

“A prophet is not without honor,  
except in his hometown”  
“God Bless - our hometown - America”

Lord Jesus, grant me your Spirit that I would proclaim your word in Truth and Power and that all who listen would hear what you have to say to them. To the glory of the heavenly Father. Amen.

Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.”

Jesus did not say or do the things they expected. “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter (the word is actually laborer someone unimportant), the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?”

Actually his mother always was his chief supporter and many of his family did come around later. One of the most prominent was his uncle Clophas and his wife the “other Mary”. They were the disciples from Emmaus, their son Simeon was the second Bishop of

Jerusalem after the martyrdom of Jesus’ oldest brother James, the righteous. He wrote the letter of James, another brother wrote the letter of Jude. So while we do not have anything Jesus wrote, we do have letters his brothers wrote.

We are remembering the Forth of July today. It was on that day in 1776 that the Declaration of Independence was publicly read to the citizens of Philadelphia. The were celebrating what the delegates had accepted two days before on the 2nd of July. Some call that the real day. At any rate it is good to celebrate patriotic holidays. It is good for us to celebrate who we are and remember what we have done, what God has done for us as a nation.

We celebrate our personal birthdays and anniversaries. Are you aware some cultures also make public remembrance of the anniversaries of deaths? The church used to. Saint’s days are usually the day of their death. Even today in synagog service members stand as the names of departed loved ones are announced.

We do not much acknowledge the reality of mourning. Death is a permanent change in the reality

of life. We may get used to someone being gone. We never get over what their presence meant in our lives. They leave a hole behind, that can never be really filled.

We remember this day many who have served this nation, they served us. Many are serving us today around the world, in unpleasant places and in some more enjoyable spots. They deserve our prayers, our thoughts, our thanks and appreciation.

They and we deserve much more. We must be sure that we are acting among the nations properly for correct reasons. God blesses what is righteous. However, just because we are believing Christians does not make us wise or mean our actions please God.

Luther said if everyone in a nation was a Christian and the rulers were Christians (which he said would never be) it would still not be a "Christian Nation". The same is true of the Church. If all were saved Christians, it would still not be a Christian Church. Nations and the church in so far as they are organizations are secular -worldly not spiritual - godly.

This weekend is also the 17th of Tammuz in the Jewish calendar. The people in Jesus' day celebrated their great holiday victories. But they did something more that we do not. They also remembered their significant defeats. This is the day that Moses broke the two tablets of stone on Mount Sinai, they day the walls of Jerusalem were breached, the destruction of the Temple Solomon built.

What good is it to remember defeat, disaster? To get us to be careful and act and speak wisely. All of know from personal experience how we learn to be careful, wise. Foolish mistakes, pain and suffering are powerful motivators. We do not learn so well from our successes. This nation has lived for 70 years on the success of WWII. We have not paid attention to, remembered, considered our national misadventures since. This time it will be a victory like another WWII. We are not even very good historians either.

God said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day." People are running all around about the Supreme Court rulings this past weeks. They put on that we have been a Christian

nation until now. Saying 'Now since this God will be acting in judgment against this nation.' They have not been paying attention, remembering the many national misadventures that has been bringing shame to the Lord by our impenitent evils for a very long time.

No politician in this country can remain respected if he brings up horrible things this nation has done even though they are known around the world. What bothers me more is that is often true in Churches and Denominations. Publicly known shameful acts and words are overlooked, ignored. We begin our worship with confession and forgiveness. In my experience, I have not known clergy to apologize, repent, and especially not attempt to amend repair harm caused. I am not perfect. You all know that. If I cause injury, speak up let me know. If clergy cannot repent and attempt to smooth over, amend, damage, how can we expect the church members to do so.

The marks of the church is not that is always does and says the right things, we are sinners. The true indication of the church of a Christian is that the power and spirit of God bring love forgiveness, the gospel to hurting people and damaged places.

St. Paul wrote, "He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." So this means that today the 5th of July should be remembering all the bad stuff the nation has done.

No I think not. I think we need to remember our mistakes so we do not keep making them. When we remember our mistakes, imperfections, sins, we actually see clearly the greatness of our Lord's love for us, the reality of His forgiveness. Then too when we happen to notice someone who is not right, not doing well, someone who bothers us, offends us, we will be encouraged to love them, help them, encourage them without saying cruel words and hateful actions.

Scoldings do have a place and we have been helped to do better by some of them. But overdone, wrong time, place, person, they just make everything worse.

Think of this. Imagine visitors come here to worship. Covered with tattoos, pieced with rings, crudely dressed. How do we treat them? Do we invite them back? "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is

made perfect in weakness.” So anything goes! No not really. We live in an age that has twisted love, forgiveness, the gospel inside out to mean what they never meant before. Sin is still sin, evil is evil, it is wrong to do and say what God condemns.

God has given you love, victorious love beyond all understanding, you are held in His hands, your heart and mind are kept in Christ Jesus Amen.

Pass it on in the name and spirit of Jesus!

Comments about the Gay Marriage ruling.  
wrong fight over wrong issue

It would have been better for the USA to be like all the “historic Christian nations” of Europe and separate legal - civil marriage from Church ceremony. Then there would have been much less cause for argument

The Church in the US has brought shame on the name and cause of Christ by attacking some people for their behavior while not being concerned about the behavior in their own members. They give the message that flagrant promiscuous heterosexuals are praiseworthy and while faithful gay couples are going to hell. At least no one is complaining loudly about the rampant sexual focus in this society.

The Bible has a clear standard from beginning to end. Either marriage or celibacy, everything else is sin. There is no clear passage about self satisfaction.

Worth noting, in Jesus’ day, Jewish - Christian society counted Male and Female and had three categories in between. Today many cultures, nations count male, female and third gender or other. We only count marriage or unmarried. There used to be other situations with legal protections.

Many of us know couples living together. We would be very upset to have them publicly shamed branded condemned sinners. Do they have to repent, change their living situation, before they would be welcome at worship? Many who support gay marriage are angry at the hypocrisy of outspoken Christians who claim to be speaking for a loving God.

sin does not should not = illegal. Never has been. Just because it is sinful does not mean it has to be illegal. And just because it is legal does not mean it is not sinful, condemned by God. The commandments about coveting are about taking legally what morally belongs to the other. It is anti Christian to have the government force all citizens to be saved Christians.

The only nation that had that in its constitution and tried to do that was the Union of South Africa as it also enforced Apartheid.

We cannot both complain about Islamic nations using Islamic law for Christians and at the same time work to have Islamic people, everyone, live under Christian laws, selectively chosen.

another time should talk about the common ancient division between serious sins leading to damnation and minor sins of normal flesh Seven Deadly Seven venial.

**6 S after Pentecost**

Ezek. 2:1-5

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

July 5, 2015

July 19, 2015

Ps 123

Mark 6:1-13

Living Water Rosedale

Hymns:

Berea