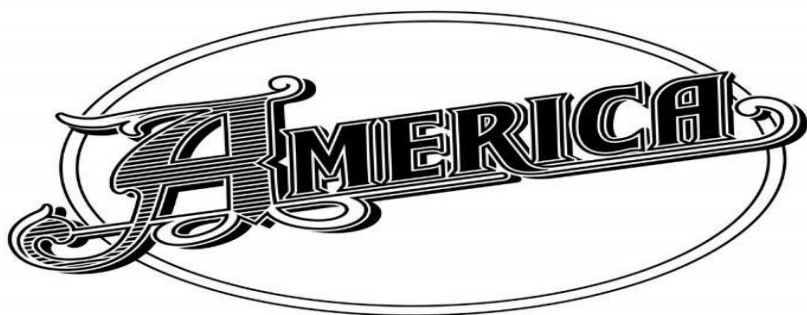


America's Goodness

Stand!



“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,
that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and
having done all, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13

By

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America's Goodness

While the controversy may never be settled over who is the real author of the quote attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville, it still resonates with a powerful life of its own "America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great." The image of that quote is romantic, it's majestic and is worthy of embrace. The question for me is when was America good? Was she good when her first settlers arrived on her noble shores? Was she good when she sought to realize her manifest destiny? Was she good when she wove slavery into the fabric of her existence or was she good when she wrestled with slavery's moral and ethical virtues (The Civil War)? Maybe it was when she toyed with the concept of the Emancipation Proclamation, or when she allowed the assassination of Abraham Lincoln? Perhaps it was when she entertained the women's suffrage movement. What about when she endured the great depression? Was she good during WWI or WWII, the Korean War or the Vietnam War or the Gulf war any of the wars in the middle east that she engaged in? Was America good during the Civil Rights struggles of the 50's and 60's? How about when she allowed the assassinations of JFK or Martin Luther King Jr. or Robert Kennedy? Is she displaying goodness with the onslaught of police brutality that has ravaged our country of late? Is her goodness being revealed by the irreverence of her president who honestly believes that there are good people who identify

themselves as white supremacist? And last but not least, maybe, just maybe, her goodness is being reflected in her rush to preserve the economy at the expense of the thousands of lives she has unnecessarily sacrificed during the global pandemic?

I ask these questions because for America to have ever been great, she must at some point in her history have been good. And to assert that we can make America great again suggest that she was at some earlier time in her history great. I cannot say that there is no goodness or never has been any goodness in America, nor can I say that she has not had some great moments, for without question, her greatest moment yet was the election of Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States. But goodness was never the cornerstone or one of the founding principles upon which this country was built. Self-preservation was her initial motivation and over time it has devolved into greed and corruption. Don't get me wrong, America has had from the start the potential for goodness and greatness and all of the pieces are in place to realize her potential, but for all of her potential and all of her pieces she has no moral resolve.

There is no profit in goodness therefore no room for it in any public arena. It's alright to talk about it on Sunday just so long as it doesn't interfere with business come Monday. Why do you think there is a very deliberate effort to keep the separation of Church and State? It's because in most instances morality gets in the way of making

money. How else can you explain the existence of a president who is the most amoral figure in America's history? He stands as the antithesis to every core principle that we as Americans have been taught and led to believe in. Why do you think our congress tolerates him? Why? Because he says and does the despicable things that they believe, but have the good sense not to say and do.

Today we are witnessing a very dark period in the life and times of our country. For the first time in our history we are the laughing stock, joke, and embarrassment of the world. Our president has single handedly dismantled our integrity as a world leader and sadly enough he doesn't even know it. His very presence is a threat to our democracy as well as the democracy of the entire free world. When the world laughs at him he mistakenly thinks they are laughing with him. His staff and cabinet have had to abdicate their own integrity in order to align themselves with him and it is the rest of America that suffers as a consequence.

As I share these thoughts with you I can't help but remember the quote from Ester Forbes fictional character James Otis in her book Johnny Tremain; Otis makes it very clear why America was engaged in the American Revolution, he said "it was not just for the rights of men in this country, but just so a man could stand anywhere in the world". The right for any man to be able to stand, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or religion is more than precious, it's a God given imperative that is worth dying for if need

be and that is what our scripture for today is echoing, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” “Having done all to stand. Stand” As you endure racism, Stand! As you face police brutality, stand! When denied you civil rights as a human being of any cultural, religious, ethnic, or sexual orientation, stand! Having done all, to stand. Stand!” Sometimes you have to stand when you are the only one standing, but stand anyway! And don’t just stand, . . . “take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,”

The evils that we are facing today are the same evils that Paul’s generation faced when he penned these God given scriptures. He knew then as we do now that the times require that we be fortified. Listen to how he describes what we are facing: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” How appropriate to our time!

To be sure, the best thing that we can do is to stand’ But in so doing our posture is important. We are not standing because it’s the last resort and all hope is lost. No! we stand defiantly prepared to endure whatever may come and here is how we do it:

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Ephesian 6:10 - 17

When it's all said and done the fault for our present condition lies not just with the president or the congress or our history, the fault also lies with us, our apathy, lack of moral conviction, and our unwillingness to stop suppressing the true goodness that resides in us. Rise up! Rise Up! Rise up goodness so that we can become what we truly long to be, America the Great, America the Good, The land of the free and the home of the brave.