

Morality In America
in part from a sermon by Steve Higginbotham

Text:- Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Introduction:

1. Ills. Of Sherlock Holmes and Watson going camping...

Watson, what do you see? I see thousands of stars. And what does that mean to you? I suppose it means that we are most fortunate to inhabit God's great universe as intelligent observers. Although we are small in his eyes, we are blessed with powers of reasoning that no other creation of God has. I guess that's what it means to me. What does it mean to you, Holmes? To me Watson, it means that while we were sleeping, someone has stolen our tent.

2. In a day of educational, scientific, technological achievements, we have lost our moral compass. I believe that our country was founded under a tent of morality and belief in God. As a result I think God has blessed us in our undertaking. The tent of morality in our country has been stolen while we slept.

3. The objective moral standard by which we judge human conduct has been stolen from this generation.

4. Before we can marvel at our vast accomplishments, we must concern ourselves with a more fundamental task of finding our missing values.

Alexis de Tocqueville was an early French observer of America. He was comparing the French revolution (which was a failure) to the American revolution.

Now it was the year 1831. Alexis De Tocqueville was in America on a state visit of sorts. He and his team were inspecting this other revolution over in the New World. He was exceedingly interested in this new up and coming nation. America had risen up against royalty, as they had. They had defeated the British in the New World and had won their independence.

De Tocqueville traveled throughout the land in search of the answer to Why was America doing so well? Surely there was some rational basis for the success of the United States of America. He looked closely at the government, the institutions, the schools, the factories, and the farmlands. Nothing really stood out for him.

It was not until he went into the churches in America and saw their zeal for God that he began to understand. The American heartland was made up of a collection of God-fearing people many of them drawn from the Reformation ...well with their zeal to create a "nation under God". They took their faith, and the integrity that came along with it, very seriously. They did not limit their faith to the cathedral. History was about to see a demonstration of a new more personal form of Christianity.

Their God was with them in their workplace, in the marketplaces and the Puritans took their God with them into the government as well. Their God was with them personally and attended all their endeavors.

His final conclusion was a very interesting one. It was a spiritual assessment of America back in those times as much as it was as a political and economic one. Perhaps it was even a prophecy for America. Even though the assessment was made back in the 19th century the oft quoted statement on America by this visiting Frenchman still stands today as a highly significant statement about America. It is not only a commendation but it also stands as a sober warning to not only America but all of us in Christendom. Because the general moral decline we see today in America has been happening throughout the whole western world.

Here is the quote from Alexis de Tocqueville.

**"America is great because America is good.
If America ever ceases to be good,
she will also cease from being great."**

I. How We Got Where We Are

A. We Have Removed God From Our Thoughts.

1. Romans 1:28- And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

2. Without God, there is no moral anchor...right and wrong, truth and error are as shifting as the sea.

3. Without God, there is no word of God.

4. If we are the product of evolution, why expect people to act differently than the animals?

B. Pleasure Has Become Our God.

1. Proverbs 21:17 He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

2. Philippians 3:19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.

3. Hedonism is the philosophy that states that good and evil are determined by pleasure and pain.

4. Solomon demonstrated the futility of fulfillment through pleasure seeking in the book of Ecclesiastes.

C. We Have "Defined Down" Deviancy.

1. We accept as normal today what at once was deemed repugnant.

2. This is nothing more than a moral placebo to salve what's left of our conscience.

- a. Abortion – the right to choose.
- b. Murder – mercy killing Euthanasia
- c. Suicide – dying with dignity.
- d. Homosexuality – gay.
- e. Adultery – an affair.
- f. Cursing – colorful language.
- g. Lying – misinformation.

- h. Fornication – love.
- i. Gambling- entertainment

II. What We Can Do To Return To God

A. First, we must embrace the Christian lifestyle ourselves

1. Ephesians 4:1- I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,
2. Philippians 1:27- Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,
3. Colossians 1:10- that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
4. Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

B. We must proclaim the Christian lifestyle to others

1. 1 Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.
2. 2 Timothy 2:2- And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

C. We must pray for God's providential hand to work change, even at the expense of personal comfort

1. James 5:16- Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

2. 1 Thessalonians 5:17- pray without ceasing,

Conclusion: 1. June 14, 1998 commencement address at Stanford University by Ted Koppel – “We will not change what’s wrong with our culture through legislation, or by choosing up sides on the basis of personal popularity or party affiliation. We will change it by small acts of courage and kindness; by recognizing, each of us, his or her own obligation to set a proper example. Aspire to decency. Practice civility toward one another. Admire and emulate ethical behavior wherever you find it. Apply a rigid standard of morality to your lives; and if, periodically, you fail – as you surely will – adjust your lives, not the standards. There’s no mystery here.

You know what to do.
Now go out and do it.”

2. Morality has been stolen away from us while we slept.

3. If there has ever been a time when God needed a pure, distinct, praying, vocal church, it is now!

4. Will you step up to the challenge and be a part of the solution rather than adding to the problem?