Pastor Chip Ganiear

[Pastor Chip's notes]

## #1.1 – America is Fundamentally Flawed

(1 Tim 2:1-4)

*Intro: taking a brief diversion from the main curriculum to address a pressing topic; I was stirred for this during the prayer/fast Monday. With a contentious election coming up, does God care? Is it anything more than the outcome of a ballgame (people praying on both sides, whatever is going to happen is going to happen)? Should you pray for your nation, and why? How do you pray for your nation?*

### I. (►) Plenty of Problems

#### A. It doesn't take piercing insight to see there are problems in the US

1. Our nation is plagued with serious, widespread sinfulness
  - a) Every one of the Ten Commandments has been broken in shockingly appalling ways
    - (1) Substance abuse, violence, robbery, corruption (in business, government, sports, entertainment)
    - (2) Racism, abortion, normalization of sexual perversion, pornography, pedophilia, blasphemy
    - (3) Destruction of the family, neglect and disrespect for the elderly, promoting false religion
2. Sin is not silent—it has a voice that God can hear
  - a) (Gen 4:10) – Abel was murdered but his spilled blood cried out
  - b) (Gen 18:20) – the sinfulness of Sodom and Gomorrah caused an outcry
  - c) (Exod 3:7) – the outcry of the oppressed

#### B. Does this mean that God has turned His back on us?

1. It is easy to look at the mess, throw our hands up and say, "It's hopeless!"
  - a) Some would even go so far as to recommend praying for swift judgment on America
  - b) US history being taught today largely builds on the premise that America is fundamentally flawed
    - (1) Even as believers, some might have a tough time disagreeing with that
2. Throw in an ugly political climate and you wonder where God fits into any of it

1Ti 2:1-4 NKJV –

(1) Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks be made for all men, (2) for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (3) For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, (4) who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Gen 4:10 NKJV –

(10) And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.

Gen 18:20 NKJV –

(20) And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,

Exo 3:7 NKJV –

(7) And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who [are] in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.

## II. (►) Conflicted Faith

### A. There is a real struggle in the arena of faith

1. Christians legitimately wonder, "How should I align my prayers?"
2. On one hand, the Bible is clear that persecution tends to produce spiritual growth
  - a) (Act 8:1,4) – this led to a glorious revival in Samaria
  - b) (Mat 10:23) – Jesus declared beforehand what to do under distress
  - c) (1 Thes 2:2) – much of Paul's 'missionary map' was shaped by the effects of persecution
  - d) History has shown that oppression, repression of the church are often the catalysts of revival
    - (1) So, should we start praying for increased persecution?
3. On the other hand, ongoing oppression creates obstacles, headaches, distractions
  - a) COVID has given a tiny glimpse – can't do simple things without worrying about *regulations*
  - b) (Act 19:8-10) – Paul also understood when opposition was counterproductive
  - c) (Matt 13:58) – Jesus' ministry was hindered; (Mark 1:44-45) – Jesus' ministry was altered
  - d) (Luk 9:5) – the point of 'shaking the dust off' is to move *somewhere more favorable*
    - (1) If the US becomes wholly antichrist and repressive... *where else do we go?*

### B. Text gives us a biblical baseline from which to proceed

1. (v1-2) – we must be praying for our leaders, our government
  - a) Civil authorities and structures are part of God's design – (Rom 13:1, 1 Pet 2:13-15)
2. Paul gives us a very key guiding principle in this – (v2-4)
  - a) (v2) – "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence"
    - (1) (v3) – this is God's ideal situation – both good and acceptable (pleasing)
    - (2) Good = well adapted to a purpose – and what is that purpose?
  - b) (v4) – men would be saved
  - c) So when it comes to fulfilling our mission, this is what *persecuted* Paul urges us to pray
    - (1) Who had likely just been released from his first imprisonment; able to continue church planting

#### 1Ti 2:1-4 NKJV –

(1) Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks be made for all men, (2) for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (3) For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, (4) who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

#### Act 8:1, 4 NKJV –

(1) Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ... (4) Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

#### Mat 10:23 NKJV –

(23) "When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

#### 1Th 2:2 NKJV –

(2) But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.

#### Act 19:8-10 NKJV –

(8) And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. (9) But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. (10) And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

#### Mat 13:58 NKJV –

(58) Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

#### Mar 1:44-45 NKJV –

(44) and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." (45) However, he went out and began to proclaim [it] freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

#### Luk 9:5 NKJV –

(5) "And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

#### Rom 13:1 NKJV –

(1) Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

#### 1Pe 2:13-15 NKJV –

(13) Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, (14) or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and [for the] praise of those who do good. (15) For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men--

### III. (►) America's Unique History

#### A. Correct perspective

1. Has this nation committed sin? Yes. Has this nation drifted? Most definitely
2. But the root is not inherently bad—the *form of government* is good
  - a) The *offices* are good...some *officials* are bad (and that is party-independent)
  - b) Concern arises when there is a push to change the *form* of government, move from our founding

#### B. Consider some examples

1. "The Church that Birthed America" – article in World magazine<sup>1</sup>
  - a) There is a church in Amsterdam that has existed well over 500 years
  - b) Originally a Catholic church, it became Protestant after the Reformation, "and a haven for Separatists who fled England, the center of English worship in the Dutch Calvinist city."
    - (1) "Separatists believed strongly in congregationalism, the theory of church government which says that every body of believers should be independent and self-governing. They opposed any civil authority that interfered with the right of the individual to exercise religious freedom"<sup>2</sup>
  - c) "About 100 Separatists worshipped in the garden chapel before most made their way to Leiden, and...40 of them set out in 1620 aboard the Mayflower."
    - (1) William Bradford – one of the Separatists on the Mayflower, later governor
      - a) He wrote that in this endeavor they had "great hope and inward zeal of laying some good foundation for the **propagating and advancing of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ** in these remote parts of the world, yea, though they should be as stepping stones to others for performing of so great a work."<sup>3</sup>
  - d) "The Begijnhof's English Reformed Church **could be considered the sending church that birthed America**. In Holland its remnant congregation faced hardships but sent more Pilgrims to America over the next decades. These and others founded churches and schools that **a century on would power Great Awakenings** on both sides of the Atlantic leading to great missionary movements. **Sending provoking more sending**."
  - e) "The 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, ignited a century of global evangelization. According to leading missions researcher Patrick Johnstone, the least evangelized constituted 54 percent of the world population in 1900, but by 2000 made up 25 percent of the world population. Looked at another way, in 1900 over 71 percent of the world's evangelical Christians lived in two countries—Great Britain and the United States—and from there they went into all the earth. **'The powerhouse for evangelical renewal has been the USA** with its freedom of religion, its dynamism and its wealth,' writes Johnstone, a Brit."
2. Founding Fathers' thoughts on the Constitution<sup>4</sup>
  - a) James Madison – "The great objects which presented themselves [to the Constitutional Convention]...formed a task more difficult than can be well conceived by those who were not concerned in the execution of it. Adding to these considerations the natural diversity of human opinions on all new and complicated subjects, it is impossible to consider the degree of concord which ultimately prevailed **as less than a miracle**."
  - b) James Wilson – "Governments, in general, have been the result of force, of fraud, and accident. **After a period of six thousand years has elapsed since the creation**, the United States exhibit to the world the first instance, as far as we can learn, of a nation, unattacked by external force, unconvulsed by domestic insurrections, assembling voluntarily, deliberating fully, and deciding calmly concerning that system of government under which they would wish that they and their posterity should live."
  - c) Benjamin Rush – "Doctor Rush then proceeded to consider the origin of the proposed [Constitution], and fairly deduced **it [was] from heaven**, asserting that he as much believed **the hand of God was employed in his work** as that God had divided the Red Sea to give a passage to the children of Israel, or had fulminated the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai."
  - d) Benjamin Franklin – "I have so much faith in the general government of the world by Providence that I can hardly conceive a transaction of such momentous importance [as the framing of the Constitution]...should be suffered to pass **without being in some degree influenced, guided, and governed by that omnipotent, omnipresent, and beneficent Ruler** in whom all inferior spirits live and move and have their being."
3. Perhaps these observations should not be surprising
  - a) US law and Constitution parallels Biblical law and structure of government given to Moses
4. Quick observation on voting
  - a) When Israelites asked Samuel for a king, God held *the people* responsible; they chose (1 Sam 10:19)
    - (1) They had been living under a form of near *anarchy*—everyone did what was good in own eyes
    - (2) They swung the opposite direction toward *tyranny*—God warned them what kings do

<sup>1</sup> [https://world.wng.org/2017/11/the\\_church\\_that\\_birtherd\\_america](https://world.wng.org/2017/11/the_church_that_birtherd_america)

<sup>2</sup> Lowman, Michael R., George Thompson, Kurt, Grussendorf, "United States History in Christian Perspective" 2d ed. (p 30)

<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> Quotes taken from Skousen, W. Cleon, "The 5000 Year Leap: a Miracle that Changed the World"

- b) They could have sought a return to the structure Moses received from God in the wilderness

**1Sa 10:19 NKJV –**

(19) "But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans."