

I AM THANKFUL FOR AMERICA

Psalm 33:12: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."

One of the most patriotic songs in our country is **God Bless America**. Many years ago, Kate Smith belted out the wonderful lyrics of a song written by Irving Berlin that has been a mainstay in our patriotic psyche ever since.

GOD BLESS AMERICA

God bless America, land that I love,
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with a light from above.
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans white with foam,
God bless America,
My home sweet home.

I will ask you to sing that song with me at the close of my message today.

Do you know the story behind the writing of our National Anthem - **"The Star Spangled Banner?"**

Over two hundred years ago, Francis Scott Key wrote a poem that eventually became America's National Anthem.

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/star-spangled-banner>

Battlefields.org tells the story this way:

“One of the cultural landmarks to emerge from the War of 1812 was the penning of The Star-Spangled Banner by 35-year-old Washington, DC attorney and journeyman poet Francis Scott Key. Key wrote the words to a poem he originally called, “The Defense of Fort McHenry” after watching the British naval bombardment of the Baltimore stronghold on the evening of September 13 -14, 1814. British warships anchored in the Chesapeake Bay attacked [Fort McHenry](#) as part of a combined land-sea operation during the Chesapeake Campaign of 1814.

History has passed down to us the story of Key's authorship of penning the poem on the back of an envelope from the deck of a British warship on September 14, 1814, after an all-night attack on the fort during the evening and early morning hours of September 13 and 14. Key and a friend, John Skinner, received permission from President James Madison to approach British forces under a flag of truce to seek the release of an American citizen and friend from Upper Marlboro, Maryland, Dr. Charles Beanes. While on their mission Key and Skinner were privy to British attack plans on Baltimore and detained aboard British vessels until after the fight.

During the rainy night Key watched the bombardment, anxiously keeping his eye fixed on the flag flown above the fort's ramparts from the British fleet anchored eight miles off-shore. The attack lasted well into the early morning hours as the fort withstood the assault.

Congreve rockets fired by the British lit up the sky, their bursts over the fort illuminating it with an eerie glare. British artillery shells also burst above the fort. With the sunrise and the clearing of the smoke Key saw that a large American flag, with fifteen stars and fifteen stripes still flew over the fort, measuring 30 x 42 feet. It had been raised in an act of defiance by the Fort's Commander Major [George Armistead](#).

Key was inspired. The fort had not fallen and the British Navy set sail for sea. Key and Skinner returned to Baltimore on September 16, where Key, in his hotel room, continued to work on his poem.

Key passed his words on to his brother-in-law Judge Joseph A. Nicholson who set them to a popular tavern tune, "To Anacreon in Heaven," written by British songwriter John Stafford Swift. Within a day the poem had been given to a Baltimore printer who had it turned into a broadside which circulated around the city. From there it gained currency and popularity spreading up and down the American Atlantic coast. By the time the war ended six months later, the song's iconic rise in American popular culture was evident. Its popularity was further boosted in the ground-swell of American nationalism that was a result of the war.

The song's popularity increased during the 19th century and could be heard at many military and political gatherings. In 1889, the Department of the Navy made it the official song to accompany all of their flag raisings. President Herbert Hoover, on March 3, 1931, signed the law making "The Star Spangled Banner" the official national anthem of the United States. The tradition of playing the National Anthem before the start of sporting events began during World War II when Major League Baseball teams began playing it before every baseball game demonstrating support for American forces fighting in Europe and in the Pacific.

No less than the "American March King," John Philip Sousa, opined the same year it became the official national anthem that the music combined with Key's "soul-stirring" words is what gives the song its emotional impact."

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Even though the song actually has four verses, here is the iconic verse that we know so well:

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

"Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous
fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming.

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.

**Oh, say does that Star - Spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"**

We need to thank God for this great country. No other nation in the world has enjoyed the freedoms, the prosperity, the successes, and the glory of our great nation.

Many people are trying to re-write our national history, changing facts, good and bad, to fit their revisionist desires.

In reality, no nation survives that allows its history to be revised in order to change the story of the nation. We know there are bad things in our history, but they need to remain in order to help us in our determination to never repeat them. But there are many more good things in our history that has helped our nation become the shining light to the world.

The "Hate America Crowd," who enjoys the liberties and freedoms in this great land, are too blinded by their hatred to see the irony of their attitude. They relish the freedom to hate the very country that provide that freedom. In a socialist/communist country they would be imprisoned for their actions - or, probably executed!

The blessing of American freedom has not come cheaply. Many brave men and women gave their lives so that future

generations could prosper and be blessed by this great country.

The reason that hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world are trying to get into America is because America offers freedom and opportunity unlike any other country in the world.

Surely, there are problems and surely there are those who want to change this country and turn it into something never envisioned by our Founding Fathers. I am thankful for the good and patriotic politicians and other influential people who are fighting the good fight to keep our nation the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave.

One person said wrote the following in order to encourage every American citizen to consider these truths:

The Blessings of God upon America.

A. Think about the fruit of America and all the things we have.

- 1. Think about our natural resources - our forests and our fields, our mines and our minerals.**
- 2. It seems that God has deposited in America everything that a nation could ever imagine.**
- 3. I like to think of the natural beauty in America.**
- 4. What a beautiful land this is!**

B. God has blessed us with a form of government which we have.

1. Our government is a republic. In other words, it is a nation governed by law.

2. The people gather together and express themselves in democratic forms and lay themselves under the authority of the law

3. You and I are living in a land where we are able to express our opinion.

a. We can express our approval and we can express our dissent.

b. We are free, in the proper manner, to criticize our leaders.

c. There is no Gestapo in America.

d. There is no Siberia or Tiananmen Square.”

I thought, as I prepared this message, that none of us had to show citizenship papers in order to travel today. We simply got in our cars and drove to wherever we chose.

Janet and I had lunch at a small local diner the other day and we were not harassed by anyone.

Yesterday, we did some shopping at Publix and the shelves were full of food; the bread shelves were loaded with fresh bread; and the meat department was stocked with a large variety of fresh meats. The vegetable bins were full, the fruits were plentiful, the milk shelves were full, and the desserts were readily available.

Do you see what I'm talking about? We live in a blessed country. While Venezuela has sunk into the abyss because of the poverty of leadership, and other countries suffer the ravages of political corruption and greed - we yet are blessed by plenty.

And, so I say to you all - and to myself - "Be thankful to God America!"

In spite of the almost dictatorial edicts of some Mayors and Governors across the country,

**** America is still a free land.**

**** We still have freedom of worship.**

**** We still have freedom of speech.**

**** We still have freedom of travel.**

**** We still have freedom of choice**

in our selection of products.

**** We still have freedom of assembly.**

And the list goes on

Please stand and sing that Kate Smith song with me - GOD BLESS AMERICA

GOD BLESS AMERICA

**God bless America, land that I love,
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with a light from above.**

I AM THANKFUL FOR AMERICA

**From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans white with foam,
God bless America,
My home sweet home.**

CLOSING COMMENTS: Please share this service with your friends and family. And, remember to be thankful for this wonderful country and all of its blessings.

PRAYER FOR AMERICA