

Thank God for Rich People – a Second Look

☒ Back in December 2010 I published a column in this space entitled, “Thank God for Rich People.” It touched off a brouhaha – without the ha ha, attracting more than 300 comments. When we talked about the column on the O’Reilly Factor it touched off another firestorm.

This seems like a good time to run it again. Because by now it has become depressingly obvious to anyone paying attention that President Obama will run for re-election trying to divide Americans based on envy. He’ll try to pit the 99 percent against the 1 percent. Rich people are the ones, according to the president, not paying “their fair share.” Rich folks are the bad guys.

I don’t think so. Which is why I’m running the column again. Let me know what you think.

I have an idea for a monument in our nation’s capital. I envision a big bronze and granite statue that would honor an entire group of Americans who are true heroes, and unsung heroes at that.

It is time – no, make that long past time – to pay tribute to those this nation of ours owes a great debt; to those who give and give and give and in return get anything but our gratitude.

This is an idea whose time has finally come.

Right there, amongst the sacred national structures that honor great Americans, we need to build a shiny monument to ... (this is where the drum roll would come in) The Rich – otherwise

known in liberal circles as the filthy, no good, greedy, heartless rich.

The statue could be simple and elegant: a smiling rich guy in a business suit holding hundred dollar bills in both hands, extended toward the blue sky.

President Obama compromises with Republicans and gives the wealthiest two percent of Americans a temporary respite from a tax hike and listening to the yelps of the “progressives” you’d think he just tried to shut down WikiLeaks or something.

The Left is bawling about how “we can’t afford” to give people “who don’t need it” a tax break. This argument makes perfect sense, of course – as long as income re-distribution is a central tenet in your theology. Never mind that liberals weren’t all that concerned about what we could afford when they passed a nearly trillion dollar stimulus package that didn’t stimulate very much or when they poured in billions of our tax dollars to bail out General Motors. It’s only now that they’re concerned about budgets because those nasty rich folks are getting a break. But I don’t want to pick a fight with my liberal friends over whether the wealthiest Americans “deserve” a tax break or not. I have come to praise The Rich, not to bury them.

I offer a few numbers to make my case:

Did you know that the top one percent of American wage earners (adjusted gross income) pay about 38 percent of all our federal personal taxes (according to the National Taxpayer Union)? The top one percent, by the way, account for 23.5 percent of all income – a substantial amount, yes, but considerably less than 38 percent.

Or that the top five percent pay just under 60 percent?

Or that the top ten percent pay about 70 percent of all the personal income taxes collected in this great land of ours?

These “fat-cats” are the ones who do the heavy lifting in this country. They’re the ones whose federal tax dollars pick up a big chunk of the tab for all sorts of noble things, such as: food for folks who don’t have enough to eat ... medicine and doctors for people with little money ... financial aid to help other people’s kids go to college ... milk and diapers for poor babies whose 15 year-old mothers and deadbeat fathers are too irresponsible to take care of their own kids ... a safety net for old folks who are retired on fixed incomes ... and on and on.

And if they “only” bank their new found savings instead of spending it all over town? Well, that’s a plus too. It means there would be more money out there for businesses to borrow for expansion, which probably would mean more jobs. Or it could mean more money for new homeowners to borrow, which would also give a boost to the limp economy.

No, I’m not saying the wealthiest Americans are all a bunch of selfless philanthropists. But try to imagine an America without those rich people.

By the way, the bottom 50 percent of tax filers pay a paltry 2.7 percent of our federal income taxes. How many poor people do you think *their* tax dollars are taking care of? If you ask me, they’re the ones not paying *their fair share*. Every time they pass a “rich” person on the street, they ought to say, “Thank you for everything you do for me and for this country.”

For those of you not already making plans to hang me in effigy – or for real – let me simply say this: The richest Americans may not “need” a break on their taxes, but they sure don’t need being vilified, either. They need our gratitude.

So let’s get busy on that shiny monument in our nation’s capital. And let’s get some unemployed people out there building it. It’s the least they can do for those nice rich people who have been keeping them afloat.

