

“Patriots! Who are We, Anyway?”

Reverend Carl Bassett, March, 2024



As I was enjoying my second cup of coffee on this bright, but chilly morning in Michigan, I found myself focusing on the old flag pole in my front yard, proudly flying our Flag as well as the Christian flag that not only share the red, white, and blue colors of Old Glory, but proudly Identifies my wife and I as followers of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It's a simple flag with a red cross on a blue square, in the upper left corner of the white background. I felt pride and thankfulness looking at those two pieces of cloth that mean so much. And yes, I still get chills and a swelling up in my heart, as I give thanks for the freedom that those magnificent flags instill in my very soul. Feelings of love, devotion, and a sense of attachment to our blessed country are inseparably entwined, providing the very foundation of who I am. They are expressed by one simple, but powerful, word: **Patriotism**. But what does it really mean to be a Patriot, not only of America, but a Patriot of our God?

I was born and raised in Massachusetts, seventy-seven years ago, joining a branch of my family tree that was rooted in a man named William, who came to this great land in 1621 with 34 folks on a small sailing ship named **Fortune** (often called the second **Mayflower**). He came not only as a religious separatist escaping persecution, but also as a successful blacksmith and gunsmith in Holland and England. In the Fall of 1621, he and thirty-three like-minded people sailed across the Atlantic to a new, primitive land not knowing exactly what they would find to start a new life and business in the recently established small, disease ridden, and unorganized, Plymouth Colonies, in present day Massachusetts. History tells us that William and other British entrepreneurs actually helped fund the original **Mayflower** voyage a year earlier in 1620!

Even though I grew up within driving distance to all the historical sites key to the foundation of America, I often ignored the importance of these antiquated places that was the home and beginning of history to a motley group of newly minted “Americans.” I lived my early years near places like Plymouth Rock, Plymouth Fort and Plantation, Saugus Iron Works factory, Paul Revere's house, the Old North Church, Concord Bridge, Lexington, Bunker Hill, Boston Harbor, and other Revolutionary War battlefields and monuments. In these places many of these early **Patriots** willingly gave their lives as they defended their families, land, their

freedom, and their God. I can't express my thanks and gratitude for not only them, but all who have **patriotically** defended and lifted high these flags for almost 250 years now!

But what is **patriotism** to a Christian? I believe it's far more than singing patriotic songs, waving the flag, and feeling emotionally stirred over our nation's heritage. Let me share some thoughts about what I consider patriotism is and is not:

First, I believe a characteristic of *Patriotism* should not be to embrace and encourage unbridled aggression.

I've seen a lot of anger and sometimes vicious opposition expressed in the name of patriotism. It's very easy to demonize those who take opposing stands with regard to political issues. The conflict between our two political parties should not be a struggle between good and evil. We can hold strong convictions regarding political matters, but we need to be civil toward opposing views. I'm appalled at some of the extreme views I hear **on tv and talk radio at times with** mean-spirited denunciation of anyone who disagrees with the host. All kinds of vile, unkind things are said of those who have different views and beliefs! Sadly, we are rapidly becoming a society and culture that thrives on argumentative, even violent conflict, directly contradicting our Awesome God's words that say, **"Come, let us reason together, with sanity and thought!" (Isaiah 1:18).** It's plain to see that even enemies should strive to dialog with each other, even when they're sure the other's ideology and thoughts are ridiculous. At all times we should and must draw a line in the sand and maintain God's truths and strong convictions, but it's vitally important that we're civil to one another when we disagree. Unfortunately, far too many choose to go in the other direction, the unholy direction of hostility.

Second, *Patriotism* does not give permission to do wrong, just because you think that your cause is just.

No doubt about it, we Americans make a big deal about freedom...but for far too many, freedom is the right to do anything we want. Taken to an extreme, freedom can become anarchy and lawlessness. Society needs some rules, based on God's error-free and inspired words, in order to maintain order. **NOW HEAR THIS:** ***True patriotism*** recognizes that we **MUST answer to a higher authority**, and I don't mean the President, whoever that might be!!! It can only be one: **our King and Savior Jesus Christ – God Almighty Himself** living with and in us! What really matters is how we live as citizens in a world God created, under His and His alone absolute authority, especially in the United States of America!

Third, *Patriotism* isn't "My country, right or wrong!"

We must never forget that ***Patriotism*** isn't blind or uninformed. It's certainly appropriate to be proud to be an American, but there are times when our love for our country demands that we stand up and voice our concern when our nation is headed in the wrong direction. If and when we disagree with policy, we speak up instead of ignoring the issue, just hoping it will go away. ***Patriotism*** involves taking a stand, writing letters to those in authority, and supporting candidates whose ideology concurs with our convictions. We pray for those who lead and serve **"We the People"** of this great, God-founded land called **America!** The offering of prayers for justice and national repentance...personally repenting, expressing our sorrow and shame to God for our ignoring His commands and unchangeable words. You see, ***Patriotism*** is not equal to or defined by the flags we fly, but by displaying the courage of our God-given, never changing convictions and beliefs, **and taking a stand for our Mighty God, even if unpopular!**

As Patriots in these troubling times, what contribution can we make to help preserve our God-given faith in Him, this nation, and our way of life? How can we impact our nation morally, especially to preserve the values upon which America was founded? How can we make a difference by being a Godly voice in the marketplace of ideas.... whether we write a letter to a newspaper editor, call a congressman, or run for public office ourselves. **Here's something we ALL can do:** always be ready to give testimony of the hope and

blessings Jesus Christ gives. Make it our mission to **pray unceasingly**, for those in need, for His divine love, support, comfort, and strength! ***That's what Patriots of God and Country do!***

We are ordinary, but incredibly blessed people who deeply care about this country, and are willing to defend what it stands for – **One Nation, under God!** We ***Patriots*** are people who recognize the benefits of the Constitution, people who hope to preserve our nation's values, based on God's error free, never changing, inspired Word. A ***patriot*** is one who votes and encourages others to do the same and who measures and evaluates the laws of our country, making sure they are always founded on His Law and Word.

You know, regardless of what it says on our passports and documents, as Christians, we truly hold dual citizenship. **We're loyal to our native home**, but in an infinitely greater way, we recognize that we're also part of the **eternal Kingdom of God!** So, if we at times feel uncomfortable and uncertain about what's ahead of us, have no fear, for we're not really home yet; we're just passin' through, and the **Almighty One** is leading us!

So, why not take time after that second cup of coffee, tea or juice, to remember who our ***King of Kings, and Lord of Lords is!*** Give thanks that **HE** truly loves you and has promised to never leave you. **Our Lord Jesus** is in control, not only of our blessed land, but of the whole universe.... that's how mighty He is! He gave His life for you, that's what that red cross on that Christian flag reminds us of! It reminds us He paid the price in full, in blood, even unto death, for my forgiveness, making us citizens of heaven, who happen to be richly blessed by this wonderful country of ours. What a joy to **proudly** proclaim: ***I'm a Patriot!*** I'm a blessed citizen of the United States of America, where many, I truly believe, still stand firmly on God and His Holy Word. May this same God who has given so much, inspire us to share His words of love and forgiveness with those citizens who don't know Him yet. *You know who those persons are!* **Start praying** for them today, that the **Holy Spirit** will open their hearts and minds to **Him! To His everlasting glory!!**