



Foundation of Freedom

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”– Matthew 22:37-40 NIV

When Russian communism fell in the mid-eighties, they attempted to replace it with a form of democracy. I say a form of it because they took shortcuts. They (whomever “they” are) tried to implement the democracy of the 20th century without instituting what brought it to that point.

Every house, regardless of its size or shape, must be placed on a solid foundation. If you build it without a foundation, it won’t stand and it definitely won’t last. Anyone who builds a house and most who live in one knows this. You’re only as good as the strength of your foundation.

Democracy is the same. What we experienced throughout the previous century was generations in the making, starting with our forefathers. Please understand that these were fallible men and no one knew that more than they did. But they built democracy upon two fundamental foundation points; an inward one and an outward one.

Let’s start with the inward one. I want to call this one **HONOR**. It is what we are called to in any religion, but even more specifically in Christianity. Honor is defined as, “high respect; great esteem; adherence to what is right or to a conventional standard of conduct.” (Oxford) Or as the Bible would put it, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:5) Democracy cannot exist nor flourish without honor or the inward drive to live with integrity and character. To commit to doing what is needed to keep your honor (character) good. If a people are not concerned with having honor nor character, democracy lends itself to be taken advantage of and abused. People will enjoy the rights of freedom but see no need to take responsibility to give of themselves to achieve the greatness that democracy brings. Then all sides (within a community) will refuse to trust and give for others needs. This leads to the second point.

Democracy’s second foundation point is **COMMUNITY**. Not only do we need to have personal character, but we also need to see that we are a part of something beyond ourselves. That is what community is. Leviticus 19:18 says, “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.” Jesus called this the second greatest commandment. We must see our strength in community as well as our need to be a part. Washington D.C. is not as much an entity within itself as it is a mirror of communities, or lack thereof, in this nation. We have many more people sitting on their couch yelling (over their computer devices) than people desiring to be a part of the solution. And it is easier to point and blame, but much more detrimental, community health.

Do you realize that the Bill of Rights was never meant to be seen nor used for individual freedom. It was to be seen through the lens of **HONOR** and **COMMUNITY**. Every right found there walks arm-in-arm with every other right. They were established to strengthen and secure communities. Freedom of speech wasn’t so

we could tear things down but to make sure everyone was heard. Today it is used to demand that the other 99% cannot do what they wish because, “I don’t want it!” If this was the reason for freedom of speech, then why have voting? The Bill of Rights meant I wouldn’t get everything I want (nor would anyone else) but so that, as a community, we could allow security and freedom for the ENTIRE COMMUNITY. It is about us helping our neighbors and our neighbor’s neighbors. It’s about trust, confidence, and yes, even forgiveness. We are a part of something bigger and much more beautiful.

HONOR and COMMUNITY

I fear we will never be a great nation until we remember and live in these things.

And Church, we should be the leaders in this. “salt of the earth” and “city on a hill”. We MUST model that in our lives and communities. Unbelievers have moved away from trusting us until they see it in your front and back yard. They won’t come into the shadow of the steeple until they see the Light in you as a part of the community.

So as we celebrate the 4th of July and Freedom we must remember that freedom has two parts. A Right and a Responsibility. You cannot have freedom without both. Right removed from responsibility leads to entitlement that cannot be supported. Responsibility without rights lead to slavery and revolt. But when we live committed to both, we are free.

God bless America. Land that I love.

From My Heart,

Billy