

True North – Leading A Nation

7-3-11

We have followed this True North star now to the last week of this series. We have looked at **Moses** in looking at a man who knew who he was, and **King Saul** and how leaders lose their way. We looked at **Daniel** and the inner life of a leader. Then last week Bob took us back over those aspects by looking at how Jesus empowered leaders. Now we come to the last in this series, Leading A Nation.

- When a nation knows who it is, you can almost always trace it back to its leaders.
- When a nation has lost its way you can almost always trace it back to its leaders
- And if you want to know the inner life of a nation, look to the inner life of its leaders.

235 years ago our nation won its independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. If generations are approx 25 years then we have experienced at the upper end 9 generations of people born in this country.

The Need of a Nation

If we were to ask people in those first generations what the need of the nation was then they might repeat the phrases of some of their leaders: like

1. The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government - lest it come to dominate our lives and interests." **Patrick Henry**
2. Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains or slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take but as for me; give me liberty or give me death!" **Patrick Henry**

If we were to jump ahead 80 years, we would hear a different need. Perhaps it would have sounded like this, from one of the leaders of that day

Abraham Lincoln – Unity and The Healing of A Nation

1. "Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally" **Abe L.**
2. "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." **Abe L**

3. "Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." **Abe L**

Herbert Hoover – Putting America back to work

1. We have not yet reached the goal but...we shall soon, with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty shall be banished from this nation. **HH**
2. The slogan of progress is changing from the full dinner pail to the full garage. **HH**

John F. Kennedy – The threat of nuclear war, bridging the racial divide and the lunar module on the surface of the moon

1. We need men who can dream of things that never were. **JFK**
2. Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable. **JFK**
3. And so, my fellow americans: ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. **JFK**

Today- depending on who you talk to the need of the nation can stem from the need for **jobs**, to the **health care** debate, to **global warming**, to foreign and domestic **energy** resources and a dozen other areas of need.

But these are only the needs at one level, , at a surface level. The events that are driven by human need, and human greed. These kinds of needs will come and go as we can see through our short 235 years as a nation.

So what is God's word on the need of a nation. The one who created all the nations of the world, all the planets in the universe. What did he say about the need of a nation, that would give us a clue as to the leading of a nation.

God is speaking to Solomon as Solomon is finishing up the great temple that he prepared for the Lord's presence to dwell in.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14

According to God's word, the need of a nation is for his people who are called by his name. The need is for them to humble themselves. The need is to pray, the need is for them to seek his face and to turn from their wicked ways.

The selection of leadership in the nation of Israel was a very spiritual activity. It was not viewed as a democracy where everyone had a vote. It was viewed as a Theocracy where the people and often an anointed prophet of God would hear God's voice concerning a person.

We talked about the prophet Samuel and how he anointed King Saul to be King, now we pick back up with him: in chapter 16 of 1 Samuel

¹ The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." 1 Samuel 16:1

⁴ Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

So Samuel is ordered by God to go to the house of Jesse, and there he is going to find the leader who has True North qualities for leading the nation of Israel.

I want us to notice 2 things about this engagement at the house of Jesse.

1. The Attraction & Illusion of First Impressions

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:6-7

How often do we look at the outside, in order to decide the character of a person.

From 1st impressions we can make such grave mistakes. We look to the impressive, to the strong, to the one who has it all together. What this is saying is that True North lies in the heart of the small, the last, the overlooked.

In fact Jesse had 7 of his sons pass by Samuel, and the Lord had not anointed any of them.

If you were the one who never got picked for the team, the one who missed out on the trophies – the truth is even if you did get picked for all the teams, there is often an overlooked side to all of us. It is from this person, it is from this side of your life that God is looking to develop you into his man or woman..

Why is that?

Because the overlooked are available. They are teachable. They are a blank slate for God to write his word on their life. Which leads to the 2nd thing that happened at this encounter in the home of Jesse. I entitled it:

2. The Power of the Leader who does not Seek Leadership

¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." ¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." ¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David.

Leaders who have true north character are all around us. However, they are not the ones that are clamoring for our attention. They are the ones who are living life right in front of us, some are succeeding, some are failing, and some are just getting by right now. But they are there, waiting for the person who will come along and see God's anointing on them.

Samuel waited through all the more impressive sons of Jesse, and then David came out of the field, from tending the sheep and God said to his heart, "This is the One"

At Alive I saw a lot of these leaders. Many were right in our own camp, but they are just tending their sheep 'so to speak; but let me explain further what I mean.

Story : I was drawn to help out as a prayer counselor one evening, after the speaker had finished and a stream of youth and adults were moving toward the prayer tent where our bibles were being handed out. I soon found myself sitting in a circle of people who had just given their lives to Christ. After talking and praying with the group, we all began to talk to each other, in smaller groups. I ended up talking with a 10th grader, who said **"I have had a couple of these experiences before, but everytime I go back to my church, I don't know what to do with it and there is really no one who can walk along side of me and show me what it means to be a Christian."**

The heart of Christian leaders are being carved out in the schoolyards, backyards, Sunday School classes and kitchen tables of our nation. Leaders are found by us who are looking for them. They do not and they will not call attention to themselves.

Had Samuel not listened to the call of God, to go to Jesse's home, the nation of Israel would have either had the wrong leader or no leader and David would have raised sheep the rest of his life.

Many seem to want to point out to me, that the church, in general has lost influence in our society, as if I cannot see that myself. The truth is we have enough Christian leaders but

they are not calling attention to themselves, and that is the most powerful leaders of all. They will pass right through these years we have with them, bide their time, and become leaders in other fields.

God has given us the responsibility to become leader makers, helping people (lonely people, lost people, available people,) establish True North in their own lives so that one day they will humble themselves, seek God's face, turn from their wicked ways and God will heal our land.