

## *Eternal Vigilance*

Andrew Jackson authored the now famous quote, "But you must remember, my fellow citizens, that eternal vigilance of the people is the price of liberty, and that you must pay the price if you wish to secure the blessing." He goes one to warn that the America's greatest enemies are from within, greed, power, etc., and not from foreign nations. Jackson continues: "Providence has showered on the favored land blessings without number, and has chosen you as guardians of freedom, to preserve it for the benefit of the human race. May He who holds in His hands the destinies of nations make you worthy of the favors He has bestowed and enable you with pure hearts and pure hands and sleepless vigilance to guard and defend to the end of time the great charge He has committed to your keeping.

While quite true on our national stage, the concept is equally true on God's stage we call earth. Jackson both recognized that God is the giver of blessings (not man) and that man's faithful response is vital to the keeping of those blessings. I am here reminded of the myriad of conditional promises found in scripture with that fateful word, "If." If we live righteously, God will bless us. I fear that too many in America today (and perhaps too many in God's church) have forgotten that His blessings are dependent on our faithfulness to following His word.

More specifically, in the Lord's church we must remember several key passages if we are to continue to receive His blessings, regardless of what happens on the national stage.

1. We can, indeed, read and understand God's word, Ephesians 3:4
2. If we keep God's commandments, He will bless us in many ways, Lev. 26:1-13; John 14:15; John 14:21; 15:10
3. Even our eternity depends on following God's word, John 8:51, 52;
4. The presence of God is with us IF we keep His word, John 14:23, 24, Rev. 3:10

As individuals, and as local congregations, we must understand the importance of keeping and teaching these concepts if we are to enjoy (as Jackson recognized) "...the great charge God He has committed to your keeping."

Jesus was very clear in Rev. 2:1-5 that when a local congregation strays from God's plan, they must, "... remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent."

I praise God that our congregation earnestly and lovingly seeks to follow, "in His steps" (I Peter 2:21) and to, "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus," (2 Timothy 1:13). May His loving hand keep us strong in the seeking of His will and not ours - after all, that is the very essence of true faithfulness!

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