

“One Nation Under God”

Summary

This powerful message challenges us to examine what it truly means to be a nation and a people positioned under God's authority. Drawing from the centurion's words in Matthew 8:9, we're reminded that authority flows from submission—we have power and influence not because of our own strength, but because we position ourselves under divine authority. The sermon traces the historical significance of adding 'under God' to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954, showing how each generation must choose who they will serve. We're called to recognize that America's position among nations isn't about exceptionalism or pride, but about being set apart for a sacred purpose: to broadcast God's glorious wonders throughout the world. Like the priests of old, we've been chosen not for our own glory but to display what it looks like to be drenched in God's mercy. The message confronts our tendency to become so consumed with comfort and prosperity that we miss our calling, much like the invited guests in Luke 14 who were too busy with their fields, oxen, and personal affairs to attend the great feast. We're challenged to be like the Minutemen of the Revolutionary War—trained, ready, and available at a moment's notice to respond to God's call, not entangled in civilian pursuits but focused on pleasing the One who enlisted us.

Small Group Study Guide – One Nation Under God

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share one thing you're grateful for about living in this country, and one way you've seen God's hand in America's history.

Key Scripture References

- Matthew 8:9 - The Centurion's understanding of authority
- 1 Peter 5:6 - Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand
- 1 Peter 2:9 - A chosen people, set apart
- Luke 14 - The parable of the great banquet
- 2 Timothy 2:1-4 - Not entangled in civilian affairs
- Romans 12:1-2 - Living sacrifices

Main Points Summary

U - UNDER GOD

America's authority comes from being under God's authority. Just as the centurion understood that his authority came from being under Rome's authority, our nation's true power comes from submitting to God's authority.

S - SET APART

We are set apart with purpose - to broadcast God's glorious wonders throughout the world. We're "drenched in mercy" to be an extension of His grace among the nations.

A - AVAILABLE

God is looking for people who aren't too distracted or entangled in the affairs of life to answer His call - like the Minutemen who were ready at a moment's notice.

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Under God (20 minutes)

1. **Authority and Submission**
 - What does it mean practically to live as "one nation under God" in 2026?
 - How does being "under authority" actually give us more authority, not less? Can you think of examples from your own life?
2. **Historical Perspective**
 - Why do you think "under God" wasn't added to the Pledge of Allegiance until 1954? What was happening in the world at that time?
 - How have you seen the nation drift from or return to this foundation in your lifetime?
3. **Personal Application**
 - In what areas of your life are you tempted to operate independently rather than under God's authority?
 - What would change in your daily decisions if you truly lived "under the mighty hand of God"?

Section 2: Set Apart (20 minutes)

4. **Purpose and Identity**
 - The sermon said we're set apart "to broadcast His glorious wonders throughout the world." How does this challenge the American tendency toward self-focus?

- What does it mean to be "drenched in mercy"? How should this affect how Americans are perceived globally?
- 5. **Witness to Nations**
 - Have you traveled internationally? How were you received as an American? What did that teach you?
 - How can we as individuals represent Jesus well while traveling, working with international colleagues, or engaging with immigrants?
- 6. **Display of God's Character**
 - The Queen of Sheba was impressed not just by Solomon but by how his servants were treated. What does this teach us about our witness?
 - How can the church put God's goodness on display in tangible ways?

Section 3: Available (20 minutes)

- 7. **The Distraction Trap**
 - In Luke 14, people were too busy with fields, oxen, and family to attend the feast. What are the modern equivalents that keep us from being available to God?
 - How can blessings become barriers to availability?
- 8. **Minutemen Mentality**
 - What would it look like to live as a "spiritual minuteman/minutewoman" - ready at a moment's notice?
 - What practical steps could you take to be more available to God's calling?
- 9. **Not Entangled**
 - 2 Timothy 2:4 says soldiers don't get entangled in civilian pursuits. How do we balance enjoying life's blessings while not becoming entangled?
 - Where's the line between stewardship and distraction in your life?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **True authority comes from being under God's authority** - not from military might or economic strength
- ✓ **We are set apart to display God's mercy** - not to promote ourselves or our nation's superiority
- ✓ **Availability requires intentionality** - we must resist the constant distractions of comfort and busyness
- ✓ **Every generation must choose** - who they will be under and what they will be available for
- ✓ **The full gospel attracts** - when people see the joy and blessing of God's people, they want what we have

Practical Applications

This Week:

1. **Pray daily** for America's rededication to be one nation under God to take root
2. **Identify one area** where you've been operating independently rather than under God's authority - surrender it
3. **Assess your availability** - what needs to be eliminated or reduced so you can respond when God calls?

This Month:

1. **Study the founding documents** - read the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, noting references to God
2. **Be a witness** - look for one opportunity to represent Jesus well to someone from another nation
3. **Simplify something** - identify one "entanglement" and create boundaries around it

This Season:

1. **Consider a mission trip** - how might God be calling you to take His mercy to the nations?
2. **Develop a "minuteman" readiness** - what skills, resources, or availability could you cultivate for kingdom purposes?
3. **Create a giving plan** - like the Queen of Sheba, be prepared to give generously when you encounter God's goodness

Reflection Exercise (10 minutes)

Personal Inventory: Rate yourself 1-10 in each area:

- **Under:** How submitted am I to God's authority in all areas of life? ____
- **Set Apart:** How intentionally am I living as a display of God's mercy? ____
- **Available:** How ready am I to respond when God calls? ____

Share with one person: Which area needs the most attention and what's one specific step you'll take this week?

Closing Prayer Points

- Pray for continued awakening and revival in America
 - Pray for boldness in pulpits across the nation
 - Pray for your group members to live under God's authority
 - Pray for opportunities to display God's mercy to the nations
 - Pray for availability and freedom from entanglements
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For Next Week

Action Step: Come prepared to share one way you practiced being "available" this week and what happened.

Memory Verse: "Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think." - Romans 12:2 (TPT)

Main Points – One Nation Under God

Sermon Summary:

This sermon celebrates America's 250th anniversary of independence by examining the nation's relationship with God through the acronym USA - Under God, Set Apart, and Available. Pastor Rob emphasizes that America's authority and blessing come from being under God's authority, not from military or economic strength. The nation has been set apart not for self-glorification but to broadcast God's glorious wonders throughout the world, drenched in His mercy. The message calls believers to remain available and not entangled in worldly pursuits, ready like the Minutemen to answer God's call. The sermon challenges the current generation to recognize their divine purpose, embrace humility, and demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit to a watching world. It concludes with a call for another Great Awakening in America, where pulpits will once again influence the culture and the nation will return to its foundational identity as one nation under God.

Key Points:

- True authority comes from being under God's authority, not from military strength or economic power
- The phrase "under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 by President Eisenhower during the Cold War to distinguish America from atheistic communism
- America was recently rededicated as one nation under God on May 17th in Washington, D.C.
- The Declaration of Independence is also a Declaration of Dependence on God's divine providence
- America has been set apart to broadcast God's glorious wonders throughout the world, not for self-consumption
- Believers are called to be drenched in God's mercy and display His grace to the nations
- Christians must not become entangled in civilian pursuits but remain available like good soldiers
- The Minutemen exemplify readiness and availability to respond immediately when called
- God is looking for people who will be salt and light among the nations without being distracted by lesser things
- Another Great Awakening is coming to America, with pulpits speaking with boldness and clarity
- The full gospel will highlight the glory of the King in ways that draw people to want to know Him

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 8:9 - The centurion's understanding of authority
- 1 Peter 5:6 - Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God
- 1 Peter 2:9 - God's chosen treasure, set apart to broadcast His glorious wonders
- Luke 14 - Parable of the great supper and those too busy to attend
- 2 Timothy 2:1-4 - Being a good soldier not entangled in civilian pursuits

- 1 Kings 10 (or 2 Kings 10) - The Queen of Sheba visiting Solomon
- Romans 12:1 - Living as sacred living sacrifices

Discussion Questions – One Nation Under God

How does the concept of being 'under authority' in our spiritual lives translate to having genuine authority in our spheres of influence, and where might we be resisting godly submission?

In what ways has the American church become distracted by the 'civilian pursuits' Paul warns about in 2 Timothy 2:4, and how can we practically disentangle ourselves to be better soldiers for Christ?

The sermon describes America as being 'drenched in mercy' - how should this reality shape the way we represent Jesus to other nations and cultures, especially when traveling or engaging with immigrants?

What does it mean practically to be 'available' to God in our generation, and what specific things in your life might be making you unavailable for His purposes?

How can we cultivate the kind of faith that causes Jesus to marvel at us, like He did with the centurion, rather than living in a way that causes us to marvel only at ourselves?

The Queen of Sheba was undone not just by Solomon's wisdom but by the joy and provision evident in his servants - what does this teach us about the witness of a blessed and joyful Christian community?

If every generation must decide who they will be under, what are the competing authorities in our culture today that tempt us away from being fully under God's authority?

How does understanding that we are 'set apart to broadcast God's glorious wonders throughout the world' change the way we view our daily work, relationships, and resources?

What is the difference between healthy national pride rooted in gratitude for God's blessings and unhealthy nationalism that becomes self-reliant and arrogant?

The sermon mentions that true authority is based on what heaven is willing to back up - how should this truth influence our prayers, our activism, and our engagement with social and political issues?

Scriptures – One Nation Under God

Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. **Matthew 8:9** - The centurion's statement about being a man under authority
2. **1 Peter 5:6** - "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you"
3. **1 Peter 2:9** - "But you are God's chosen treasure, priests who are kings, a spiritual nation set apart..."
4. **Luke 14** - The parable of the great supper/feast (specifically the account of those who made excuses)
5. **2 Timothy 2:1-4** - Paul's instruction to Timothy about being a good soldier of Christ Jesus
6. **1 Kings 10** (or 2 Kings 10) - The Queen of Sheba visiting Solomon
7. **Romans 12:1-3** - Living sacrifices and spiritual gifts

Alluded to or Referenced Thematically:

8. **Matthew 5:14** - City set on a hill (mentioned in the sermon)
9. **1 Corinthians 12** - The body of Christ and spiritual gifts (referenced when discussing gifts of the Spirit)
10. **1 Corinthians 12:7** - "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit with all"
11. **Song of Solomon** - Referenced in connection with the Queen of Sheba account
12. **Psalms 127:1** - General theme of God's sovereignty in building nations (implied)

Devotional – One Nation Under God

Day 1: The Power of Being Under Authority

Reading: Matthew 8:5-13

Devotional: The centurion understood a profound spiritual truth: authority flows from submission. He recognized that Jesus operated under divine authority, which gave Him power over all circumstances. In our lives, we often seek independence and self-reliance, viewing submission as weakness. Yet true spiritual authority comes from positioning ourselves under God's mighty hand. When we humble ourselves before Him, we gain access to heaven's resources and backing. Consider today: Who or what are you truly under? Are you operating in self-dependence or God-dependence? The centurion's faith amazed Jesus because he grasped that being under the right authority changes everything. Your influence and effectiveness in this world directly correlate to your submission to God's lordship.

Day 2: Set Apart for Divine Purpose

Reading: 1 Peter 2:9-10

Devotional: You are not here by accident. God has chosen you as His treasured possession, set apart to broadcast His glorious wonders throughout the world. Peter reminds us that we were once nobodies, living in darkness, knowing nothing of God's mercy. But now we are drenched in it. This transformation isn't for our comfort alone—it's for global impact. We've been positioned where we are to display what knowing God looks like to a watching world. The privileges we enjoy aren't meant to make us self-consumed, but to equip us as ambassadors of grace. Today, reflect on how you're stewarding the blessings in your life. Are you using your position, resources, and influence to point others to Jesus, or have you become entangled in self-promotion?

Day 3: Available, Not Distracted

Reading: Luke 14:15-24

Devotional: Jesus' parable reveals a sobering reality: blessing can become a barrier to availability. Those invited to the great feast were too consumed with their possessions, pursuits, and relationships to respond. They were polite but unavailable. In our generation, distraction is perhaps the enemy's greatest weapon against believers. We're not necessarily doing bad things—we're just too busy with good things to answer God's invitation to greater things. The master's house will be filled, but the question is whether we'll be among those seated at His table. Availability requires intentionality. It means not allowing the affairs of this life to entangle us like soldiers distracted from their mission. Examine your calendar and priorities today. What would change if you truly made yourself available to God's purposes?

Day 4: Drenched in Mercy to Display His Glory

Reading: 1 Kings 10:1-13

Devotional: When the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon, she was undone not only by his wisdom but by the condition and joy of those who served him. The servants' clothing, their happiness, and the abundance surrounding them testified to the greatness of their king. This is our calling—to live in such a way that others are drawn to investigate our King. We represent Jesus to a broken world, and people should be able to see the evidence of His goodness in our lives. This isn't about arrogance or materialism; it's about being so satisfied in Him that joy overflows. When we're truly in awe of Jesus, we can boldly ask for more—not for selfish gain, but to have tangible evidence to share with others. Let your life be a living testimony today.

Day 5: Transformed to Discern His Will

Reading: Romans 12:1-8

Devotional: Paul calls us to be living sacrifices—holy, set apart, and available. This becomes our genuine worship. But notice the progression: we must stop imitating the culture and instead be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through total reformation of how we think. This transformation empowers us to discern God's will and live a beautiful, attractive life that draws others to Him. We're called to honestly assess our worth using God-given faith as the standard, not the world's metrics of success. Each person has a unique function in the body of Christ. Contentment comes from finding your spot and faithfully fulfilling it. You'll never be more satisfied than when operating in your God-given purpose. Today, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your specific role and commit to walking in it wholeheartedly.