

4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
~ Matthew 16:18



July 4, 2021

Contact Us:

3201 4th Street
Brownwood, TX 76801

325-646-7102

www.4thstreetcoc.org
office@4thstreetcoc.org

Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:45 AM
Worship 10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service N/A
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class N/A
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Mike Bannister

Billy Chism... Johnny McCaghren

Deacons:

John Barnum..... Don Smith

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
World Bible School

[Parts of the following article probably fall more into the realm of opinion than Scripture, but it still gives us some things to consider as we celebrate the 245th birthday of our nation.—Johnny]

Can (or even should) Christians Be Patriotic?

As a kid and into my young adulthood, I was extremely patriotic. I wore USA t-shirts, read up on America's heritage of faith and liberty, and loved discussing and debating our nation's merits. Like so many (especially in my age bracket), I reached a stage of disillusionment through the Bush and Obama years, unsure of so much of what was being done in Washington D.C.

And, as I tried to reconcile my faith with a country devolving so quickly in so many ways, I grew less patriotic. I saw how patriotism can influence one's faith and identity in negative ways, making for American Christians rather than Christian Americans. So, for the last several years, I've downplayed my personal patriotism and cautioned Christians on making an idol out of the country.

These do seem to be the two basic camps, though there are numerous shades of each. There are the very patriotic Christians who believe God has given us this country and we should love and support it. And there are those who believe "This world is not my home" means being cautious of tying oneself to worldly allegiances, such as national identity.

Now, I'm growing more convinced that patriotism, rightly ordered, not only *can* be part of a Christian's life, but *should* be. A few considerations.

Idolatrous patriotism must be avoided.

Love of country does not outrank love of God and His kingdom, nor should the two be on equal footing. Every year footage of First Baptist Dallas' "Freedom Sunday" service goes viral, in which they dedicate their Sunday worship to singing patriotic hymns, waving flags, shooting fireworks, honoring the military, and listening to a politically-driven message by a prominent guest speaker from the political world. It should not be hard for us to say that that's not okay.

Even if we don't go that far, we must guard against that kind of thinking in our own ways. The American flag doesn't have a place at the front of our worship auditoriums. We don't need to be singing "America the Beautiful" in the assembly dedicated to worshipping God and remembering the body and blood of Jesus. You might love your best friend and think he's a great guy. But if his birthday falls on the same day as your wedding anniversary, the choice shouldn't be hard as to which one you're going to celebrate that day. In the same sense, we can love our country. But **we're not going to give it Jesus' day.**

The Bible should set the boundaries of our patriotism.

To be patriotic does not mean endorsing all of the negatives associated with one's country. We do not need to pretend America has been perfect in the past, nor do we need to pretend it is incapable of great wrongs today. Slavery and segregation were bad. Roe v. Wade is bad. The starvation of people in places like Yemen and Libya through disastrous wars and foreign policy is bad. Pride month is bad. There is much that should not be embraced or approved by the Christian. It's awful hard to be proud

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Let us know if you want to study
the Bible to know more about
Christ and His Church.

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of a country where abortion is the law of the land, where our nation’s embassies fly LGBT pride flags, and where godlessness seems to rule the day.

What *is* patriotism, then?

It’s important to remember that patriotism is love of country, not love of government. We love our country always, and our government when it deserves it, as Twain wrote. Instead, patriotism is a love of our countrymen, a sense of brotherhood for those with whom we share a heritage and with whom God has seen fit to place us in geographical proximity. And while there is a danger on one side of going too far and ending up in idolatrous patriotism, there’s a tendency on the other side to go too far and view any patriotism as idolatrous. That’s just not so. Good, healthy patriotism is an application of principles from God’s own Word.

Patriotism is loving one’s neighbor.

Nations and nationalities have not been eliminated from God’s plans, but rather they factored in heavily in Revelation (both positively and negatively). Jesus mourned over the people of Jerusalem specifically (Matt. 23:37). Paul said he’d trade his own soul’s salvation for the salvation of “his kinsmen in the flesh” (Rom. 9:3). Far less importantly, but still not insignificantly, the great thinkers through the ages like Augustine, Aquinas, Chesterton, and Lewis have all endorsed patriotism as a part of one’s identity as God’s children and duty to love those around us.

It’s alright to identify oneself with one’s country and one’s countrymen and love each of them. Yes, God has called us to love all people, but the opportunity to love our neighbor is still greatest among those of our own country. The example often trotted out is that we are to love all people the same, whether our fellow Americans or somebody from even an enemy country, such as an Iraqi. That’s true. But it’s far easier to claim a love for the hypothetical, nameless, faceless, Iraqi or North Korean than it is to love the people around us in deed and truth. Loving our neighbors and “working for the good of the city in which we are exiles” (to paraphrase Jer. 29:7) is part of God’s plan for His people.

Patriotism is honoring one’s father and mother.

The nation you are born in is part of your root system, and every single person has a root system of some form. None of us are an island. The individualism of our day may be

the #1 thing that has led people away from patriotism, but such individualism is not healthy. We are not all atomized individuals on a globe of 8 billion people. We are parts of involuntary groupings, such as our families, our nations, our tongues, and voluntary groupings, such as our churches, our workplaces, our schools, and our places of hobbies and recreation. We have roots.

And the roots we have were planted by people who wanted to be a part of the nation we’re in. At some point, someone in your lineage decided to come here because they thought it was best for your family. Or, sadly, in the case of some they were brought here by force – but even the families who came here in such bad circumstances made roots here by doing the hard work of fighting for unity.

To deny such roots is to turn our nose up at the life our parents and grandparents worked for. It is to detach ourselves from the bonds we have with those who came before us and those who will come after us. It is to disavow mother and father.

Patriotism is gratitude.

The catalyst for this article actually came from scrolling through Twitter and seeing two tweets: [One describing the disgust of American Olympic hammer thrower Gwen Berry at the display of the flag and playing of the national anthem at her medal ceremony, and the other describing the excitement of the Italian soccer team in the same scenario—“No other nation sings their national anthem quite like Italy.”]

There’s a marked difference between those two images (and no, it’s not about race). Look at them for a second and ask yourself, based on feel alone: which one of these feels more right? Gut feeling is not a final answer to anything. But sometimes when it hits strongly enough it’s time to ask why. And that’s how this article came about. Why does this spur the reaction it does? Put briefly, it’s a matter of gratitude.

I am sure Ms. Berry has a number of grievances against the United States. In fact, likely everybody does, though they differ in substance and are perhaps in varying degrees of severity and urgency. However, the opportunities have been made available to her to train and compete and use her talents at the very highest level in the world. And, she is at least in theory competing for the opportunity to represent her country. She wants the good afforded to her by these

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Television

In Search of the Lord’s Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:00am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

God’s Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)
Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Reading Schedule

video.wvbs.org/access/interactive-bible-reading-plan/

- July 4** Deut. 19—20; Psalm 3
- July 5** Deut. 21—22; Psalm 4
- July 6** Deut. 23—24; Psalm 5
- July 7** Deut. 25—26; Psalm 6
- July 8** Deut. 27—28; Psalm 7
- July 9** Deut. 29—30; Psalm 8 (video)
- July 10** Deut. 31—32; Psalm 9
- July 11** Deut. 33—34; Psalm 10

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

(2 Timothy 2:15)



Visitation Meeting

- ◆ Last week **19** contacts were made.

Announcements

- ◆ The kitchen and auditorium have both just had a deep cleaning. Please do your part to keep the building neat and clean. If you have trash, please take it with you or place it in a trash can (the holders on the back of the pews are not trash receptacles). If you intentionally leave a Bible or things for the kids, please make sure they are left neat and tidy. Your help is greatly appreciated by those who volunteer to clean the building.
- ◆ **Summer Youth Series** will be at **Park Heights** congregation in **Hamilton** this week. (Tuesday—7:00pm)

Upcoming Events at 4th & Stewart

- ◆ July 18 pm—Mission Printing Update
- ◆ August 10—We host Summer Youth Series
- ◆ October 17-20—Fall Gospel Meeting w/ Ross Haffner

Upcoming Area Events

- ◆ June 8—August 10: **Summer Youth Series** each Tuesday evening at 7:00pm (except camp weeks; see flyer on bulletin board for locations and topics)
- ◆ July 18-23—**Senior Camp**

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opportunities – a trip to Tokyo to compete, the training facilities, the equipment sponsorships, and the other USOC amenities – all without the “negative” of the flag and the national anthem. There’s really no other way to view it but as ingratitude.

On the other hand, the Italian soccer team, noted for their boisterous renditions of their national anthem before every game, show a great pride in representing Italy. They are competing for the honor of the land of their fathers. In our individualized, atomized world, that sounds like a bad thing. But that view is almost unprecedented before our day.

You take pride in your heritage, not because you think you’re better than everyone else, or because you don’t care about other people. But because it *is* your heritage. You’re thankful for your family, for your neighbors, for your countrymen, for your culture. Hyper-individualism, and its anti-patriotic manifestation, is little more than ingratitude.

Christians, though, are called to be a grateful people. God put each of us in the countries we are in for a reason. He gave us the families we have for a reason, along with the governments He has placed over us, and the neighbors He has placed around us. It is a godly trait to be thankful for His hand in each of those things. Even if He did so through undesirable circumstances and used evil means (like the slave trade, for example) to accomplish good ends, we can say as Joseph did “*you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good*” (Gen. 50:20). In all things, give thanks.

So, this weekend, I believe I’m beginning to recover a little of my patriotism. I’ll say I love my country, and I’m proud to be an American. That doesn’t mean I love or endorse what the government does. It doesn’t mean I wish for the ill of other countries. It means I love my neighbors, I’m proud of my forefathers who saw fit to get on the boat and come here, and I’m thankful God placed me where He has.

Jack Wilkie (focuspress.org)

Celebrate

“Rejoice with those who rejoice...” (Romans 12:15)

July Birthdays: Laura Huckaby (6), Jason Warman (6), Chase Churchwell (11), Cindy Fuller (12), John Barnum (26), Jack Hill (26), Jaye Dennard (27).

July Anniversaries: None.

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	June 20, 2021	June 27, 2021
Bible Class	33	37
AM Worship	39 + [11]	46 + [9]
PM Worship	37 + [8]	36 + [7]
Wednesday PM	36 + [6]	29 + [3]
Contribution	\$1,184	\$1,914

Privileged To Serve

"...be ready to every good work," (Titus 3:1)

	This Week: 7/4/21	Next Week: 7/13/21		
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	<p align="center">July 2021</p> <p>Make Announcements: Dex Dennard</p> <p>Prepare Communion: Duaine / Edwards</p> <p>Clean Building: Duaine / Edwards</p> <p align="center">August 2021</p> <p>Make Announcements: John Barnum</p> <p>Prepare Communion: Rudloff</p> <p>Clean Building: Wilcox / Milam</p>	
Greeters	—	—		
Opening Prayer	Tom Wilcox	Ken Maninger		
Communion	Chase Churchwell, John Barnum Ryan Rudloff, Ryan Settles	Tom Wilcox, Rafe Smith Kyle Duaine, Daniel Edwards		
Closing Prayer	Don Smith	Dex Dennard		
Attendance Cards	—	—		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Dex Dennard	Song Leader: James Fuller		
Opening Prayer	Randy Huckaby	Don Smith		
Scripture Reading	James Fuller (Mk. 7:24-30)	Ryan Rudloff (Mt. 15:29-39)		
Communion	Chase Churchwell	Tom Wilcox		
Closing Prayer	Ken Maninger	Mike Bannister		
Wednesday Devotionals:	July 7 Prayer Night	July 14 Ryan Rudloff	July 21 Rafe Smith	July 28 Don Smith

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of July 4, 2021

Sunday Class I Corinthians 15:42
Wed. Class Leviticus 19:14

The King and His Ambassadors (Matthew 10)

The emphasis in the Book of Matthew is on the King and His kingdom. Matthew 10 is the account of Jesus sending the apostles to preach in Galilee. While some of the specifics pertain only to the immediate situation, there are some vital lessons we can learn from the account.

I. Ambassadors Past.

- A. As we read the listing of these special ambassadors in 10:2-4, two facts stand out.
 1. Viewed from the standpoint of the world, these were *ordinary men*.
 2. Viewed from any standpoint, it was a *strange mixture*.
- B. **Their Special Credentials** (10:1, 8).
 1. When God commissions someone, He bestows whatever is needed to carry out that commission.
 2. Though we have not been given the same powers the apostles had, the Lord will give us what we need to carry out His commission to us.
- C. **Their Special Commission** (10:5-7). The Limited Commission.
- D. **Their Special Instructions** (10:9-16).
- E. **Their Special Encouragement** (10:19-20, 40-42).

II. Ambassadors Present. We are not ambassadors in the special sense that the apostles were, but we still represent the Lord on earth today.

- A. **A Life to Live** (10:28, 32-33, 37-39).
 1. This should be a life characterized by *godly fear* (10:28).
 2. This should be a life characterized by *boldness in proclaiming the Lord* (10:32-33).
 3. This should be a life characterized by *right priorities* (10:37, 39b).
 4. This should be a life characterized by *self-denial* (10:38).
- B. **Persecution to Endure** (10:16-18, 21-22, 34-36). As Christ's "ambassadors," we can expect persecution.
 1. Persecution from *organized religion* (10:16a, 24-25).
 2. Persecution from *governmental authorities* (10:18a).
 3. Persecution from *family* (10:21, 34-36).
- C. **Resources to Expect** (10:26-31).
 1. As Jesus' "ambassadors," we have the power and resources of the King at our disposal.
 2. Do not fear, because the all-powerful God is on your side (10:29-31).

Healing of the Daughter of a Syro-Phoenician Woman (Mt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30)

- I. **Withdrawal from Herod's Territory** (Mt. 15:21; Mk. 7:24).
 - A. After the clash with the Pharisees and scribes, Jesus departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon (Mt. 15:21).
 - B. As far as we know, this was the first time Jesus set foot on foreign soil.
 - II. **Healing of the Daughter of a Syro-Phoenician (or Canaanite) Woman** (Mt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30).
 - A. When Jesus arrived in the region of Tyre, He "entered a house," desiring to keep His presence secret, "but He could not be hidden."
 - B. He is soon interrupted by someone seeking His help.
 1. The woman cried out, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David."
 2. She told Jesus, "My daughter is severely demon-possessed."
 3. What this woman is asking for, as an outsider, is to be blessed by the Jewish Messiah.
 - C. On the surface, it appears that Jesus deliberately insulted her.
 1. Initially, He ignored her, and His disciples tried to get rid of her.
 2. Jesus said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
 - D. Nothing deterred this desperate mother.
 1. She continued to beg, "Lord, help me!"
 2. Jesus responded, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."
 - E. This woman's humility is impressive. So also is her wit and persistence.
 1. She cleverly answered, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."
 2. Jesus replied, "O woman, great is your faith! ... For this saying go your way. ... Let it be to you as you desire. ... the demon has gone out of your daughter" (Mt. 15:28; Mk. 7:29).
 - F. As dramatic and fascinating as the story is, it is still perplexing.
 1. Were Jesus' words to be taken at face value?
 2. How did He speak these words (tone, body language, etc.)?
 3. Was it His intention to heal the girl all along?
- Jesus turned a bothersome interruption into a beneficial interlude by using the occasion as **an object lesson for the apostles regarding the kind of faith they would need in the future.** The kind of faith that we need as well.