

November 14, 2021 Our Covenant Keeping God

The founding of our nation was compelled by the persecution of the vast number of people who suffered at the hands of religious elites in Europe and England. People came because of persecution and seeking to be the church of Jesus Christ in a new land. There wasn't a question of whether they wanted to be a light. The words of John Winthrop, "We are entering into covenant with Him for this work... to follow the counsel of Micah, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God... For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man... For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world."

Covenants made with God are serious: Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Children of Israel. This land was found on covenants with God and are often forgotten by man but not forgotten by God. God will still honor covenants today. Covenants provide a pathway to safety, but also to discipline, rebuke, and consequences when broken. We are living in the mess of broken covenants.

Jesus said this would happen. **Mark 24:3-4** *As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you."*

Jesus cautions us to make sure no one misleads us. Jesus continues in **Matthew 25** with 2 parables. (This chapter is important to read on your own.) But today hear about the parable of the 10 virgins waiting for the bridegroom to come. Some wise virgins were prepared with extra oil. The other unwise only had no extra oil and were not allowed into the celebration. It's the story of the church before the bridegroom, Jesus Christ, returns. Half of the church falls away before His return.

The second parable of the fig tree tells of watching for the signs of His coming. The signs are all around us today especially increasing in the last 2 decades. Universalism, open rejection of the Bible's teaching, abortion, same-sex marriages, no authority of scripture, worship of creation instead of the creator - Recognize that He is near! Like the impending eruption of a volcano, there are signs of earthquakes, the churning of lava, gases released, etc., to warn of what's coming. The lava dome of sin is growing and now we see these things and recognize that we are in this time.

What to do? The church is at a point of choosing between God's warnings or the apostasy of the world. First, we need to embrace our history as a covenant people. This nation is a covenant blessing from God. It is not ours because we are Christians. It is not owned by the church. It is Gods. The statutes of our country are based on God's people keeping the covenant. The church needs to be revived and return to God and His principles.

God brings discipline when we break His covenant. Non-believers can't keep the covenant. But we as His people can look to God's ways and obey. But the church has rejected truth and denied the holiness of God. We are living as covenant breakers. We as God's people, must return to God and our commissioning and be humbled as others look on. Ask God to make us salt and light. We need to repent and be humble.

We are called to be a city on a hill. What are we to do?

- 1) See this message as hope and grace as we live for God.
- 2) Believers have prepared for these times and if not a believer, you can make a decision today to believe and live for Christ.
- 3) Don't be ashamed of Jesus, His Word, or the lifestyle that He commands. **Mark 8:38** *If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.* Stand up and claim Jesus as Lord.
- 4) Be gracious to unbelievers but don't compromise on the truth. **John 1:14** *The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.* It is both grace and truth!
- 5) Pray. It's the secret of God's power. When the people of God repent, it is personal and heartfelt, contagious, and life-giving, demonstrated by a return of values and behaviors, fueled by prayer. Commit to be a praying people for our church, our community, and our world. God desires a remnant to declare His truth and share His glory.

Hosea 6:1 *Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will restore us, that we may live in His presence. Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge Him. As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.*

We can have a great revival that only God can do. Let us be prepared in this place and remember His covenant promises. Jesus Christ desires to work in us. Jesus Christ provided the covenant sacrifice and offers forgiveness of sin when we go to Him.

Do you see our country as a covenant-keeping people? Why or why not?
How can we be ready as half of the wise virgins in Jesus' parable?
As we are called to be a city on a hill, what can we do?