

Ridin' High Cowboy Church

8771 FM 35

Union Valley/Royse City, TX

Pastor: Steve Bishop

July 3, 2016 – The Free State of God

This week's message is taken from the movie, "Free State of Jones" about a man in Mississippi history, Newton Knight. There were deserters from the Civil War and runaway slaves who lived in a swamp today called Sal Batee, named after Newton Knight's shotgun, Sal's Battery...good movie, starring Matthew McConaughey.

Conscience ~

Things you know that you ought to do, and ought not to do ...

There is a personal conscience and a collective conscience. The best way to see this is to visit another family who does not have the same rules as yours.

There is also a collective National Conscience ...

Our conscience in the USA is tuned into litter. You would not dump out a bag of trash going down the road (Don't Mess With Texas – trash police!).

Eastern Europe – you can mess all you want.

- Minimum marriage age without parents' consent
- Abortion legal in all states but different on when and how
- Child labor laws different in other countries
- You can't have three wives, bible is no help, no woman wants more than one husband
- Legalization of drugs – marijuana laws

When there is a strong collective conscience about something, you don't have to have a lot of rules.

One of the reasons our legal system is so complex is the lack of social conscience in America (what you end up with is right and wrong being determined by the court, not the human heart).

A conscience has to be informed.

Romans 2:14-15 14, when Gentiles, who do not have the law(they don't have the written word of God to go by), ***do by nature*** (collective conscience) ***things required by the law.*** 15 They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness,

and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.

Your conscience takes the information you give it and it says you shouldn't do that or that's ok. Everyone here has an informed conscience.

What has in the past informed our national conscience? Things that are right and wrong to all of us as a nation.

Answer: a sense of accountability to and gratefulness to God

Think about the things you do because you are accountable to someone. If I know someone is checking or I have to answer for it, I will treat things differently.

2nd sentence from the Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In the 1950's a line was taken from Lincoln's Gettysburg address and One Nation Under God was put into the pledge of allegiance. By saying that, we are saying God oversees this nation.

In 1956, July 30th, our Country got a new motto, which was put on our coins after the civil war ... the 84th Congress voted and Eisenhower signed into law that the Motto of the United States is "In God We Trust."

What if every principal in every school said, "students remember we trust God" there would be lawsuits everywhere! IT'S OUR NATIONAL MOTTO!!!! We have moved so far from where we began.

Our national conscience is tied to God, so as we move away from God, something else must take his place, if God is the basis of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and if God goes away, what is the basis of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? We know from other countries that when God leaves, so does life, liberty and happiness.

Background of the story – **Deuteronomy 8:10-20** a generation of ungrateful people had just passed away and a new generation was about to enter the promised land.

Enemy of Conscience

10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. 11 Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his

decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Wealth and dependence on God don't go hand in hand.

¹⁷ You may say to yourself, "My power and strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."

When we think all we have is because of our hard work and our hands, we are not accountable to anyone.

When any group of people or individuals lose a sense of accountability to God, they will no longer treat people fairly.

Do you know how to keep the rich man from taking advantage of the poor – keep him accountable to God.

Do you know how to keep the lazy man working – keep him accountable to God.

How to Get it Back

¹⁸ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, (This reminds us *why* God has blessed us. His plan is that it would ultimately further *His* eternal purpose. Therefore, we have no right to use our material blessing to further selfish purposes, instead, we use our resources to advance His kingdom), ***which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.***

The Cost

¹⁹ If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. ²⁰ Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

We can't allow God to disappear from our national conscience. Because that will leave us accountable to no one, it will lead to the loss of all morality.

These things are the things men and women fought and died for.

Are you accountable and grateful to God? Do you live this out for everyone around you to see?