

A CHRISTIAN AND HIS COUNTRY

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-6

Intro: Greg Laurie shared these words Friday.

As we look to celebrate our nation's birthday on July 4, I think about all that is great about the United States. I have had the opportunity to travel around the world. I have visited some great countries. But I am partial, and I believe that the United States of America is still the greatest country on the face of the earth. As Sen. Marco Rubio recently stated, it's the "Miracle of America."

However, I believe we are at a historic crossroads, much like our Founding Fathers faced that fateful summer in Philadelphia in 1787. They found themselves – 11 years after the Declaration of Independence – facing economic depression, social unrest, interstate rivalries and foreign intrigue. Sound familiar? Those could be today's headlines. In the face of this discord, these men tackled the onerous task of uniting disparate voices.

I believe they were only able to come to agreement because of divine intervention. We already know that many of the men considered themselves Christians and believed in prayer. They had set a precedent three years earlier by agreeing to open each Congress in prayer. Consider this famous prayer from that first session in 1784:

"Oh Lord our Heavenly Father ... look down in mercy we beseech Thee on us these American states who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor and thrown themselves on Thy gracious protection desiring to be henceforth dependent only on Thee."

This prayer showed their dependence on God and expectation that He would intervene on their behalf.

When they began crafting the Constitution in late summer of 1787, it looked like they had reached a stalemate, but the story goes that Benjamin Franklin called for a recess and encouraged his fellow delegates to spend some time in prayer as they sought unity and compromise.

They were eventually able to hammer out a document upon which most could agree, moving our nation into its prosperous and storied future.

We find ourselves once again facing economic recession, political stalemate, international intrigue and a general malaise about the state of our country. We look at all of these things that are happening and we wonder if it will ever get better.

Back in the beginning of the new millennium there was a buoyant optimism among Americans about the future. Twenty-eight percent of Americans said they were dissatisfied with the way things were, and 69 percent were very satisfied.

That was the year 2000. Fast forward to today.

A recent poll reveals that 90 percent of Americans are dissatisfied with our situation. The Wall Street Journal conducted a poll revealing that 73 percent of Americans believe the U.S. is in a state of decline.

With all of the problems we have in our country, and there are many, I believe the only real lasting solution for the United States of America is for us to turn back to God. I think there is no other hope.

As you look at our country and you look at the statements of our Founding Fathers, consider that many, though not all, were Christians. They at least had a respect for the Word of God and believed it to be an authoritative source. And they believed in the person and the power of Jesus Christ.

If we remove that foundation, if we remove that belief in the Bible as the Word of God, we have a vacuum – and suddenly this whole American experiment begins to unravel. You see, it is not just about freedom. It is certainly not about freedom from religion. It is freedom of religion.

This is the choice our country made, but I believe we as individuals face a crossroads of freedom for ourselves. The only true freedom and security for the individual is found in Christ. When we worry for our nation's future and lose hope for a better tomorrow, we need to turn back to God in prayer, as our Founding Fathers did, and ask for His blessing and protection once again.

We need a personal and national revival, and I would love to see it start with prayer, once again, as it did in Philadelphia all those years ago.

I would like to share three things from Paul's first letter to Timothy that I believe can correct the course of our nation.

I. Pray continuously v.1-2a

II. Live correctly v.2b-3

III. Share constantly v. 4-6

One time many years ago preacher Dwight L. Moody was criticized because of the evangelistic methods he used. Moody replied, "I like my way of doing it better than your way of not doing it."