

Speak Well of the USA



Let's Show Our Gratitude (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week.

In my talks this week, I've been sharing with you some important, practical ways in which we can show our gratitude to God and our country. I've spoken specifically about two ways: first, by praying for our nation and its government which is an obligation the Scripture places on all of us, as believers; and secondly, by acting as salt. I quoted the words of Jesus, "You are the salt of the earth." And I emphasized two particular aspects of salt, which are by no means the only ones: first of all, salt gives flavor to that which would otherwise lack it and so it's our responsibility to commend the society, the community, whatever area of life we live in to God to give that particular section of society flavor. Our presence should make a decisive difference in God's attitude toward that area where we live.

You remember I took the example of Sodom where God said that 10 righteous men in that city could cause Him to postpone or withhold His judgment on a city that probably numbered 10,000 or more people. So one, in a sense, can withhold judgment from 1,000. That's acting as salt. Secondly, I pointed out that salt restrains corruption. I pointed out that corruption is at work in our society. We cannot change that fact but, by acting as salt, we can restrain it, we can hold it back, until all the purposes of God's mercy have been worked out. And I challenged those of you who were listening yesterday to act as salt, to stand up, to be counted for righteousness, to identify yourselves with the forces of good and to take a stand against the forces of evil and corruption.

Today I'm going to share with you a third important way in which we can show our gratitude and that is one that may not, at first, seem very obvious to you. But it is: to speak well of our country, the United States. As I've given you to understand in my talks, I am not an American by birth; I am an American by choice; I chose American citizenship. I was brought up in Europe and I have to say this from my experience in Europe, both in England and in the countries of the continent of Europe that I do not know of any European country whose citizens are regularly so critical and so negative in their comments and their talk about their political leaders, as the people of America normally are. I cannot think of another nation where people would regularly permit

themselves to speak with the lack of respect and the cynicism for their political leaders which is almost fashionable in some circles in the United States. And yet, this is totally illogical. Why? Because Americans have the privilege of electing their own leaders. So when we criticize the leaders we've elected, what are we doing? We're criticizing our own choice. The finger we point at our leaders is really a finger pointed at us.

I want to tell you that persistent, negative talk has a powerful negative effect on our whole nation. I was impressed the other day, when I was reading about God's dealings with Israel and particularly with the land of Israel. In the prophet Ezekiel, I found two passages. One that spoke about the desolation of the land of Israel and one that spoke about its restoration. They're both found in the 36th chapter of Ezekiel. And what impressed me was this: that the desolation was associated with negative talk about the land; contrariwise, the restoration was associated with positive talk about the land and I saw that these two go together. Negative talk brings desolation, positive talk brings restoration and conversely, that restoration will be manifested in a positive way of talking. Here are the Scriptures: Ezekiel 36:3, the Lord is speaking to the land and the mountains of Israel and He says:

> "You became... the object of people's malicious talk and slander..."

And, the result—desolation. Then, later on in the chapter, in verse 15, He promises restoration and this is what He says:

> "No longer will I make you hear the taunts of the nations, and no longer will you suffer the scorn of the peoples..."

I really question whether the great majority of Americans have any concept of how much harm is brought to our nation by persistent, negative, critical talk. And often the people guilty are religious people. There's something about religious people that they feel in some way they demonstrate their righteousness and their cleverness if they can criticize others. I want to tell you that's completely incorrect. You are not demonstrating your righteousness nor your cleverness—you're demonstrating the fact that you're a negative person. And really, you need to change.

Let me point out to you three results of negative talk commonly experienced in a nation. First of all, negative talk lays a heavy burden on political leaders and such people as law enforcement agents. In fact, in this nation today, some of the law enforcement agents are just about ready to give up because of the totally cynical negative attitude of the people they're supposed to be helping and protecting.

Secondly, negative talk creates a general atmosphere of pessimism and this has a measurable negative affect on the whole economy. You speak enough against America, especially overseas, as an American—you criticize your own nation, down goes the value of the dollar. That's cause and effect. You can probably break the value of the dollar. If enough people talk against America enough, the result will be an economic crisis.

Thirdly, negative talk promotes bitterness, jealousy and rivalry amongst different sections of the people. The more we criticize, the more critical we become. We turn against one another, we criticize one another, we don't like the color of other people's skin, we don't like their racial or their religious background. We don't like their culture, their style of life—an atmosphere of bitterness and rivalry and hatred in generated by negative talk. We are not doing our job as Christians, if we indulge in all that. We should be the opposite. We should be the people who speak positively. We should be the people, not who are a part of the problem, but who are part of the solution.

I've pointed out the disastrous effects of persistent evil speaking about our nation and now I want to look, for a moment, at the other side of the coin: the results of speaking well. First of all, I want to say that to speak well about the United States is to be realistic.

I was born in India; I was educated in Britain. Before I was twenty, I'd visited nearly all nations of Western Europe. Since then, I've visited more nations that I care to count. I speak probably eight or ten languages. I'm not theorizing. I've lived in other countries. I spent eight years of my life in Africa. When I hear Americans dissatisfied and discontented with their nation something rises up in me that wants to say, "You should take a trip to Siberia. Or you should spend a few years in an underprivileged nation in the Third World or in a corrupt dictatorship (in a quarter of the world). You have not learned to appreciate your blessings." I say, objectively, that I do not know of any nation, anywhere on the earth, in which Christians enjoy greater opportunity and greater privileges than they do in the United States.

What is our attitude? Are we going to return evil for good? Are we going to be critical and negative? Oh, there's much to regret in the United States, today. There are many things that need to be changed. But they won't be changed by being negative. They won't be changed by critical attitudes. They'll be changed by people with a positive approach, with faith, people who know how to pray. People who can demonstrate

what is good and not what is evil. People who act as salt.

I'm going to close in prayer.

Father, first of all, we want to repent, as Christians, for the many, many times we've been negative and critical when we shouldn't be and we ask you to forgive us and we want to say today that we thank You for the many special blessings and privileges that we enjoy in this nation and we ask Your blessing upon our nation, for Your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Before I close my talk today, I'm going to make a special request of you. I want you to pray about something. This week we're asking our listeners across the nation to express their appreciation of this radio ministry by sending us a special Thanksgiving offering. I'm sure you understand that this ministry is kept on the air by the offerings of people just like yourself. People who believe in its message and want to support it. If this ministry is a source of help and blessing to you, will you pray about helping us, in turn, this week with a special Thanksgiving offering. Let me suggest that your offering will do two important things: first, it will express your appreciation for help that you yourself have received through this ministry; second, it will enable us to bring the same kind of help to someone who needs it just as much as you do but may not be in a position to support us financially.

If you will help us this week with your special offering, I want on my side, to do something special for you. I want to send you a copy of my book, Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting. The message of this book is directly connected with the events we celebrate at Thanksgiving, from original eye-witness accounts, it vividly depicts the hardships and struggles of the Pilgrims and the marvelous way in which God answered their prayers and saved their harvest. I believe every American family should have a copy of this book. Also, my complete series of talks this week on "Let's Show Our Gratitude," is available in a single, carefully-edited cassette. Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program

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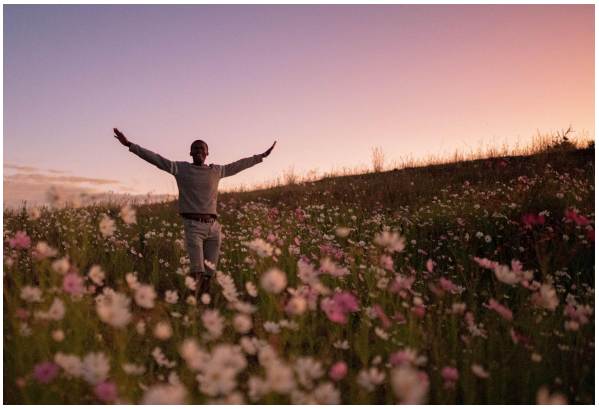

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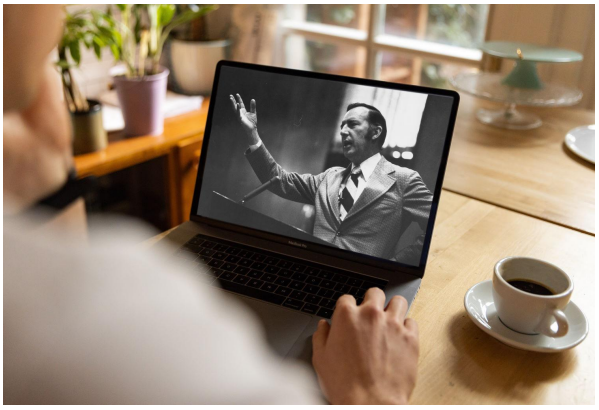

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