

In God We Trust
John 14:1-14

Today, I have two trivia questions for those of you who are trivia buffs. First, in what year did congress officially declare a national motto? Second, what is the official motto for the United States? Let me give you a clue. The slogan we proclaim as Americans was announced at the same time the Star Spangled Banner became our national anthem. Are you still not sure? In the final stanza of Francis Scott Key's infamous song, he writes: "And this be our motto: 'In God is our trust.' And the Star Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave; o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave." Have you figured it out yet? If your answer was, "In God We Trust", you are correct.

After the Civil War the religious population spread throughout the States. God had truly become a key cornerstone in the rebuilding of what we now call America. In the late 1800's there was a strong drive to ensure future generations would remember that placing faith and trust in God would always remain vital to the success of this country. Abraham Lincoln was quoted,

And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God ...and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures

and proven by all history that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.

This country has been blessed with a strong relationship with God. The questions placed before us today are, "Has Christianity reached its peak? Are we living what we proclaim? Do we truly trust in God?"

John shares with us the most important reason why we should continue to live and proclaim "In God We Trust." In John's time, the early Christians were being tempted to return to the Jewish faith and beliefs. The Religious Leaders raised questions like: "If Jesus has risen from the dead, then where is he?" "Why are you putting your faith in something you can no longer see, touch, or hear?" They still refused to believe that Jesus was truly the Messiah. John argued that even though Christ is no longer physically standing with us, we can still hear His voice and see His works. As we learned last week, Christians still find God's presence active and alive in the world.

In this passage, Jesus teaches the disciples that His physical presence is about to be transformed into a Spiritual presence that never leaves us. It is similar to what happens when we are faced with the death of a loved one. Even though their body is physically no longer alive, they still remain in our hearts, minds, and souls. We remember the lessons our

parents, grandparents, and friends taught us through the events we shared while they were still with us here on earth. Maybe this is the reason why this passage is often used at the funerals of our family and friends. These words bring comfort to our ears as we place the spirit of our loved our loved one in God's hands. We trust in God to take care of them and us until we can be united once again. We need to remember that there is more to this passage than trusting God with our loved ones that have died. Jesus tells the disciples that others, especially the living, are also to trust in God.

As we delve a bit deeper into this text we discover more to what Jesus offers us in this passage. We begin by putting this passage in context. This scripture is part of John's interpretation of what happened at the last supper. John gives us insight as to the conversation Jesus had with the disciples after He predicted Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial. Jesus offers reassurance by saying, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." Jesus knows the next few weeks are going to be very difficult for the disciples. He is attempting to send them off with the faith and trust in God. He is giving them the opportunity to hear God's voice so they will be protected from the robbers and thieves John spoke of

last week. A simple act of trusting in God will give them the confidence and courage to face the events that are yet to come to the Disciples.

Thomas and Philip need a bit more to go on than just trusting in God. They want to know the exact location of where Jesus is going and what they will need to do to reach the same destination. Already they are struggling to put their faith in what Jesus has taught them. These obedient men need a check list to verify they have done exactly what Jesus wants them to do. Jesus wants them to listen and follow God rather than follow a check list. They will each take a different journey to reach the same destination. Therefore, Jesus only gives words of comfort to calm their fears. He says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well." In other words, you have trusted in me because I am with you; now put that same trust in God.

There are times in our lives today when we struggle to put our faith and trust in God. We question, "Is this really what God wants me to do?" Sometimes we even wonder if God is present at all. This questioning and doubting are the reasons the leaders of our country chose "In God we Trust" to be our nations Motto. They wanted a constant reminder that God

will never forsake those who believe and trust that God will provide; which is why the words "In God We Trust" is printed on our currency. The intention was to remind us every time we reach into our billfold for cash. There is only one small flaw with this philosophy. How often do you think of God when you spend money? We even have a tendency to save as much as we can for the rainy day projects that come unexpectedly. Does that show we put our trust in God? I wonder how many of us really do put our trust in God.

When we read this passage from John, he emphasizes Jesus' words of trust, assurance, and confidence. The disciples have watched Jesus at work in his ministry. They put their full trust in the human that stood before them. What they have forgotten was that the man before them was God. They had been walking, talking, and learning directly from God. Now, the time has arrived where the disciples were to model and teach others how to trust in God. The death and resurrection of their dear friend brought new challenges to their lives.

Today this passage is before us again. What message do you hear from God? Our Christianity is once again faced with the need to remind ourselves and others that it is time to trust in God. The methods we have

been using to prepare ourselves and our children to hear God's voice are no longer working. The methods of learning and the needs of the people are different today than they were twenty years ago. I'm sure there is a Spiritual need in your life that has yet to be fed. Help us explore those areas and what we need to do to help you strengthen your relationship with God. Chances are if you have a need there are many more searching for the same thing. This does mean trying new ideas and trusting in God. It also means using the dollars and talents God has given us to reach out in this world. Are you ready for the adventure? Are you ready to truly put your trust totally in God? If you are, where do you want to start? Amen.