

Teaching E-mail 74
Free To Be A "Spiritual Patriot" For Jesus
(March 6, 2015)

Dear Friends in Christ,

We recently watched an inspiring DVD from our library entitled Last Ounce of Courage. The main character was a mayor of a small town who stood up against the ACLU for the **freedom** to be able to observe Christmas for the reason Congress made it a national holiday — to observe Christ's birthday. [We admit that we personally don't observe the Christmas holiday because of its pagan origins and commercial catering to greed. But standing up for freedom, both spiritually and politically, sparks our hearts!]

The movie referenced several statements voiced by Ronald Reagan way back in the 1960s. We were emotionally energized not only by his emphasis on the true cost of patriotism in general; his words also reminded us of the cost it was for us to be a war couple ourselves decades ago. To an even greater extent was fanned in us a deeper appreciation of the "spiritual patriotism" which the Spirit of our Lord has instilled in us to lovingly serve Jesus. A passage that has reflected our lives and ministry for many years is Psalm 67:1,2: *"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine upon us, that Your ways may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations."*

Please, read Reagan's statements and reflect on the transgenerational responsibility each of us has to make sure that freedom prevails for our children and their children's sake:

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it

to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

"You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We will preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we will sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness. If we fail, at least let our children and our children's children say of us we justified our brief moment here. We did all that could be done."

If you're a senior as we are, you too may be saddened as you've witnessed the escalating downfall of this nation morally, politically, and militarily *in our generation*. The last war this nation showed itself victorious was World War II. The rest have been police actions and conflicts over which thousands upon thousands of lives on all sides have been cut short or devastated beyond repair.

"Doesn't an old fat man and war veteran have the right to express what he values because he fought for the freedom of others to do likewise?"

That's how I (Mike) often introduce myself to people wherever Sue and I walk and I wear my "special" shirt or sweatshirt, next page. (The back of it offers this challenge: "If you don't believe Jesus is the Son of God, just ask Him!")



[This is me at the indoor mall where we frequently walk in the early morning. It's been an interesting experience ever since our Father told me to "be a signpost for Jesus." We've certainly gained some insight into the various ethnic groups of individuals who engage us about these messages. We've found that Blacks are the most likely to make comments as well as engage us about their own faith in Jesus. Hispanics and Asians are next among those who remark about the shirt messages, and Whites are the least likely to engage us. While a number of Hispanics will also talk about their own faith in Jesus, the Asians and Whites who stop to talk to us generally bring up the church they go to or some famous Christian teacher they listen to—but they never talk about Jesus! I'm delighted to wear my shirt or sweatshirt but I'm saddened each time I encounter a "Christian" who won't talk about Jesus. They have a false sense of "patriotism" since their allegiance seems to exclude the One they profess to follow.]

A patriot is person who vigorously supports their country and is prepared to defend it against enemies or detractors.

***A "spiritual patriot" of our Lord Jesus is someone whose chief purpose for living is to lovingly and courageously do their Father's will as Jesus did, no matter what it costs them.
"The righteous are as bold as a lion."
(Proverbs 28:1)***

We know that a good number of you have gone outside the city gates to follow in the footsteps of loving and obedient trust in our Lord (see Hebrews 13:12-14). You're among the 20+ million in this nation who've fled organized religion and are seeking the spiritual power and relational intimacy which overflows the Book of Acts. If this describes your own odyssey, don't look back with regret wanting to rejoin the crowds you sat with in man-centered, self-gratifying religious systems. The disregard for the holiness and repentance which marked gatherings of Christ's followers of old has made contemporary church attendees complacent **spiritual cowards**, comfortable in their scheduled "Christian practice."

Please don't feel sorry for yourself if you and/or your spouse and family seem alone in your hunger for authentic extended spiritual family in Jesus. Our Father is at work in this land quickening many with a "divine restlessness of spirit" to shake up the status quo in their lives so they'll be eager to hear and obey His Spirit!

Even though our Father commanded us *to share* the Hebraic foundations which He is restoring, He's also prompting us *to prepare those who wholly love our Lord to be courageous* before the coming national disasters which will shake this land. Most Americans can't envision the likelihood of the home-grown terrorism which will explode here

soon. Why will this come to pass? Because there are too many poor and hopeless people under the thumb of the very rich who have taken control of the government. History demonstrates in every society that the teeming masses of the hopeless finally revolt, producing chaos. And since so many in this country have forsaken the Godly principles and Biblical foundations on which this nation was founded, most likely a God-denying, Hitler-type dictator will arise to quell the chaos. Even now the spiraling lawlessness, belligerent animosity toward other people, and despising of authority both within families and in society overall are the dry tinder staged for the fires of societal chaos. How does this prospect make you feel?

Tension, fear, and self-preservation will become the norm for those whose hope isn't in the sovereignty of our Father and in the power of our Lord Jesus for His own to endure to the end. Please go to the home page of our website to remind yourself of the relational priorities that our Father wants in place for you NOW! As a review, these priorities flow from the center outward on our relational diagram. They begin with love for our Father and our Lord Jesus through His Spirit in you; that ever-deepening relationship is supported by repentant and load-bearing homes, and by home fellowship families of Jesus followers. If you haven't been living with these priorities as central to your life, you're squandering time for you and your children and/or grandchildren to prepare themselves to stand firm. They will either deny our Lord Jesus when widespread calamity comes, or they'll have "spiritual patriotism" steeped in their hearts to stand up for Him. The difference is up to you NOW!

A special note to those who are "outside the city gate":

If you're feeling alone, most likely our Father is using this season to increase your love for Him, your trust in Him, and your determination to do His will in loving obedience to His indwelling Spirit. In essence, He's perfecting your spiritual patriotism that is essential for you as a citizen of His Kingdom. Those who shrink back from the Lordship of Jesus won't be welcomed (Hebrews 10:39). You're already aware that Kingdom living outside the religious system doesn't offer comfort and ease and self-idolatry. Living in and for the King calls for sacrifice from a heart of love and the willingness to be rejected for His Name's sake. Make this biblical axiom yours to live by:

"I overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of my testimony; I did not love my life so much as to shrink from death" (paraphrase of Revelation 12:11).

Please, don't squander this time to prepare yourself and your family by sitting on your sofa watching "Christian" TV shows to fill in the emptiness. If you're genuinely born again of the Spirit, He lives within you (Colossians 1:27). There's not a bigger Spirit in one person than in another. It's a matter of yieldedness, submission, and obedient trust. The foremost issue for you is to rely on the power His Spirit has and let Him use you! Courage, dear brother and sister — Spirit courage, not your own faltering courage.

Where to begin? Get out and serve the Lord in His loving authority. Begin by walking around your neighborhood and giving eviction notices to the demonic spirits in the Name of Jesus. Do

this at work and/or at school too. Watch what our Lord will do as you rely on the power of His Name to "clear the way"—the demons will flee! Just remember that it's His courage and power you're depending on. If you have to depend on your own courage, you'll ALWAYS rationalize yourself into doing nothing — and those who rationalize end up **spiritually unpatriotic** to Jesus.

A warning for those who refuse to go outside the city gates:

Are you hearing a "prophetic warning" each week in your faith community that stresses God's commands for you to walk in as a way of life in Christ? Yes or No? Are you also being penetrated with wise exposition of God's right ways of living, and warnings of ways and choices to avoid so that His Name won't be tarnished by your actions? If those messages aren't being voiced to you and to those in your faith family, then you're hearing nothing more than a homily—a religious discourse that's intended primarily for self-edification.

If your worship service ends and you haven't been brought to repentance as you realize you've been violating your just and holy God, then you're being entertained by man-contrived messages that allow your **sin nature*** to be placated and unchallenged. Mike served for years as a prophetic voice to clergy and discovered that any preacher who waters down God's Word and doesn't speak it forth as a double-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12) is hiding his own pet sins. Someone who is unrepentant can never bring others to repentance!

[*Your sin nature actively tries to entice you into sin. It's an inner force that draws you to temptation, luring you to give up

resistance and give way to whatever it is you want. Some of its sly rationalizations are these: •"Why shouldn't I do that?" •"No one's going to know about it." •"God's already forgiven me, so what I do that's against His Word doesn't really matter." •"What God's asking me to do is too hard. I'm not going to." •"I shouldn't feel guilty about my bad attitude or about what I said or did. That other person deserved it!"]

They speak about everything BUT Jesus

Some of you know that you're spiritual cowards in our Lord's sight because you're afraid to be identified publicly as His. Think about this time-tested observation regarding your own conversations: *Whatever habitually comes first out of someone's mouth, or whatever they speak about most often, is what they value the most.*

As we mentioned earlier about our encounters with various groups of people when we're wearing our "Jesus message" shirts, far fewer Whites engage us than do Blacks or Hispanics or Asians—and many even within the latter groups avert their eyes when they see us. Why is this? Part of it involves each person's sin nature not wanting to be confronted with the reality of our Lord. Already rebellious toward God, the sin nature resists speaking the very Name of Jesus in conversations — and this sin-nature control holds true for so many self-identified "Christians" too.

Then there's the domination of the demonic principality of Hellenism which rules western "Christianity." Remember, Hellenism puts humans at the center of the world rather than our Lord Jesus Who created all things (Colossians 1:16,17). The singular focus of Hellenism is the individual's pursuit

of whatever gratifies them, with no moral boundaries or restrictions. Again, because of the insidious and pervasive influence of Hellenism within this land, the demonic chains of **political correctness** prevail:

Anything goes, regardless of the destructive consequences to body and soul or to future generations. As long as I'M happy, no one else matters — AND I'm entitled to others paying for my right to it.

Just because this totally unbiblical stance encompasses both the government and much of the populace, we who love and follow Jesus as LORD don't have to give way to it! The Hebraic foundations of authentically walking the way of our Lord are action-based: a lifestyle of trust and obedience that are responsive and prayerfully focused on daily doing our Father's will. That kind of purposeful life framework means that we who follow Jesus according to His Spirit and His Word are increasingly becoming marginalized in this society as "intolerant." Why? Because we refuse to condone the sins of sinful man! Our Lord calls people out of darkness into His wonderful light (1Peter 2:9) — that's the kind of love that offers true freedom! And for the two of us, this means **Jesus all the more — nothing less.**

Our Lord offers an encouragement and a warning to both the spiritually patriotic and to spiritual cowards, a declaration which aligns with what we previously noted: *Whatever habitually comes first out of your mouth, or whatever you speak about most often, is what you value the most.*

In Jesus' words,

"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man

brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:35-37).

From this perspective a "good man" first of all and most often brings up things of the Kingdom and its King to both believers and unbelievers. Why? Because our Lord commanded this to His own: ***"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness!"*** (Matthew 6:33). If you're fulfilling this goal as your life priority because of your love and gratefulness to Jesus, then you'll find that this ongoing pursuit will often be the first thing out of your mouth — because it means that much to you. And this isn't an occasional, one-time event. Our Lord also commands ALL who belong to Him to lovingly take action based on HIS desire that His Throne room be filled with people from every ethnic group and language (Revelation 7:9). Our victorious Risen Lord puts it this way: ***"As you're going [through life], make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"*** (Matthew 28:19). Our caution to the cowardly is this: Be afraid of showing up at the Judgment Throne empty-handed, having lived just for yourself and devoid of other people you could have loved, discipled, and instructed how to obey His commands.

"Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God" (1Peter 2:16).

In several of our past materials we've

encouraged you that our Father puts you in your particular neighborhood, workplace, or school to be Christ's ambassador to a lost world. Any other view of why you're among these specific people is a self-serving, selfish focus. Your resistance to exercise your freedom to be His ambassador is best understood as **Spiritual Dereliction of Duty**. "Dereliction of duty" is a specific offense which applies to all branches of the US military, and since Paul exhorts followers of Jesus to be "good soldiers" of Christ (2Timothy 2:3), the analogy is useful. We want to adapt the military code regarding dereliction to depict what a Spiritual Derelict might look like. But first we need to cite our Lord's warning about spiritual dereliction: *"I tell you, whoever acknowledges Me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns Me before men will be disowned before the angels of God"* (Luke 12:8,9). Keep in mind that you don't have to voice disownership of our Lord; just refusing to speak up about our Lord Jesus before others is denial of Him in your life.

If you say you to belong to Jesus, you're *spiritually derelict* when you willfully refuse through commission or omission to do the Father's will (see 1John 2:3,4). And if you've continued in unrepentance you've incapacitated yourself to obey Him, thereby severing fellowship with the Father (see 1John 3:6-10; 1John 1:5,6). There are varieties of ways in which you can incapacitate yourself and render yourself unable to walk in His Lordship: •loving the world system or treasuring anything that's in the world system; •pursuing the cravings which people without Christ go after; •boasting about what you have (secure savings, fine home) and what you do (great job, luxury trips) (see Matthew

12:37, and James 4:4). *You* have become the lord of your life, and since you can't have two masters, you're denying His Lordship of you. (See Proverbs 21:2.)

The Empty Cross Can Be Your Symbol As A Spiritual Patriot

The annual celebration of our Lord's resurrection will soon be here. Even though we personally don't observe Easter because of its pagan origin and syncretist practices, we respect the freedom people have to observe it. If you'll be observing Easter you're probably looking forward to the gathering of family and/or close friends. You can prepare yourself between now and Easter to reveal the courage of **spiritual patriotism**: *"I belong to Jesus, the Lord of my life, so that my life will glorify my Father."* We have some suggestions if you have the spiritual courage and love to put them into action. Put a cross up in your yard, or a banner of one that's substantial enough in size to assert that you identify with our Lord Jesus.

Consider this Scriptural truth seriously:

The day Jesus died on the cross is the day of Christian victory — the MOST IMPORTANT DAY TO REMEMBER CONTINUALLY, not just once a year as you celebrate His death and resurrection. Is it any wonder that during His final Passover He enjoined His disciples as they shared the loaf and the cup to *"do this in remembrance of Me"* (Luke 22:19). It was *on the cross*—the stake of execution—that the demonic accusations against you were nailed, and the atonement for your sins which you could NEVER pay was accomplished. If that isn't victorious and the ultimate expression of sacrificial love, we don't know

what is. And if it isn't a reason to display spiritual patriotism as a "patriot" of Christ, nothing else will inspire you!



We know that some of you live in "covenant communities" which have rules about what you can publicly display. Many of them have become so politically correct that they're anonymously sterile: people reside there but don't belong to each other as heartfelt neighbors. Maybe you've convinced yourself to do nothing that would be considered to be "offensive" to others. You just go in and out of your house and maybe do some yard work, but have no thought or inclination of being Christ's ambassador to your neighbors. Our Lord didn't die on the cross and rise again so you could hide out among unbelievers in your neighborhood! Please, put up a cross or a banner and join our brothers and sisters around the world who stand up for Him in the face of atrocities you wouldn't want to see your own family endure. No one is going to kill you for putting up a cross and declaring His resurrection victory on your behalf! But you may find out for yourself exactly what

Paul is describing about a **spiritual patriot**:

*"For we are to God the **aroma of Christ** among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the **smell of death**; to the other, the **fragrance of life**. And who is equal to such a task? Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, **in Christ we speak [and act] before God with sincerity, like men [and women] sent from God**" (2Corinthians 2:15-17).*

- **Be in person the aroma of Christ, patriotic and proud of your Lord.**
- **Don't hide out anonymously in your neighborhood, workplace, or school, denying Him by refusing to identify that you belong to Him.**

And for your faith community:

Start your services or gathering times between now and Easter (April 5) by having worshipers get on their knees to repent and cry to our Father to deliver this nation. Only His miraculous intervention through pouring out a Spirit of repentance can save us. His promise to Israel of old still stands for us today who are called by Him through His Son Jesus:

"If My people, who are called by My Name, will 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" (2Chronicles 7:14).

Why don't you do this every time you get together: start with each person in their heart confessing and repenting before our Lord, and watch what our Father will do. Most of you have probably never seen Him manifest His power to intervene. What glorious testimony awaits you!

Years ago an Australian worship group recorded these lyrics, "It's time, it's time for war." The kind of spiritual warfare that's needed to penetrate a neighborhood, workplace, school, and even a city with the Gospel of the Kingdom begins with repentance so that the prayers of the righteous can be heard by our Father. Spiritual warfare is far more effective when a faith community remains repentant and constant in prayer. When you see what the prayers of the repentant can accomplish, you'll be filled with awe and glorify our heavenly Father.

Also, if you or your faith community isn't doing it now, begin sending letters of encouragement to our persecuted brothers and sisters abroad who are imprisoned and suffering for their trust in our Lord Jesus. They could be you or someone you care about if you lived in their countries. What would you want others to do if you were in prison just because of your faith in our Lord Jesus? Please write them! (See the link below which will direct you to the website for prisoner information and for verses and phrases in each language which are available for you to copy.)

If you live in a politically "free" nation, then you have the freedom to love Jesus as your Lord and to publicly stand up for Him. The only hindrance is you if you give in to your sin nature and/or to the Hellenist/humanist snare—seeing yourself as the center of your life. Our Lord's Word is for all who would be **spiritual patriots** to bring Him praise: *"Not by [your] might nor by [your] power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD Almighty*" (Zechariah 4:6). If you find that you readily give in to rationalizing, then do some sincere soul searching. If the Spirit of our Lord dwells with-

in you, let Him freely work through you! If you can't find Him dwelling in you, then please read the *Gospel of the Covenant* at our website. Your response has eternal consequences.

Mike & Sue