

“Our Christian Heritage”

By Brother Parrish Lee

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Last week it was, I saw the Burtons, or, rather, I saw the youngest Burton, little Phoenix, I saw her up in the front area and she was doing all she could to put one foot in front of the other. She would take a couple steps and she'd fallen catch yourself and get back up and then she take another couple of steps, fall and catch herself, and get back up, and she did this several times, and I thought, “You know what? that's kind of cute.” But I would see her do it over and over again and not be deterred. And why? Because walking was the goal. Walking was the goal. But then the Lord had to give me some instruction in that, and He showed me on so many levels that's how are young Christians are—so often we take a couple steps, and we trip and stumble, and catch ourselves; get back up and go out for another few steps. And I thought, “Wow.” And then God gave me a little bit different understanding. There we were leading up to July 4th, and doing a little study for the message, and the Lord just showed me how our nation has been like this. We began as a nation, and stumbled on some things, got up, dusted ourselves off, and did it all over again. Praise be to God who giveth us the victory.

I said all of that into give a little respect, a little reverence to this great nation that God has given us. But if I could take a thought for just a moment, I would like to speak a little about our theme for the month. Our theme for the month is, "A Month Of Encouragement". And our Scripture for the month is from Luke 22:32.

Luke 22:32 *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

There was a time when the Lord was talking to his disciples. And he went on to describe with them the relationship that a leader in God has with those that he may lead. He told him that if he were going to be chiefest among them, he would be servant of all. And he told them again because they have continued with some through the thick and the thin, they would also be appointed a kingdom. And then the Lord turned and looked at Peter, and said how Satan desired to sift him as wheat. Now I'm not a farmer or anything, and I can't say that I have ever kneaded a loaf of bread—but I understand when you sift something you are making sure that you break it down to its most minute particles. In other words to quote a nursery rhyme, all the kings horses and all the kings men would not be able to put it together again.

Anyone hearing this news would have to be discouraged, challenged, wondering what they were going to do, if Satan was going to personally make them a target. And then the Lord said that He had prayed for them that his faith would not fail, and when he would be converted to strengthen his brothers.

Many of us have had situations in our life that had been challenging, discouraging. Especially after becoming a Christian, many of us have had battles where we understood who our enemy was. And some of the battles have been so intense, we just haven't wanted to fight any big ones anymore. Christians have been challenged when losing a job, when having an illness come upon them or their family, when just even being in the church and it seems like no one cares. A death in our family, trouble with children or parents. Christians are not exempt from fighting such battles. But I am here to report that no matter what you go through, or when you go through it, God has got your back.

You know, we have to look at Christianity in our nation, or to say it another way, our Christian heritage. And we have to be able to be thankful for what God has brought to our nation. We have to go

to the Scriptures and we see that we have obligation to support our nation. I was listening to the radio some time ago and it was Christian radio and I heard the announcer say that the president was not their president, it was the president for everybody else but not for them. And in case you're wondering it wasn't our current president—point is, they don't have a Scripture to stand on.

1 Peter 2:17 *Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*

One of the things we as Christians have to realize if God knows how to take care of our nation, if He knows how to take care of our country, if God is had the foresight to put things in place where our nation has been subject to so many wars, in so many conflicts, so many issues, and God has brought us thus far—we need to put our trust in His hands and other words if He can take care of our nation for over 200 years, then surely He can take care of us for a lifetime.

Freedom has always been an expensive thing. I had a conflict in my life many years ago. When I got saved, I was in the military. And the question have imposed me, as the Bible says thou shalt not kill (Exodus 20:13); then how can you be in the military and a Christian at the same time? Of course He says that in the Old Testament, and the New Testament, it says, if you're angry with your brother without a cause you are in danger of the judgment (Matthew 5:22). And so I had a conflict on being a Christian, and being in the military. Because you see Saints I just wanted to serve God. You see, we have to be thankful for God's wisdom and understanding and instruction. We have to be thankful for His Word. We see our Lord and Savior shared with soldiers at that time. And I am sure they themselves were in conflict looking for the answer to the same question. Even David himself, he being a man of war, had similar conviction. But you could beg to ask, if David killed so many, why was one more such a terrible sin? The Bible says to render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's and render unto God the things which be God's (Mark 12:17). So often we have to realize is that the thoughts and intents of the heart is what the Lord and spirit discerned out. Should we be in the military; is it okay? The Bible says to render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's. War, military conflict, many times we are put in situations that are uncomfortable and unpleasant yet necessary. But what about just going out and shooting somebody? The Bible says that the Word is a discerner (Hebrews 4:12), so God cares about what we think about where our heart is. This means that mode as is intrinsically connected to what we do. In other words, *why* we do what we do is important also.

This brings me to another point. It doesn't matter who's in control in our wonderful nation. Of course in this country, we have two parties who basically have control of our government. My responsibility is the same: pray for those in power. And you know why we are obligated to pray for them? It's because Christians know the One with the real power. We have only to look at the news on TV tonight to see that there are some places that are trying to take over their government. Some are religious groups that want to take over their nation, some a different political affiliation. What ever the case, it is they that know God, and asked Him that can change a nation.

John 17:9-11 *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

Our Lord and Savior, while on this Earth, prayed for us and told us that we belong to Him. He told us that He would be glorified in us, and that we would be kept in the name of the Father. And He told us that we would be one with Him. I don't know how that makes you feel this morning but I come to tell you there is no greater security than to be kept by God. No greater warm fuzzy, no greater peace, no greater joy... I myself am not one of those touchy-feely people that has to have that

acknowledgment of affection through touch. But there was a time in my life when I was young that there was no greater confirmation of being loved than for my parents, or relatives to hold their arms out and pulled me to them, and give me one of those rib cracking hugs. I'm sure we have a witness in the house here this morning. There is just something about when someone means love to you and goes in a way to express it that you can receive. So isn't it great to have the Lord tell us that not only would He be glorified in us, but that we would be kept by Him and one with Him.

Many of our brothers and sisters here have gone to the conference in Virginia. I am looking forward to hearing all the blessings that are going on there. I am looking forward to a richness shared from their lives and for my life to be enriched by what God has poured out there. But make no mistake—the same God that blesses the gathering of our brothers and sisters in Virginia is looking to pour out according to the Bible a blessing that we cannot contain, even here. Don't ever catch yourself passing by a blessing that God wants you to have. Don't ever find yourself not looking forward to His blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior. For as the Scriptures say:

Psalms 118:24 *This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

