



Sunday, July 4, 2021

Pastor Don Denyes

## **Intro to Proverbs 14:34**

As Christians, there is much to be thankful for when we think about America. We can be thankful, for one, that we are Christians. The likelihood of us knowing Christ had we been born in Yemen or North Korea is pretty low. But instead, the Lord granted us a place where we could hear the gospel proclaimed accurately and we could respond in repentance and faith without fear of serious persecution. We can also be thankful that, generally speaking, the morality that undergirds much of our political system is Christian. The whole concept of human rights and human dignity was foreign in pre-Christian societies. We can be thankful that America has provided a good place for us to live and serve freely as ambassadors of another nation, another world—the Kingdom of God.

On the other hand, we must remember that America is not the same as God’s people or God’s nation. Sometimes we can conflate Old Testament teachings about the people of God with an understanding of America as a “Christian nation.” America, as a nation, has never held a unique covenant status before God. The people of God in the Old Testament (Israel) were those who had entered into a covenant relationship with Him. Not only that, but America has continually strayed in various ways (even in the days of its founding and in its best days since then) from the righteousness of God.

So, as Christians, we live in this tension. We ought not be cynical or malign our country—it is a gift of God! We ought to not only give thanks for it but continue to pray for its prosperity and seek its welfare, because in its welfare we will find our own (Jer. 29:7). At the same time, we ought not think of ourselves as enjoying some sort of special covenant status before God. May God give us grace to think rightly about our country. And may God bless America!

**Read and Reflect** *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Proverbs 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:1-6; 4:7-8

“A Birthday Reflection”

A Great Nation

*Godliness makes a nation great*

“God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever.”

- Inscription on the Jefferson Memorial

A Great Disgrace

*But sin is a disgrace to any people*

## Discuss

- 1) If you had to guess, what do you think most people would say makes a nation “great”?
- 2) What are some aspects of God’s righteousness that would make a nation “great”?
- 3) In what ways do you think our country has followed the wisdom and righteousness of God?
- 4) In what ways do you think our country has failed to follow the wisdom and righteousness of God?
- 5) Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8 again. How would you say you are “training for godliness”?