

***“Learn to do right.”***

All the nations of the earth are like growing mountains, trying to get bigger and bigger and go higher and higher, trying to be the biggest and the highest of all the mountains. All the nations want bigger economies with more wealth and possessions, larger armies and defense systems, more technologies and advancements. They all want their power and rule to expand.

But all this growth and desire for growth is built on bloodshed and violence. Competition rules the day in **all** nations, as everyone claws and scratches to **lift themselves up** and **tear others down**. Everyone is willing to take a bribe and sell their souls to get ahead—anything to get an edge and advantage in the rat race. The poor, the lowly, the immigrant, the widow, the orphan—they are all crushed by this endless desire for growth.

And this is the way of life we have **learned** and been raised in. From the time we were small children we have been trained and taught to fight and **compete**, to desire more and more, endlessly grabbing everything for ourselves that we can—to always think and operate with “me” and “my nation” at the center of the world.

There is **nothing** healthy in this way of life that **all** the nations of the world follow. From head to toe it is selfish and sick—to its very heart and core it is corrupt and dysfunctional. The way of the nations of Civilization is deeply **unnatural**. Even the most stubborn and defiant animals, like goats and donkeys, are more obedient, more aware of the Creator and what he has called them to **be** and **do**. And everything that is unnatural eventually ends up destroying itself. All the mountains of the nations and their unnatural pursuit of growth will end like Sodom and Gomorrah, wiped off the face of the earth, **completely consumed** by fire from heaven. All their cities and fortresses and armies will be destroyed. Every tower will fall. Every work of their hands will completely disappear forever.

The people of Israel had built a great civilization for themselves, working and striving tirelessly for greatness. They had built large cities and fortresses, protected by walls and armies—with a grand temple at the center of it all. Yet all of that was meaningless and a disgusting **abomination** to the Creator. What he cared about was how they were **treating** each other and how they took care of the **lowly**. And so their civilization, built on growth, selfishness, violence, and greed like all civilizations, was destroyed. Their great accomplishments and achievements meant nothing. They had built everything on the backs of slaves, on the backs of the lowly. And so it all came to **dust**.

It is the same for us. All of the so-called achievements and accomplishments of the United States of America and Western Civilization are **meaningless**. Having the world’s largest economy is **not** a badge of honor, it is a mark of great shame as blood is all over our hands through our economy. We have grown big and great at the expense of the poor and lowly, at the expense of the Creator’s creation. And America—this high mountain among the nations—will be torn down. Its armies will be destroyed. Its cities wiped off the face of the earth. It will end up in the garbage heap like all the civilizations and empires that have come before it.

But there is **hope**, for there is a mountain that rises above all the mountains of the nations. There is a Way of life that rises above all the ways of Civilization. On this mountain no violence is practiced, no wars are waged. There is no fighting and hurting. The lowly are lifted up, the widow and orphan are taken care of. Justice is done for all. Every creature lives in a right relationship with each other and with the Creator. This is the **mountain of the Lord**.

But to reach the Lord’s mountain one does not climb **up** in the dog-eat-dog struggle of the nations. This highest of all mountains is found by going **down**, by humbling oneself and joining the poor and lowly, by **being** the poor and lowly. It is the mountain of Calvary, the mountain where the Lord Jesus made himself a servant of all, where he laid down his life for others, where he gave up everything he had, where he refused to wield the sword, where he forgave his enemies who were killing him, and where he lived by **humble faith** in the Creator even in the face of death.

Our hope is not in saving America as a nation. Our hope is in abandoning its empty pursuits—leaving the **unclean** mountain of America behind to live on the **holy** mountain of the Lord Jesus. We are being called into salvation—to live as members of the church, of the Body of Christ, to be a people who no longer fight and practice the ways of war, to be a people who no longer pursue worldly greatness and achievement. We are being called to be a people who pursue **sharing, love, self-sacrifice, and humility**.

What mountain have you been dwelling on? The mountain of America, scratching and clawing to lift yourself up? Or the mountain of the Lord, letting go and losing yourself in the pursuit of love for your enemies?

The Lord is coming and he is going to bring his justice, true justice. He is going to judge all creatures, all nations. If we don’t want to be like Sodom and Gomorrah, wiped off the face of the earth, then we need to repent and **“learn to do right.”** We need to learn to be the image of the Creator—to act and live like him, to reflect his light, his love, and his character. We need to **unlearn** the ways of the nations, the way of Civilization. We need to unlearn our selfishness. We need to unlearn our greed. We need to unlearn our violence. So we can **“learn to do right.”**

Jesus is calling us to join him on Mount Calvary, on the holy mountain of the Lord. He is calling us to take up our own crosses and follow him to his mountain. There we will **die** to everything we have known, we will unlearn all our habits and practices so we might learn and live the true Way of the Lord. So listen to the calling of Jesus. Take up your cross. Follow him to his holy mountain this day and **“learn to do right.” Amen.**