

The Country and the Church - Vance Havner

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

The sermon emphasizes the need for a rebirth of patriotism and spiritual power in America and the Church, highlighting the importance of humility, prayer, and a return to Christian principles and values.

Duration: 33:24

Scripture: Psalm 84:10, Matthew 19:16-22, Luke 19:10, John 6:63, 1 Peter 2:13-15, Revelation 22:11

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon by Vance Havner, he discusses the parallels between the country and the church. He emphasizes the importance of Christians submitting to the governing authorities and living as servants of God. Havner also highlights the need for the Constitution and the Bible to come alive in the lives of Americans and church members. He warns against the dangers of cheap Christianity and the loss of regard for the flag in America. Overall, Havner calls for a revival in both the country and the church.

Transcript

Welcome to from the pulpit and classic sermons each week We bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith and powerful sermons for modern preachers to this week We have Vance Abner with his message the country and the church And the church There are some parallels that can be drawn here. And of course you're familiar with those familiar verses in first Peter 2 Where we read there's some good advice about country and our duty as Christians Beginning with the 13th submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake Whether it be to the king is supreme or under governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers And for the praise of them that do well for so is the will of God That with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men as free and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness But as the servants of God and then he sums it all up honor all men Love the brotherhood fear God honor the king Our country is about 200 years old as a Independent nation The Church of Jesus Christ about 2,000 years old many of the conditions that exist in the country today are parallel that by Similar conditions in the church and when I say the church, I mean the professing church at large You'll understand The same story in America now as Rome you in our last days same symptoms Same disease Said fares the land the hastening ills of prey where wealth accumulates And men decay We say it can't happen here. That's what they said.

They said it in Athens. They said in Rome They said it in Egypt But the Parthenon and the Colosseum and the pyramids bear silent witness. Otherwise History repeats itself.

And the only thing we ever learned from history is that we don't learn anything from history to begin with Both in America and in the church. We are rich in what money can buy and poor and what it can't buy You remember the story of the Pope walking along with Thomas Aquinas amidst all the glories of the Vatican and saying No longer is the church have to say silver and gold have I none and so Tom his listener said No, and neither can she say rise and walk The church can stand anything better than popularity and prosperity We're poor when we're rich for rich when we're poor We're secure in danger, but endangered by security I heard of a hillbilly walk down the street sometime ago by a furrier's shop And there was a leopard skin coat hanging and out there And he looked at it in a minute and said that old cat was better off before he was worth so much That's possible in the nation. It's possible with people in Revelation 318 Jesus tells us that he wants three things for the church you know, I'd read that for years and years and years and then one day it just jumped out of the Text and grabbed me you've had that happen He wants three things for his church and the first of them was that thou mayest be rich not get rich God doesn't want the church to get rich but be rich in all that she has As the bride and the groom who though rich for our sakes became poor We through his poverty might be made rich and both in America and in the church Our problem today is material plenty and spiritual poverty They had to see a rich and increased with goods and don't need a thing That's material prosperity But wretched miserable blind poor and naked that spiritual poverty I'm concerned about the condition of our country.

I'm bothered about its financial condition I can't even think in terms of trillions of dollars Neither can you maybe but we spend billions on nuclear armaments And probably don't have a friend in the family of nations and the moral degradation bothers me Everybody wants their rights and nobody wants to do anything about their responsibilities We lack the moral and spiritual integrity to handle the problems that science has raised And in fact is if we'd had it we wouldn't have some of the problems Because they've slipped up on us because we didn't handle them The real problem has always been sin and Science does not have the answer to sin When I think of the drug craze and the sex craze drug crazy sex crazy show crazy sports crazy land devourers broken homes Unmarried couples by the million living as man and wife teenage single parents Homosexuality age of Permissiveness when men becomes his own God Humanism getting ready for the man who will claim to be God a little later on No king in Israel.

Every man does not what's right In his own eyes, that would be bad enough, but what he wants to do whether it's right or not No nation can survive that Every time we have a disaster Tornado or something like that you read immediately that they had to be on the guard against looters Well, where are those fellows all the time right here among us? They didn't just drop down for that occasion My Bible says we're sheep among wolves You find that out if you get out much among them a Generation that's never learned how to work for the most part will turn into anarchy if things get worse It's a sad time You might as well try to damn up Niagara Falls with Toothpicks as to hold back the flood tide of lawlessness that will sweep in when the great Hinderer is removed Cheap Christianity Laodicean Church, I know we have the 4,000 who have not bowed the knee to be Bale, but millions of church members have only a form of godliness without the power We used to have too much respect for church to join it unless we were converted Now everybody comes in and as in the days of Constantine out to Christian eyes Paganism it turns around pagan eyes in Christianity The standard is so low and the majority of our church members live with so such low Ab you'd have to backslide to be in fellowship In the second place America has lost her regard for the flag Stars and stripes have become chief commonplace Gone are the days when it brought tears to our eyes and a lump in our throat and a tug at our hearts Now all the white no longer means purity and the blue doesn't mean Lord in the red Doesn't stand for the blood of martyrs who gave their lives That we might have the land of the free in the home of the brave and the banner of the church is the cross And

God forbid that we glory in anything else than that, but it's the cross of Christ Mind you because a Christless cross is as meaningless as a crossless Christ Let him come down from the cross and we'll believe in they say and they would they'd accept him today if you leave the cross out of it, but He's not just the paragon He's the propitiation and the cross is the symbol of our faith The vertical beam that speaks of our relationship to God love the Lord thy God and the horizontal beam Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself on these hang all the law and the prophets Paul wanted to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man and the way he did it was exactly that way He stayed right with the cross right with God and right with people How about you this morning, I don't carry a crucifix around but many times in my meditations I find myself saying Lord, how am I doing in my relationship to you?

Is there any point of rebellion in your heart between you and God? And how about you and people? Is there anybody that's mad at you and you haven't done the thing? The Bible says do Jesus says In application you bring your envelope to church for the offering and remember your brother's mad at you Hang on to your offering. So you get right with your brother I sure would spoil a lot of offerings over the country some of our churches get right with your brother That's what the book says But the church today has devised a new cross an ornament to wear around the neck a Commonplace symbol twisted out of context a charm kind of a holy horseshoe and I Think a W toaster never wrote anything better than the old cross and the new If you've never read that it's been translated in other languages.

I think that was his masterpiece It doesn't interfere this new cross with godless living Never goes against the grain of the old nature Sunday morning church goes saying and sometimes I get nervous as I hear them make their way through it to the old rugged cross I'll ever be true. It's shame and reproach gladly Bear God help us. We're not bearing it any kind of way much let alone gladly I saw later told me the other day said the kids here were supposed to Give a program one night and they illustrated this business of putting well I the way I put it putting cushions in the church instead of crosses these days So they were supposed to come down the aisle saying it onward Christian soldiers marching as the war and at the last minute some of Morning each each of them wanted to bring a little cross along with them.

Well, it was too late. Some later said But if you had one anyhow, but they didn't like it He took them away and hid them in the Sunday school room when you start that and the kids rebelled you're in trouble They came down saying an onward Christian soldiers marching as the war with the cross of Jesus hid behind the door I don't blame the kids. I don't blame them at all.

That's why we've hit it We've hit it behind the door It's about time the stars and stripes meant something in America about time The cross of Jesus meant something again to the church during the First World War Caruso came to Atlanta to sing for a patriotic rally and that man in whose throat was lodged Perhaps one of the greatest voices that mankind's ever known sang finished with the starspangled banner but when you reach that last note instead of the normal place where you saying it he lifted it an octave and They said it didn't nearly half an hour to get that crowd quiet Because that did something To I'd like to see a church full of professing Christians really get happy sometimes singing in the cross of Christ Our glory Towering over the wrecks of time all the light of sacred story gathers around its head and sublime the way we saying it now You'd think it was a lullaby instead of a reveille. It's supposed to wake us up in the third place The Constitution of the United States means might a little to Americans today and the Bible means might a little to the average church member Daniel Webster said this about government if you take one word out of what he said you can apply it in all directions You may look at government and see it possesses all the external marks of freedom and yet find nothing of the essence in it No vitality Just as you may contemplate an embalmed body where art has preserved proportion and form amid nerves without

action and veins without blood The Constitution needs to come to life again today and the Bible needs to come to life in our experience To the average church members almost a dead book. Oh, everybody has one once in a while I quote it.

It's in a pew rack at church and gathers dust on tables, but Although we say lovely things about it in tribute few there be who make it the rule of their lives My friend Adrian Rogers who has a tremendous church now Bellevue following Robert G Lee the other day, you know Madame O'Hare Was worrying because they didn't have any holiday for her crowd No national holiday said I know a good one April Fool's Day I'm a new like to go hear Bob Ingersoll who was quite an ardor but an infidel and He came out and said well that really did things to your mother's old-time religion but it didn't because Mother said she wouldn't cross the street to hear Ingersoll lecture on the mistakes of Moses But she'd go a long way to hear Moses speak on the mistakes of Ingersoll There's a wonderful thing about this old Bible It's been said That if you dig into it you have a feeling like an electrician Rewiring an old house where the power has not been cut off you'll get a shock get a charge Church members are ignorant of the Bible and the Constitution over to open now We're not the worship the Bible that would be bibliologically, but it's the only authorized textbook of our faith Jesus said when the disciples said we don't understand what you told me Well, how can we eat your flesh and drink your blood?

You know that I wonder what would happen to the average calm satisfied see date American congregation It's a preacher bore down on that and some morning when they had the Lord's table Observe and say you've got to eat his flesh and drink his blood or you don't even have the life in you Well, no wonder they ask and you said the words That I speak in you their spirit and their life Then we have another problem too many people in America are only Americans in name and Un-americans and anti-americans in conduct And the church has a corresponding ailment community church members name only members of the church, but not members of the family of God I Remember the First World War and how Teddy Roosevelt a lamb basted people who had a double order Some to the other crowd and although now citizens of this country.

He called him hyphenated Americans He said this country is not a polyglot Borden house Hi, mr And the Bible says a friend of the world is the enemy of God I have been in some churches that I've I think the Lord's crowd has been well compared to sheepfold But I get in some more like a zoo as I go about Did you hear that church the other day a little church had a sign out in the front? It had so many church splits and divisions over the community I get harmony church number two No, no, what happened over number one?

Hyphenated Americans he that is not with me is against me he that gather is not with me scatters abroad America needs better Americans the church needs better Christians One of the great leaders in my denomination the Southern Baptist at years go gone by dr Gamble said the trouble with us Baptists is we're many but we're not much That's him to think over. It's the quality that bothers me We're so anxious today to run up a big Roll of statistics that somebody said the Bible says we shall reap if we faint not But in our zeal we faint if we reap not so that's the wrong way to go about it I've just been out in Los Angeles at the Southern Baptist Convention speaking to the pastors And that's a crowd of pastors to face But I said to them Southern Baptists have never been noted for an inferiority complex We brag a lot I said now we're out here in Los Angeles, they got a lot of smoke I think we could blow it out in three days But I told him this I said, but it reminds me years ago They had more smoke than usual and the meteorologist said this and it has a double meaning It will take a wind from elsewhere To clear up this situation I Said we need the wind that blew at Pentecost To clear up our situation.

That's the only thing that'll do it and I wonder we they say we're the soul of the earth My soul if we're the soul of the earth, why is it so corrupt? I know the world's not going to be converted, but it'll be a lot better than it is If we're the soul of the earth and if we're the light of the world, why is everything so dark today? I Haven't found a satisfactory answer for that except that we're not letting our light shine And we're not remembering that God made of us the soul of the earth to rub us into the carcass of a decaying civilization Makes have some effect on it not conversion of the whole world. No, but as many as you can and then America suffers from a low-grade patriotism if we had any I Remember World War one and the boys leaving for France Their sweethearts weeping at the high school where I was a student. Oh We were going over to make the world safe for democracy It's never been safe for anything since but anyhow, that's what they went for and they were willing to give their lives Down in Florida Shell Point Wonderful resort plays a met an old general who was beside George Patton in World War two and George Patton is pretty rugged man, you know, but he said one day we were standing there in the Battle of the Bulls They brought along a bunch of soldier boys all shot up Some of them would die in a couple hours George went over to him said how are you boys? And everyone who could get his hand to his head saluted and said fine general Said we walk down the road a little bit and he never said a word and I never said a word and finally curiosity got The better of me and I looked at him and tears were streaming down that rough old face Because that was it There was patriotism and willing to die for something and I think of Paul and that long list of things he'd been through shipwrecks and everything else under the Sun and yet I'm sure that when the Lord called over the parapets of heaven to how you doing? So he was in pretty bad shape most of the time.

He said fine Do we do that? Certainly we should I Know we folks more lately than Paul Harvey says we were afraid to win in the shame to lose Said rightly and we're in a new internationalism and lost our national identity sometimes Forgetting that a man's a better citizen of the world of nations if he's true to his own nation Better member of the human family if he's a good member of his own family. I heard Douglas MacArthur say Strange voices are heard across the land about this old and proven concept of patriotism Seductive murmurs are arising now that it's outmoded and that we are provincial and immature and reactionary and stupid When we idealize our own country that there is a higher destiny for us now under another more general flag He said rebuke it from the platform Rebuke it from the pulpit and I put in my little ten cents worth today in that direction just as America's gone International and in some strange ways the church has gone universal in some rather odd ways I know of a heard of a fellow who I wanted to sing in the choir but didn't want to join the church and preacher said what church you belong to I belong to the Invisible church preacher said I suggest you join the invisible choir I Believe we all belong to something. I believe in tying up with the local fellowship We have a lot of these movers Sometime ago.

I heard of a fellow who was about his fifth move I think from denomination to denomination and he said to his pastor pro-tem Because any pastor he had was pro-tem said I think I'm thinking about coming to your church Well, the preacher said never does any harm to change labels on an empty bottle Well said But in such a time We need a rebirth of patriotism in the country and a rebirth of Pentecost in the church and it won't happen Until we humble ourselves and pray and seek God's face turned from our wicked ways. I Don't hear much about that in Washington. I haven't heard anything much about it from there in a long long long time Pride goeth before destruction haughty spirit before a fall God resisted the proud and giveth grace to the humble and Our forefathers when they came over here some of them Had a desire to build a new nation on Christian principles puritanic and the pilgrim group but Unfortunately, they came along with them another crowd who had been infected and infested with the philosophy of Tom Paine and The viewpoint I'm sorry to say of Thomas Jefferson who said that the gospel contains no mystery and he never

read great as the mystery of godliness and Said that Jesus Christ never thought of himself in terms of human excellence and anything but human action Well somehow everything got mixed in and to this day the brotherhood of man is confused with the fatherhood of God and we're trying to create a false millennium counterfeit kingdom of God on Unregenerate society and won't work I've heard a number of my preacher brethren lately who are uneasy about this land and they're not that kind But they said things aren't turning out so well It sort of started in 19 and 12 Old Mordecai ham used to have a sermon on the sinking of the Titanic He said God was trying to give us an object lesson.

We didn't get it We were so smart We built one that one of them even said even God can't sink it And the only thing it ever did was sink on the first trip I Was 11 years old and I remember how as a country boy that thing that did something to me and There are books galore about the Titanic. I don't know how many in our library in my town Movie about it and they're going over now to have another look to add it if they can get at it this time Quite a problem, but with the new paraphernalia, they think they might be able to they know it's there and they had a glimpse it corresponds to the proportions, but The strange thing about it all was that it seems as though God said you're not as smart as you think you are I'm gonna take a hunk of ice. He is plain old ice and Slit the side of this thing and show you you're not as smart as you thought you were.

I Think there was a lesson in it. I Don't think we learned it. I know one thing at the offices of the line that made the Titanic in and the lines in New York that Were a back of it, too They had when it was all over only two lists Lost and Saved and I'm living in the world or so far as God's concerned.

There are only two lists and then on that Titanic there were millionaires wealthy people famous people on down to poor folks in the steerage But after it was all over there were only lost and saved And on the boat of life you have rich man poor man beggar man thief butcher baker candlestick maker everybody But when it's all over There's only be the Lord and the saved I don't know how long it's been since I've heard anybody use that old word lost and say my my boys lost My girls lost I've been Listening to see if anybody ever says it anymore Sinners are pretty hard to find Today my boys my boys a good boy. So is the rich young ruler, but he wasn't God's boy It's gone out of our vocabulary and yet those are the people Jesus came to seek and to save the lost And I turn over to Revelation and there's another one that jumped out lately and sees me Revelation 22 11 he that is unjust Let him be unjust Still after after it's all over and Jesus comes he that's filthy Let him be filthy still He that's righteous. Let him be righteous still He that's holy let him be holy and still do you realize dear friend this morning that there's coming a day when we are going to reach a point of fixation and What you are then you will be forever How are you getting fixed for such a thing? Remember we're going to be congealed But then we're going to be forever what we are then For we have polls today for and against and Undecided there aren't any undecided about Jesus Christ If you've reached the age of accountability You've done one or the other he that is not witness against me He that believeth is not condemned.

He that believeth not condemned already. You're one or the other That's all there is to it. Billy Graham says as an American.

I'm a pessimist but as a Christian, I'm an optimist That's about the way I feel about it. Frankly this morning. I Heard of a little parade of youngsters.

They were doing pretty well except one kid was out of step all the time And they checked and found that he had a transistor radio in his pocket and was marching to music from a thousand miles away That's what

a Christian does Goes through this whole world tuned in on heaven. That's why you can't keep separate you'd better not with the way this other crowds going because You are going by the beats of another drummer. I Hope you are this morning and making good time at it I'm glad as an American to put my hand on my heart and join and sing in the Star-Spangled Banner This is the best patch of dirt there is left on this whole earth They're trying to get in over here and trying to get out everywhere else.

It seems to me. I Love it for rocks and reels and all the rest of it But I still get happier when I can sing about that other country and that Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run. You know, we're out like David We're out to crown the king.

I'm I've been working on the son. I haven't got it to suit me yet on that David was out to crown King and They started in the cave of Adullam I said mighty unpromising looking place Somebody said the history of many a church is from cave to Cathedral and get to the Cathedral the different story sometimes But the thing that makes me happy is expressed most And the old boot black and a business firm down our way He'd been there for years and they all loved him He was a wonderful Christian. Oh, man Had his Bible right beside his outfit there.

They all knew he was a Christian wasn't ashamed of it One day one of the businessmen came around said well, I see you're reading in Revelation. Yes Do you understand what Revelation means? He said yes, he said I wait a minute Bible scholars have differed on the meaning of Revelation and you say, you know what it's all about What do you say he said it means Jesus is gonna win Thank God, that's what it does mean why you could yet 500 theologians together They couldn't come up with anything better than that. It means Jesus is gonna win Another Bible with no devil on the first two pages.

No devil on the last two pages Thank God for a book takes care of the devil before you get through Meanwhile, I'm a pilgrim and a stranger and what the church needs today is to recover her pilgrim character We're just passing through We're not citizens in this world trying to get to heaven. We're sitting in heaven trying to get through this world And Paul Harvey says Christians believe Christ will return and take over When mortals have made a hopeless mess of self-government, well, then he ought to come anytime Because we've done it All we say we've got democracy Yes And that means government by the people and the world over the people are not doing too well with democracy even today But there's another one I believe in the theocracy above all and a Christocracy that's coming and in the meantime Let us render under Caesar the things that are Caesar and under God the things that are God You've been listening to from the pulpit and classic sermon series this week He heard Vance Havner with his message the country and the church tune in next week to hear Joel Rosenberg Talk about are we living in the last days? I'm from the pulpit in classic sermons

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