

## PAUL HARVEY - FREEDOM TO CHAINS (1965)

### FULL TRANSCRIPT

Now then, what makes a nation strong? Taxes? (Heh) There's nothing new about those either, the first income tax was paid by Abraham. It was written on a rock by the hand of Divinity and handed to Moses at the top of Mount Sinai (and you might want to remember this) it was at the flat rate of 10%. It promised the wrath of God on anybody who tampered with or violated that law. Christ was born in Bethlehem because Joseph was on his way to pay his taxes. Joseph was a relatively well-to-do landowner of the house and lineage of David. Yet the taxes exacted by Caesar Augustus were so exorbitant that he didn't have enough money left over to employ a trusted messenger for the mission so, though his wife was great with child, he made the journey himself. And Christ was born in Bethlehem because Joseph was on his way to pay his taxes. And Christ was born in a manger because there was a housing shortage when he got there. Our problems are not new.

At Runnymede the Magna Carta was handed to King John on the end of a sword denying to royalty the right of unlimited taxation. Yet, you know it was for us, the American People, to become the first in recorded history ever voluntarily to surrender our rights to private property? Oh, yes we did. With an innocent sounding Constitutional Amendment, the Sixteenth, which says that "Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes on incomes from whatever source derived" and we forgot to put any limit to the extent to which we could tax ourselves. Conceivably we could be taxed out of all private property. We could be taxed not 70%, 80%, 90% but at 100%. We could be awakened one morning and find the government owns the farm, and the house, and the car, and HAS A MORTGAGE ON THE CHURCH! LEGALLY!

Historically, when any nation has taxed its people more than 25% of their national income, initiative was destroyed and that nation was headed for economic eclipse. Presently (1965) the American People are being taxed 33% of their total income.

History says we'll roll forward on momentum for a little while, but we'd better get some more gas in the tank pretty quick. You see, ours is not the first "By-George" good government to arise on the world stage, there have been several. Rome, Spain, Greece, China, and others, and each enjoyed about a hundred and fifty years at its zenith, and that's just about our time in the new world, and then each decayed away. Not one of them was ever destroyed by anybody else's marching legions. Each rotted away morally, socially, culturally, economically simultaneously. You know one of the most cruel paradoxes of history is this, because each was a good government it bore bountiful fruit and when it bore bountiful fruit the people got fat, and when they got fat they got lazy, and when they got lazy they began to want to absolve themselves of personal responsibility and turn over to government to do for them things which traditionally they had been doing for themselves.

At first there appears to be nothing wrong asking government to perform some extra service for you, but if you ask government for extra services government, in order to perform its increasing function, has to get bigger, right? And as government gets bigger, in order to support its increasing size it has to, what? Tax the individual more, so the individual gets littler. And to collect the increased taxes requires more tax collectors so the government gets bigger and in order to pay the additional tax collectors, it has to tax the individual more so the government gets bigger and the individual gets littler and the government gets bigger and the individual gets littler, until the government is all powerful and the individual is hardly

anything at all. The government is all powerful and the people are cattle. Now, some believe that the need is for a vigorous, strong man to rise on the scene. To regulate and regiment the affairs of men. Yet, history tells us there have been several such.

Once upon a time there was a nation great and powerful and good. Few were suffering from the aftermath of war, from a depression. And then came upon the scene a leader, an idealist, selfconfident, intolerant to criticism. A wise lady limited his early activities to combating the financial depression, nobody could argue with that, but in a while he began to regulate business and establish new rules to govern commerce and finance. Some of them in diametrical disagreement with the God-Made laws of supply and demand, but anybody who disagreed with those new rules was promptly fired. The new leader saw that under the old system of free enterprise landlords prospered, so he levied new taxes to take away their profits and destroy what he called the "Monopoly of Capital". To please laborers, he controlled prices. To win the favor of the farmers, he gave them loans and subsidies. The National Debt mounted, alarmingly. Whenever anybody tried to tell him "that governments, even as people, can go broke, when they spend beyond their incomes", he said "They just didn't understand deficit finance."

Well, what do you say? Did he build on rock or on sand? I say on sand. For you see this was the story of Emperor Su Tung Po (Tsu Tong Phao) who led China to its doom more than a Thousand Years Ago. I am satisfied with all my heart that if Uncle Sam ever does get whipped, here too, it will have been an Inside Job. It was internal decay, it was not external attack that destroyed the Roman Empire. Starting about 146 B.C. internal conditions in Rome were characterized by a welter of class wars and conflicts, street brawls, corrupt governors, lack of personal integrity and moral responsibility. About 290 years after Christ a Roman Emperor named Diocletian took over. He really grabbed the bull by the horns. He took over in a period of turmoil and severe depression. The first thing Diocletian did was call in the gold and closed the banks and raised the taxes. He reduced the power of the Senate. Delegated its power to a lot of little government bureaus.

Do you know they even had a Transportation Act back there, prescribing the fee required to rent one laden jackass per mile and at today's rate of exchange it would have amounted to about 1/8th cent per mile? Which meant that in order to make a profit a jack ass would have to carry five passengers? That was simply beyond the capacity of the jack ass. Diocletian put millions of people on the public payroll, but when this failed to do the job, the country was still in trouble, he asked more personal powers for himself. For a brief while, incidentally, they were standby powers, but then he used them, all at once. He froze wages, he froze prices, he froze jobs, he stopped profits, he dictated to the farmer what he should plant, when and how he should sell it and for how much and he rationed food and what happened? The labor market closed down, incentive was gone. Farm life became dependent on bureaucratic red tape.

Exorbitant taxes cost the farmer his land. He kept for himself only a small plot on which he might grow turnips for his family. He lost the rest of it to the state and without food and with incentive gone city life stagnated and declined. And Rome past into what history has recorded as the "Dark Ages" lasting a thousand years. Just by turning to the left, the world has gone in circles. A nation would evolve from a monarchy, into an oligarchy, from oligarchy to dictatorship, from dictatorship to bureaucracy, from bureaucracy to pure democracy where, finally, the people would cry out from the chaos and confusion of the streets "Oh! Please God give us a king!" And God would give 'em a king and they'd have a monarchy again and start the whole silly cycle anew. Now either we will profit from the errors of their ways, or it follows as the night the day, our children are going to have to relive the dark ages, all over again. How come after thousands of years of experiment our new nation has come so far, so fast?

All this in less than two hundred years. What is the secret of our success? Well, I think it had to do with a basic American's Creed. Perhaps it never passed a pioneer's lips in this form, but if it had I think he would

have said something like this: "I believe in my God, in my Country and in Myself." I know that sounds like a trite too simple thing to say, and yet it's a rare man today who will dare to stand up and say "I believe in my God and my Country and in Myself." (And in that order.) When the early American pioneer first turned his eyes toward the west, there were only Indian trails or traces as they were called, for him to follow through the wilderness. Do you know today you can roller skate from Miami to Seattle, from San Diego to Plymouth Rock? In this little bitty instant, as historical time is measured, our 7% of the Earth's population has come to possess more than half of all the world's good things. How come?

Well sir, when that early pioneer turned his eyes toward the west he didn't demand that somebody else look after him. He didn't demand a free education. He didn't demand a guaranteed rocking chair at eventide. He didn't demand that somebody else take care of him if he got ill or got old. There was an old fashioned philosophy in those days that a man was supposed to provide for his own and for his own future. He didn't demand a maximum amount of money for a minimum amount of work. Nor did he expect pay for no work at all... Come to think of it he didn't demand anything. That hard-handed pioneer just looked out there at the rolling plains stretching away to the tall green mountains and then lifted his eyes to the blue skies and said "Thank you God. Now I can take it from here." That spirit isn't dead in our country, it's dormant. It's been discredited in some circles, driven underground, but it isn't dead.

It's just that a few seasons ago politicians baiting their hooks with free barbeque and trading a Ponzi promise for votes began telling us "we don't want opportunity anymore, we want security." "We don't want opportunity" they said, "We want security." And they said it so often we came to believe them. We wanted security. And they gave us chains and we were secure. Suddenly with our constitutional guarantees depleted, with our national character eroding away, with our tax laws penalizing those who would dare to prosper, with workers concentrating on how little they can get by with instead of how much they can produce. Suddenly we looked overhead one day to discover that the first to the moon in space was a Russian accomplishment. That free men dragging their feet had been outdistanced by slave workers dragging their chains. And we were sore afraid. Perhaps this was a disguised blessing, too.

Maybe a dramatic accomplishment by this cold war adversary was necessary to get us off our dead centers and back to work again. If we can revive in ourselves, then in our youth, something of that basic American's Creed, the horizon has never ever been so limitless. For Man stands now on the threshold of his highest adventure of all: his first faltering footsteps into space. Twenty years from today, half of the products you will be using in your everyday living aren't even in the dictionary yet. We've got it made. If we just keep on keeping on. We've got it made – and if we don't? We will follow those other great nation-states of history into the graveyard of ignominious oblivion. History promises only this for certain – We Will Get Exactly What We Deserve."