



WEEKLY SERMON

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Sunday July 16, 2023
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Message: Character

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Text: See lesson

“America the Beautiful”

Every real hymn has its story, if only we could discover it. The background of the author’s life, his spiritual experiences, his conflicts, his sufferings, his victories, sometimes a startling incident, sometimes a soul crisis, sometimes a season of exaltation – these things are woven into the thought and feeling of a great hymn.

And perhaps, in some measure, the fact that the hymns have been wrought out of actual human experiences give to them the great power which they undoubtedly exert upon the hearts of men. Certainly, to know what conditions produced a given hymn often adds to our appreciation of its meaning and our responsiveness to its message.

Each time we join together in singing the vividly descriptive lines of “**America the Beautiful,**” we are moved emotionally as we contemplate the wonders of our great nation. The scenic beauties, the courage of the early settlers, and the sacrifices of heroes in battle all stir us to avid appreciation of our country’s heritage. But this national hymn does more than inspire us to praise our great nation. It also encourages us to pray for it.

Each stanza is completed with an earnest plea for God’s grace, God’s healing, and His refining until we as a people achieve true brotherhood, law-abiding control, and nobility.

The author felt deeply about the message of her patriotic hymn. Katherine Lee Bates, who was a teacher and head of the English department at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, wrote the original lines of this text in 1893. Miss Katherine Lee Bates was on a trip westward across our great country.

Her first stop was Chicago and the great Columbian Exposition with its gleaming white buildings. She said this scene made such a strong impression upon her and her patriotic feeling, that it was in no small degree responsible for the beginning and development of what was to be this much-loved song of America. Her allusion in verse four to “Thine alabaster cities gleam” stems from this Chicago visit.

As she continued westward, she passed through the great fields of grain and fruited plains, on to the purple mountain majesties of Colorado. But it was on her trip to Pike’s Peak, from whose summit she witnessed the far expanse of spacious skies and the sweep

of amber plains, that she then and there began the opening lines: "**O beautiful for spacious skies For amber waves of grain ...**"

This hymn reminds America of her noble past, of the Pilgrims whose stern impassioned stress made a thoroughfare for freedom. Raise your voice in praise to God and country as you give thanks to God for the noble heritage and the many beauties of our great country He has entrusted to us.

Today our nation is threatened as never before – threatened by enemies without, but especially by decadence within. In our day, there seems to many who believe that “freedom of worship” means Freedom FROM Worship. If we are to survive as a great country – if we are to achieve brotherhood, self-control and “liberty in law” – we must return to the faith on which America was founded. God will again shed His grace on America, if we will turn to Him in repentance as we remember the words from II Chronicles 7:14, “**If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.**”

**O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties Above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!**

**O beautiful for pilgrim feet, Whose stern impassioned stress,
A thoroughfare for freedom beat Across the wilderness!
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!**

**O beautiful for heroes proved In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!**

**O beautiful for patriot dream That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam, Undimmed by human tears!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!**

Proverbs 14:34 teaches us that “**Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.**”

In *HIS* Amazing Grace,
Pastor David Miklas

“Successful Christians Memorize Scripture”

Bible Study Objectives:

1. To remind us that what we don't know can hurt us and our families for both time and eternity: (Hosea 4:1-6)
2. To remind us that our greatest failure in life is to succeed at something that does not matter: (Matthew 16:26)
3. To remind us that happiness is a wonderful feeling and it is the byproduct of knowledge/obedience: (John 13:17, 15:10)
4. To remind us that success is a wonderful feeling and it too is the byproduct of knowledge and obedience: (Joshua 1:1-9)

Bible Study Introduction:

1. The first step to success/happiness is to memorize and hide God's Word in your heart: (Joshua 1:8, Psalms 119:11)
2. The second step to success/happiness is to study/meditate on God's Word: (Joshua 1:8, II Timothy 2:15, II Peter 1:20)
3. The third step to success/happiness is to put into practice every command/rule of God: (Joshua 1:8, Mark 7:6, Luke 12:47)
4. The fourth step to success/happiness is for us to become both strong and courageous: (Joshua 1:8, Numbers 23:19, Titus 1:2)

Basic Reasons For Memorizing Scripture:

1. We memorize because it will never pass away and it never requires any updating: (Luke 21:32, Psalms 119:89, Malachi 3:6)
2. We memorize because it is a powerful weapon to assist us in avoiding temptation: (Psalms 119:11, Galatians 6:7, Psalms 81:12)
3. We memorize because it will keep us pure and enable us to avoid Satan's landmines: (Psalms 119:9-10, Proverbs 6:23-35)
4. We memorize because it alone contains advice/instruction that will lead to certain success: (Psalms 119:105, Proverbs 3:5-6)
5. We memorize because it explains how to acquire the wisdom that we need to make decisions: (James 1:5, Proverbs 2:1-6)
6. We memorize because it provides a fail-safe protocol to deal with stress/disappointment/depression: (Psalms 37:1-40)
7. We memorize because it comforts us when we are lonely – sad - discouraged: (Psalms 119:28, 97-104, 127-133, Psalms 19:7-14)
8. We memorize because it alone explains how we can navigate through this mess called life: (Psalms 73:1-28, Psalms 23:1-6)

9. We memorize because it alone can prepare people to gain access to heaven:
(Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:8-13, Romans 10:17)

10. We memorize because it alone can drive out our fears and provide
sweet sleep: (Proverbs 3:24, Isaiah 35:4, 41:10-13, 40:31)

11. We memorize because it alone leads us, keeps us, and talks to us:
(Proverbs 7:2, Proverbs 6:20-23, Psalms 63:8, Psalms 139:10)

12. We memorize because it alone will give to us God's presence and a song on our
lips: (Ephesians 5:18-20, Colossians 3:16-17)

Bible Study Bottom Line:

Happiness always finds those who discover that success is finding the will of God and
doing it: (I John 2:15-17)

Thy Word have I hid in my heart
that I might not sin against God,
Thy Word have I hid in my heart
that I might not sin against God.

I rejoice at your Word as one who finds great treasure, treasure that none can measure
in silver or gold. I rejoice at your Word as one who finds great treasure, treasure that
forever my heart will hold.

Thy Word have I hid in my heart
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Here is a suggestion for memorizing Bible verses.

First: Print each verse or set of verses on one side of a 3x5 card and the reference
on the other side.

Second: Place a card in your car, at your desk or work station, on the mirror in
your bathroom, at your kitchen or dining room table and carry one with you.

Third: From all the above places - read your verse at least 15 times a day.

Fourth: If you are interested in a basic set of verses to memorize – e-mail me at
pastormiklas@aol.com and I will send them to you in a return e-mail.

**The Above lesson was written by Tommy Dowling
a Sunday School Teacher for over 40 years.**

If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon "**Successful Christians Memorize Scripture,**" right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, "...**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...**"

Romans 10:13, "**For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: "**I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.**"

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, please let me know. Please send an e-mail to pastormiklas@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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