

Date: Sunday July 4th, 2010

Scripture: Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Title: “It Still Applies”

The Message of Scripture (Sermon Thesis): Thoughts about Freedom

The Sharing of the Good News (The Sermon Purpose): God makes freedom possible. Let us give thanks to God.

(Remember, it’s all about God!)

President Abraham Lincoln was not the first person invited to give a speech. And even after he was asked, his role was to be that of the one who might hold the scissors at a ribbon cutting; important but not the main attraction. There was great fanfare about the keynote speaker, few remember him today, and his speech ended up lasting over two hours; even fewer can recite anything said. President Lincoln’s speech on the other hand was just 271 words – about one type written page.

Today President Lincoln’s speech is called by many the greatest speech in American history. The speech was given at a time when our nation was in the midst of an internal bloody, bodily, battle and it was given in a place that saw battle field death and destruction unlike this nation had or has seen and we pray, will ever see.

On the surface, our situation is far different today than it was one hundred forty seven years ago in that we are not at hand to hand combat with ourselves. But our situation is also quite similar in that we do seem to be a country challenged with defining just who we are at this point in history and a country allowing our differences to rip and tear at the very stitching that holds the fabric of our nation

together. I find the words from President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address appropriate for our 4th of July worship and still applicable to our lives as Americans. Here's what he said:

“Four score 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.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that this nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from

the earth” (Wikipedia).

“Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory”

From Carl Schurz: *“If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other.”*

“My County Tis of Thee”

From Ralph Waldo Emerson: *“For each new morning with its light, for rest and shelter of the night, for health and food, for love and friends, for everything Thy goodness sends.”* We give thanks.

“O Beautiful for Spacious Skies”

Let us pray

Lord,

We give you thanks for all the goodness that you send and we thank you for the freedoms that we know in this nation. We ask for your continued guidance so that we work to preserve and further freedom for all people, in this country and throughout the world, in a way acceptable to you. This we pray, Amen.

Offering: We are free to give. Let us give with thanksgiving for that freedom. The users will please . . .

Dedication: We ask that you accept and bless these gifts. We hope that they are used to announce your realm among us. So we pray, Amen.

Benediction: We go forth from this place blessed by God and we go forth into this beautiful country and wonderful world as those ready to share the blessing. Go forth. Amen and Amen.

Sources:

“Gettysburg Address”; www.wikipedia.com
www.famousquotesfunnyquotes.com/quotes/