

## **Civil Disobedience in Church History, Part Two, (The Puritans – Modern Age)**

Various Passages

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, September 3, 2023,

Good morning. Why don't we begin in a word of prayer, and then we'll jump on into what we're going to talk about today. So if you'll bow your heads with me?

Heavenly Father, we always enjoy coming together for worship, to sing and pray and call out to You and this morning, we just pray for an extra measure of Your grace on Your goodness on our hearts in our lives as we continue to talk about the important subject of the government. This is where we need prayer, Lord, because we do all come from different places. Many of us come from different governments, different backgrounds, good and bad experiences, that kind of thing. And what we want to do Lord is understand what Your Word says, and even understand what's happened in history so we can have a perspective on it.

And so this morning, we're praying for Your grace in that. You are a God who is sovereign over history. And we did not just show up in this planet at this time in the 21st century in Canada, British Columbia Chilliwack, for any random reason. This came from Your hand and this morning I just pray that You would allow us in Your grace in this short time that we have together to take our minds back to see how we got from one point to another. So we can understand what's gone on in the past with government. And we can understand how we can respond to it moving forward. We pray this in Christ's name for His glory. Amen.

Well, this morning, we are continuing a series that we started last week entitled, "The Christian and Civil Disobedience" where we're looking at what the Bible says about the subject of civil disobedience. And whether it's okay for a Christian to disobey the government or not because it's something that's been talked about quite a bit in our society.

And just to say a few words about this, some of this history is so familiar to you I don't need to say too much, but on March 17, 2020, a state of emergency was declared in the province of British Columbia over something we'd never heard of before called the Coronavirus. You know that; you lived through that. And from what we were told at the time, if I remember, it was a respiratory disease that caused shortness of breath, bodily discomfort, and death. In many cases, the virus was even said to be so dangerous, the authorities believed it would kill large numbers of people, they would become infected and then it would lead to large numbers of deaths. So to prevent that, businesses, stores, and schools, and shops, and restaurants, and bars were asked to close, just about anywhere you could think of, to slow the spread of it for 14 days. Do you remember that number? For 14 days. The challenge was that the 14 days turned into more 14 days, which turned into more. And the restrictions weren't lifted until way, way, way later. I think they lasted over a year. And during this time, this is why we're doing this series, during this time, we saw a show of force from the government that it's my understanding we've never

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seen before in Canada. Fines were issued, arrests were made. The government began to crack down on people who did not comply with restrictions.

And for whatever reason in the media and in the press, churches got a lot of attention over this. Now other people were arrested too, and even other religious communities were affected. But churches were in the news a lot. The RCMP gave several fines to the Free Reformed Church here in Chilliwack along with the Free Grace Baptist Church for holding services during the season. Then afterwards, a pastor in Edmonton named James Coats was arrested. You guys are all familiar with this, along with another one in Calgary named Tim Stevens, another one in Calgary named Arthur Pawlowski.

Which has raised the question, what are we supposed to do if this happens again? Because it could. So how does the church respond if the government tells us to close our doors? The authorities have never made a public apology for their behavior at the time; they've never retracted those actions. So there is a good possibility they'll go back to that at some point. So what is the church supposed to do if that takes place? Well, the point of this series is to answer these kinds of questions for you. We believe, as elders, you do deserve an answer to that. I mentioned last time, we've drafted a document that spells out our response that I want to read at the end of all this, but before I get there, I'm trying to explain where this is coming from so you're aware. That's the purpose of these messages.

Last week, we actually started by looking at the subject of church history. Now, the reason we did that is because when you think about the issue of government least when I did, I sat down at my desk last week, and I opened my Bible to see what it says about government, and it just occurred to me right off the bat, everybody doesn't even mean the same thing when they say the word, "government." And then started thinking, "Well, why is that?" It is because of history. When you look back over the last 2,000 years of church history, you find the reason we have different responses to the government is because of what's happened with Christians in the past. And if you don't understand that, you won't understand the chaos that's happening now. And so that's why we're going back to study this.

Let me just review some of what we talked about last week. Please be patient with me, we did go through this material, but it's important for our studies this week. So I just wanted to review a few points. There are three main views on the relationship between church and state, at least that I could gather anyway.

The first one is what's known as dominionism, which says that the church and state are one. So that the church governs the state, the state governs the church, the two things are intertwined. The term dominionism, it's also known as theonomy, communicates the idea that it's the church's job to dominate the world, not just spiritually, but also politically, religiously, and also legally, diplomatically, constitutionally. And when we looked at that last time, I showed you that the Roman Catholic Church is a good example of this. This is what they did. When the pope took over, he was not just the head of the church, he thought he was head of everything. And you remember, he put himself on a throne, he wore a

crown, he made people even kiss his feet. Surprisingly enough, that was also the position of the Protestant reformers, they were way more balanced than the Pope, they were way more levelheaded, but they did set up their own Christian government in places like Germany and Geneva. So that's the first view on this.

The second view on the government, when you look at history, is the view that's known as strict separationism. If you were going to put these views on the stage, you would put dominionism over here, you would put strict separationism against the other wall, it's the very opposite of that because it says that the church is separate from the state in everything. It just has nothing to do with it at all. It ignores the government completely because it believes there's one king that you follow, and that is King Jesus. So if the government tells you to wear your seatbelt, you don't have to wear your seatbelt. And if the government tells you to pay taxes, you don't have to pay taxes. And if the government says that you need to respect the police, you don't even acknowledge the police. That's this position here. It was the view of the Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation. Many of you came up to me afterwards and said, you have some Anabaptist history. I do as well. The Tennessee Baptists came out of the Anabaptist. Also, this is a view of the Amish. If you come from a province that has Amish people in it, and you wonder why did they isolate themselves from everybody? Well, this is why. This is their position on the government.

And then a third view that we talked about on the subject of government in history, is known as biblical separationism, which falls somewhere in the middle between those two positions. But it's closer to this side, because it says the church is separate from the government, but not in every regard because the two things are not the same. They are distinct. They're not intertwined, but they do have something to do with each other. There's a relationship there between Christians and the political authorities. God doesn't want us to go into the woods and hide. He doesn't want us to run to the hills and get away. He wants us to interact with the government face to face whenever possible. This was the view of the founding fathers of the U.S. which is what we're going to talk about today. Men like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson held this view, and I would argue that the book of Acts does as well.

So if you look at these views, one at a time and you read, some of you told me you read the book of Acts this week, like I asked you to do, this is the position you'll find that the apostles held to in the Bible because when you read what happens in the Bible, you find right off the bat, they did not always get along with the government. They had problems, but they never tried to take it over. You don't get to Acts 9 and you find as they're having friction with the government, the apostles picked up swords, and went to attack Caesar, or the Sadducees, or whoever. They always kept a distance in that sense. As Peter told the government and Acts 5:29, he said, "We must obey God rather than man," which means we respect you. We appreciate the authorities. We're submitting to your leadership where we can, but we are going to be clear about this. We don't answer to you first. We answer to God.

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And as we talked about this last time, we found that's the mindset of everyone in the church for the first 300 years of history, if you weren't able to hear that sermon, you can go online and listen; but that was the view for the first three centuries of the church until a man named Constantine took the throne in the fourth century. Remember him? Because when Constantine took the throne, he professed to be a Christian. And as a Christian emperor, Constantine thought it was his job to rule the church and the state. That's what the emperors did. That's just the job. It's my job, he thought to govern politics and religion, civil and ecclesiastical authority, so he just started overseeing everything. Then when he died, the church in Rome took his place. And that's where you see the pope stepping in. The word Pope means father, father of Christendom, father of the faithful, father of people like you and me. Then when the Reformation happened, the Reformers come out of that. They do away with the idea of Catholicism and the Pope, but in a strange twist of fate, men like Martin Luther and John Calvin go right back to the dominionism. And they begin to set up their own Christian nations in places like Germany and Geneva, where they do wonderful things, a lot of good things happen; and then they did some things that weren't so nice, like persecuting the Anabaptists. Now, that's what we talked about last time, there's your review.

And I would say at this point, we're not done with the history yet because we haven't gotten to Canada. We haven't gotten to the U.S. We haven't gotten to the 21st century. So how did you go from that to this is the question this morning? And the answer, in a sense is that a small country started across the Atlantic Ocean, called the United States of America. Now, this is not a pro-American sermon, let me just go ahead and say that. I am American; I can't help that my family goes back to the 1700s there. My wife's family goes back to the Revolutionary War in that country. But I mention that because when that happened, that would change the way a lot of people in the Western world thought of the issue of church and state. Because for the first time in a thousand years, there's a nation that puts in its constitution that the two things will be separate. That hadn't happened, not to my knowledge. This doesn't mean America was perfect because it's not; it had a lot of issues. We're going to talk about that in a moment. It doesn't mean that they were Christians, the founding fathers. Listen, some were, and some weren't. That's the way history works. History is messy. It's not as simple as just that everyone was saved. But what it means is that their view of government was instrumental in the way that we'll look at it today. In 1776, the United States would become a nation. In 1867, 100 years or so later, Canada would do the same. And when they did, both countries would remain separate from the government over the issue of religion.

You don't live in a dominionist country right now. You live in a country where the two things are distinct. Even though Canada has a strong tie to England, it's never allowed the government to control what it does on the issue of worship. I don't know if you've thought about this before, but there's a reason why you have never burned heretics here in Canada or put them on trial. There's a reason why you don't have to pay a fine or spend time in prison when you break the Sabbath. There's a reason why you're not banished from the colony or if you run out of town when you change your personal beliefs from Calvinism to Arminianism. Or from pedobaptism to credobaptism or back and forth, and a lot of

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that goes back to the things that happened at this stage of history. And this is what we're going to talk about this morning.

So this morning, we're going to look at three more stages in the history of the church's relationship to the government. We talked about three last week, but this week, I'm going to give you three more.

And the first one is the stage of the Puritans and Pilgrims, which refers to the time of the 17th century. This is what happens after the Reformation. The Reformation was a wonderful time in history, but it didn't end our history. If anything else, it sort of kick started a lot of things that were about to happen.

And in order to talk about this, I do need to back up a little bit in time and tell you what happened before so you can get a mental picture of life in this world. If you remember, on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. In 1526, 10 years later, a man this is this picture here, named William Tyndale published the first edition of the New Testament into English. Now, the reason that's important is because what language are you speaking this morning? English. And you live in *British* Columbia. You're in an area rich in British history, rich in English history, so you trace your lineage in many ways back to what happened here. This is where our legacy starts as citizens of Canada and the United States. It began with this man, I would say.

Historians tell us that before he arrived in England, it was one of the darkest places in Europe. We often pride ourselves on our English history. English is the most dominant language in the world right now, that type of thing, but this era, England was a mess. One Bishop surveyed the priests at this time, and he said of the ones that he talked to, nine out of a handful them did not know how many of the 10 commandments there were. And a handful couldn't recite the Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. And even worse, 33 didn't even know who said it. It's called the Lord's prayer; the Lord said it. And he said when you looked in their lives, it was worse. They were lazy, they were drunk, they were immoral men, many had kids out of wedlock. And so the Lord sent William Tyndale into the world to help change that.

He translated large parts of the Bible into the language of the people. The way it worked is he would translate in a certain area, and then when he found the authorities were coming, he would pack up as much as he could and head the other way, and sometimes he would leave large works behind. He would translate Matthew; get through chapters one through 10, the authorities would be coming, he would pick up chapters one through five and head off the door and have to start chapters six through 10 all over again. Another time he was sailing in the ocean, the ship sunk, and he lost large amounts of his work. But he did it so that people could see the Word of God for themselves and be saved and hear it explained in a language they can understand instead of the Latin of the priests and be converted.

And as he did this, a couple of things happen in England that are very important for us to know. One of them was the rise of a movement known as Puritanism. It refer to a group of men and women who took

it upon themselves to help purify the church. That's where the name Puritan comes from. If you remember, at this time, the Church and State were considered to be one, the people saw them as the same thing, and so everyone who was English was part of the church. That was the mindset at this time. Whether you believed or not, didn't matter whether you were converted or not, they didn't really care so much. The most important thing is that you were part of the British Crown, until the Puritans came along and said, "No, that's not enough. You need to believe. You need to be saved. You need to be born again and put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who died on the cross. Your nationality will not get you into heaven." These men came along and started talking like that. One pastor described them this way when he said that they were Calvinistic in doctrine, they were reformed in worship, industrious and work, devoted to family, educated in learning, expository in preaching, and zealous in evangelism." Another one said, "If Christianity was a forest, these men would be like redwoods."

And just to show you what I mean, I mean, let me just give you some of these names here. You guys know who these people are. Anybody heard of John Bunyan? We all have, haven't we? Have you read *Pilgrims Progress* before? If you have not, go home and read it. It's an amazing book. You can also watch the video, but I think the book's better in my personal opinion, but the ideas he taught you in that book, and the images of a pilgrim on the journey to the celestial city were born out of the things that he learned at this time. John Bunyan didn't just make all that stuff up himself. It came from his Puritan forebears. What about these guys? What about John Owen or Matthew Henry? Now despite the wig, Matthew Henry, I'm gonna comment on some of these things; you can't help but not say a few words. Do you have a copy of Matthew Henry's commentary? That's another great book. It has been called the greatest devotional commentary ever written. He wrote a commentary on every verse of every chapter of every book in the Bible. George Whitfield said it was so important to him that he read it every morning on his knees after going through the Bible. Matthew Henry received the skills to write that from his father who was a Puritan too without the help of formal education. He learned to read Latin by the age of six and Greek by the age of nine. And he poured all that learning into those volumes. My Matthew Henry's commentary is that thick, I got all of them in one volume. Don't ever do that. I got to read it with a magnifying glass. But it's a wonderful set of books. What about Richard Baxter? Richard Sibbes, Steven Charnock, Jeremiah Burroughs, and *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, William Perkins, Thomas Watson, John Fox, I could talk about these guys all day long. John Fox wrote *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, somebody was telling me last week, "I tried to read that book one time I got halfway through it, and the tears stopped me." It's another classic in Christian literature. But the importance of these men is that they had a massive impact on what would happen in England. Because remember, before this, the pastors were illiterate, mostly illiterate; they could barely read and write. They left the English people destitute of knowledge, blind to the Gospel, until these men came along, and wrote book after book after book after book in order to bring the Word of God to the masses.

And one thing you have to know about the Puritans is that when they did that, they did not live in an ivory tower. They lived in very turbulent times. They weren't ministering from a place of comfort. Matthew Henry preached in a barn for a lot of his ministry. They were running from the authorities



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because just as the people of England were changing, the politics of England were changing too. As one king got saved, and then another king got saved, and then the next one didn't. Do you see the problem? And one would believe in the gospel, they would put their faith in Christ, and they would start to change the policies and laws and then they would die, and it would flip flop flip flop, flip flop flip flop, back and forth.

What I mean is that in 1547, King Henry the Eighth dies, and when he does, he succeeded by a son named Edward the Sixth, who is Protestant. By all accounts, Edward would believe what the Puritans would later come to embrace. He read his Bible, he prayed, he ignored the Mass, he trusted in Christ alone, these types of things, so that he put Protestants in high places of government. That's what kings did. And he gave them key teaching positions in schools like Cambridge and Oxford, and he made life very pleasant for them. He was a good king for these types of people, but then six years later, he dies, and his sister Mary takes the throne. And she's the opposite of that because she's Catholic. And she's not just Catholic, she's passionately, devotedly Catholic, which would cause her to tear down all the things that Edward did, fire the Protestants from the places of government, throw them out of the seminaries, and she would begin to persecute them. Historians tell us she killed 280 Protestants during this time, so that they started calling her Bloody Mary, because her reign was drenched in blood. And then Mary would die. And she would be replaced by her cousin Elizabeth the First who was more lenient than Mary. She was much more level-headed, kind to the Protestants. She was Protestant. Then King James would come along and do the same thing. This is the man who commissioned the King James Bible.

And then the story is not over yet. This guy, Charles the First would become king and he would marry a Catholic queen. At this point, everything falls out of the bottom because the Puritans thought he was going to take things back to Mary, and he would begin arresting pastors again. And he would go into their homes at night and drag them out of bed and murder them and break into their churches. They started panicking until open war broke out in the streets. The Puritans felt like they had no choice but to take up arms against the king, so that's what they did. And we don't have time to go into all the details of the English Civil War, but let me just say after forming their own army called the Round Heads because of the way they wore their hair, some of you like to do the Puritan beards, but you're not going far enough, you got to do the Puritan haircut because they would take a bowl almost like a bowl and put it around their head and shave everything below. And so they were called the Round Heads. If you want to be really reformed, that's what you have to do. Close crop on the head, we did that in the 80s as well, I was very thankful it's gone away. But after forming this army, they overthrew the king and had him executed. Which was so traumatic that John Owen was asked to preach in honor of the event the next day, and he could barely do it. He called a day of national humiliation instead. But either way, eventually another king would take the power from them and go right back to the topsy turvy flip flop flip flop way of life.

The point is that this is what they experienced in this history, just total chaos in some ways, which led some people to come to the breaking point with all this. Here's why I'm saying this to you. All the

fighting and wars and chaos pushed a few people over the edge. And this is the next thing that happens in the 1600s, and that's the pilgrims. This is a group of men and women who made a pilgrimage to North America in order to escape the pandemonium that was taking place in their homeland because they thought that even though they didn't know what the New World held in store, it had to be better than this.

So on a certain date, a party of about 120 people set sail from Plymouth England on a ship called the Mayflower headed toward Virginia. They heard there was a settlement there, and they were going to live with their countrymen. But the problem is they couldn't make it. They were blown off course to Massachusetts. I've got a map here of some of the journey. They left England and they traveled 2700 miles on open sea at the rate of about two miles per day due to the storms. And to make things worse, the ship they purchased was not a sailing ship. It was a merchant ship designed to haul fish. So there was no beds in there. It was just a big open area in the whole of the ship. One naval captain who studied their route, said the boat would have rolled like a pig and smelled like one due to the all the human waste down there. But they did make it. Almost everyone survived. And right before they leave the ship, this is important for what's going to happen in America, they wrote out a contract of what they were trying to accomplish, called the Mayflower Compact. We had to study this in school in the 1980s. In which they said there were several goals in coming to the New World. Now this is putting yourself into the mindset of these people. I'm not going to read it for the sake of time, but they said they wanted to glorify God, advance the Christian faith, honour their king, they still felt a connection to the king, and combine themselves into a civil body. That's what they did. The Pilgrims were true to their word. They built houses for themselves, they cleared lands to farm, they established a church and a town. But in an interesting twist of fate again, here's what you have to know, the pilgrims who came to the new world to seek religious freedom go back to the same way they did things before. And they began to put the church and state together again. They left England to get away from that pandemonium, but when they came to the new world, they didn't know how to do anything other than go right back to letting the government control religious affairs. And so they started persecuting each other.

Now I have a list of some of the crimes they would persecute you for. So if you're interested in knowing what it was what it looked like, specifically, here's a list of some of them. There were a lot more. If you cursed God in the pilgrim colonies, they would put you in stocks for no less than three hours. Now this is what it looks like to be in stocks. They had other versions of this, they had some versions where your feet would be in the stocks. But they would put your arms and legs in a position where you couldn't move and protect yourself while people in the town could come by and holler at you and assault you. They could throw rocks and rotten vegetables at you; it was intended to be a punishment of humiliation that would embarrass you so that you would never do that again, if you cursed God. They would also do the same thing if you lied. They would make you pay 10 shillings and if you could not afford the shillings, you would be in the stocks for two hours. If you stole, you had to double the value of what you stole or be publicly whipped. If you got drunk, you would be fined a price that was determined by the magistrate. If you gambled, they required 40 shillings. If you wore visors, or strange apparel, the price



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was 50 shillings. If you defaced a landmark, it would be anywhere from 20 shillings to five pounds. And we could just talk about this all day. They had page after page after page of this stuff. The most unusual one I saw was at the bottom, I had to tell you about this one, harbouring a Quaker. They didn't like the Quakers at this time, they thought they were very strange people, and their religious beliefs were very offensive to them. So they will even fine you for protecting one of them.

And this went on and on for some time until their group of people started speaking up against it because in their minds, they didn't come to the new world for this. They came for freedom. And they didn't journey all the way across the ocean to go back to the oppression again. So they started to speak out slowly at first.

And this brings us to the next stage of the history here, and that is the stage of the Revolution. It refers to the time of the 18th century, the stage of the American Revolution. It took place 100 years after what I just described.

Over time, the colonies would drift away from the harsh form of justice for several reasons. One is just they couldn't keep up with it anymore. The population went from a handful of people at the landing of the Mayflower to a million people 100 years later. So they couldn't follow up with all those laws. If you have a small town of a couple hundred people, you can arrest people for lying. If you have a town of 20,000, you can't do it. How do you keep up with all the lies? How do you stop all the swearing? And so with time they begin to break away from it.

And if you want to remember one name during this time, I would say you want to remember the name George Whitfield. Anybody heard George Whitfield before? Yeah, you guys have. Okay, good. I find a lot of people haven't studied him, which is very strange because at this time, he was very popular in American history. He was so well known among the colonies in the 1700's that it was said he was more recognizable than George Washington. More people in America had seen him than the President. He was a son of a bar owner in England who was converted at Oxford University when he heard the gospel and began to preach. And by preach, I mean this guy preached. He went everywhere. He's considered to be probably the greatest itinerant evangelist the world has ever known because he crossed the Atlantic Ocean 13 times in order to bring the gospel from England to the Americans. Now, if you remember what I just described to you on the Mayflower, how ugly that trip was, he did that 13 times. He spent about three years of his life on the open sea. And as he did, he preached some 18,000 sermons, that have been recorded or at least remembered. And when you add the devotionals that he did on top of that, Steve Lawson says the number comes to about 30,000 messages in 30 years. That's three per day, or 1,000 per year for 30 years. All without modern technology; he did not have a microphone or anything like that. Whitfield would show up in a field and preach. And he would come into an area and tell people about Christ with nothing but the Bible. And as he did, he set the world on fire. Every time he showed up, the life in the colonies would stand still. People would close their bars, shut up their stores, leave the plows in the fields to go hear him. It's a picture of him preaching there. Which caused some people to hate him

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because he ruined their business. When he would show up all the drunks would leave the bars and so the bar owners would come after him, and they would pelt him with stones and filth and excrement. They would stick dead cats in the pulpit if they knew he was preaching there. But he just kept going. I don't know if you saw this in the picture there, but he was cross-eyed. His enemies called him Dr. Squintem. And when I first saw a picture of him, I didn't see this picture, in the library in seminary, I laughed out loud. I thought this guy was ridiculous. And look at what he did.

One colonist, a New England farmer said, "To hear George Whitfield preach gave me a heart wound." Have you ever had a heart wound before? Have you ever heard a message that pricked your conscience, and you couldn't sleep at night? That's how this guy preached to everybody. Another one said, "When he spoke by God's blessing, my self-righteous foundations were broken up, so I put my faith in the cross instead." That's the kind of man he was.

By the way, he was not alone in this. At the same time, Jonathan Edwards was ministering in the colonies. And he preached a famous sermon, the most famous sermon on American soil, called "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God." And it had the same impact that Whitfield's preaching did because people started weeping and shrieking and crying in the aisles for God to save them. In spite of the fact that Jonathan Edwards, by most accounts, was a boring preacher to listen to. Not because of the content, just because of his mannerisms. He would stand up in the pulpit, read his notes with a quiet monotone voice, and as he did that, describing the terrors of hell, the people were cut to the quick.

I'm telling you all that because this is the world The American Revolution occurred. And it happened right in the midst of what historians call now the Great Awakening. It was a time when the Lord brought revival to the 13 colonies. If you want to think of revival, a good verse is up here on the screen, Psalm 85:6, the Psalmist prays, "Will You not Yourself revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?" And that's what God did in America at this time. He began to reinvigorate the church by bringing thousands of souls into it. And as He did, in a sense, He turned back the hand of sin with a tide of sin. Because the colonies were going this way, it was becoming a very dark time, and the Lord in His grace and mercy took them this way. If you want to do a comparison in history, it's been said the French Revolution occurred at this time without the revival. There was no revival in France, no great awakening, and it plunged the nation into hell. The revolution in America occurred right in the heart of the revival, and it saved it from destruction in many ways.

And it makes you wonder, well, why? Why does God do one thing in this nation and one thing in that nation? Why does God take America there and France there? The answer is we don't know. He's God. We are not. He is sovereign. These are His choices. But I would say it paints a very moving picture for what happens at this time. You can't understand the language of the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, all the spiritual talk in there if you don't know that this was happening. Even in America today, our presidents can't get elected unless they say they're religious. All of them I think, I can't

remember one that came up and said, “I’m an atheist, agnostic, and I don’t care about God,” and they elected him.

It goes back to this because on April 19, 1775, a group of colonialist militia exchanged gunfire with British soldiers in Concord, Massachusetts over the issue of taxes, and what they consider to be tyrannical abuse. They felt like the nation of England was milking them of money while they were thousands of miles away doing nothing to help them, so they protested so much that it led to violence. Both sides attacked each other, several people were killed in the skirmish, and at this point, the revolution is underway. Benjamin Franklin famously said, “Okay, boys, we got all hang together or assuredly we’re going to hang separately.” It was true. The war would take seven years to finish, close to a decade.

And to give you some historical pointers here on July 4, 1776, the colonists would declare their independence from Great Britain. Then on September 17, 1787, they draft and sign the constitution of the U.S., of which the First Amendment it’s written up here. Many of you have heard the first amendment before. It says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Now, when you read that, if you come from another country or have a different background, as Americans we just we just heard this all the time; we never wondered why they said this, but if you’re from another place, you might wonder why is that in there? That’s not the Second Amendment. That’s not the third, it’s not the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth, it’s the first one. Now why? Well, because everyone was religious at this time. Or at least they said they were. As I just showed you, the Great Awakening is underway. There are thousands getting saved by Whitfield’s preaching, people are hearing this message of the Gospel all over the place, and so they felt like they had to talk about this. They also did this because the Founding Fathers in England had a different perspective on this. They had a political system whereby the church and state were one, and the king ruled over all things civil and ecclesiastical. And they didn’t want that. And so they drew a sharp distinction between the two. And they didn’t want to go back to whipping people again for cursing God, or lying, or breaking the Sabbath or something like that. And so they made a break from that.

There’s an interesting book I would recommend if you want to know more about this called *The Religious Beliefs of America’s Founding Fathers*. It was written by a professor of history from The Master’s University named Greg Fraser. And in the book, it was helpful for my studies of this because he wrestled with the question whether the founding fathers were all Christians or not. It’s an interesting question. And if you grew up in America, like I did, you would hear a bunch of different answers to that question. Because he’s wondering, Well, did they make decisions like this based on biblical convictions that they all had? And the answer is yes and no. Because some were saved, and some were not.

And when you look at a man like Benjamin Franklin, when you study his history, it’s obvious he was not a converted man. He was friends with George Whitfield. The two of them talked a lot. They wrote letters that we still have today. And Franklin told George Whitfield in a sense that I like you, but I don’t

like your God, and I don't like your Jesus; you can keep them to yourself. Franklin was religious, everybody was religious at the time, but he's religious in a way that a lot of people in Chilliwack are. Where they're not born again.

At the same time, you look at a man like Alexander Hamilton, and it's obvious that he probably was a believer. On his deathbed, he was asked, "What are you trusting in for salvation?" And Hamilton said, "I'm trusting in the infinite merits of my Redeemer." I don't know about you, but that that's a good answer to me. He hit the hammer right on the head.

This is why it's important for us to talk about this because there is a big push today, among some, at least in the States anyway, to look back at this period of time and say, "We should go back to this." And they want to put the founding fathers on a pedestal. I've got books on the shelf that do this and say that they are our spiritual heroes. The problem is that some of them weren't spiritual at all. They were lost. There's a few that were outright heretics like Thomas Jefferson, who took a pair of scissors and cut out everything in the gospels that he didn't like because despite what some may tell you, America was not a Christian nation. Now to be clear, the Pilgrims wanted that. And it was the desire of many of the early settlers to make America a Christian nation. That was their intention. But as time goes on, and you build up to the Revolutionary War, that way of thinking had changed. There's even a document that's still on file that came around 10 years after the Constitution where the U.S. Senate unanimously ratified it, A Treaty with Tripoli. It was over trade rights. And I guess Tripoli was concerned of the religious zeal of Americans. And so they put this in the document, they said, "The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion." Now, I would say that's not altogether true because the Great Awakening was going on, there were people getting saved, and it did influence the founding of the country. But the point is, they were not trying to promote that at the time.

This really hit home with me the last time I was visiting family in the States, because we went to a Fourth of July celebration, and I forget how much Americans love fireworks down there, but they are they're rabid about their fireworks. And we went to a lake where they shot off these massive fireworks under an American flag, and they did a baptism at the same time. Now, I've been in Canada long enough now that I look at that and kind of question it. I didn't at the time, but I do now. And I started thinking, "Wait, wait, baptism, fireworks; God, country." If a soldier walked at the time, it would have just made sense. And I said to myself, "Would they be that excited over the baptisms if that flag said Pakistan on it?" Would they be that thrilled about the conversions if America had nothing to do with it, I hope so. You're not baptized into the name of America. You're baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. You've got to remember that.

And it brings us to one more stage of history here. Appreciate your patience this morning in working through all this. But one more stage in the history of the church's relationship with the government, and that's just the modern stage. So this takes you up from where we were at and all this other history to where we're at today. Because at this point in the sermon, I'm sure some of you are asking the question.

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“Okay. This is interesting Pastor Jeremy, but what does it have to do with me? And all this history of the Puritans and Pilgrims and the Revolution is nice, but how does this relate to what I'm going through? I don't live at the time of the revolution. I'm in the 21st century.” So can you relate this to that, and I want to do that for you.

Before I do, let me say from this point onwards in history, the two countries of the United States and Canada, they're going to be very different. And they're also going to be connected because they're on the same continent. There's just no way around that. They're also going to grow up together. Canada is a nation of about 3.8 million square miles of land. It's the second biggest country geographically speaking in the world behind Russia. And the U.S. has about 3.6 or 3.7 million, which means it's right behind that; these are massive amounts of territory. And at the time of the revolution, neither one had hardly made a dent in it. They were all out east. If you came to Chilliwack in the 1700s, there wouldn't be much here. Some native peoples and there wouldn't be any settlers if I understand the history correctly. But when the revolution happened, many people who are loyal to England are going to move north. And they're going to settle into the territories up here. And as they do, they're going to go into a couple of towns, like the city of Quebec, founded in 1603 and Montreal, founded in 1642. I thought these paintings were very pretty. I just wanted to show them to you guys. St. John's, Newfoundland; that's one of the oldest cities in North America; it goes back to the 1500s. Toronto, Ontario, they would go into Halifax, Nova Scotia, which looks very cold in this painting, and so does Winnipeg, Manitoba. And when they would go into these areas, they would start to establish colonies, and they would build churches, and they would create schools and towns and military outposts and ranches and farms and shops and stores and businesses as the early explorers began to head west. More and more West more and more West. More and more West.

A similar thing happens in the U.S. when a man named Daniel Boone, Daniel Boone is an interesting guy; he's from Kentucky. Don't go to Kentucky. It's a strange place. I'm just kidding. I lived five miles from Kentucky when I grew up. He would say if someone moved a mile away from him, they were too close, and he had to move farther away. He found the Cumberland Gap which opened the Americas up to the rest of the continent. Before this the U.S. could not go past the Appalachian Mountains. He finds a gap in the mountains now. They start taking their covered wagons and going west as far as the eye could see. They start going the same direction Canada is.

While they're making the journey, there's other things that happen that we could talk about, like the War of 1812 when the US goes to war with Great Britain again. And as a result, they invade an area that's starting to be called Canada, and they're beaten back. You guys won that war. Congratulations. That's great. Several people asked me, they said, “What are you gonna do with the War of 1812?” I think you won. I'll give it to you. That's okay. But what that war does is it helps to establish a permanent barrier. Kind of a place that says U.S. goes this far, but no further. Also the Civil War would take place in 1861. I had an uncle captured in Gettysburg in the Civil War Two years after it's over, Canada receives its independence from Great Britain. And the reason as I understand it, is because the English thought the

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Americans were nuts, so it might not be too long before they tried to invade again. And they gave the people of Canada the freedom to protect themselves, should that event ever occur.

And right in the midst of all this, this is where we're trying to put the history together, there's a phenomenon you got to understand has taken place in the 1800s in North America, called the Second Great Awakening. Now, if you're wondering, why don't we look Puritan anymore in North America? Just look around. Why don't we do things the way John Bunyan or George Whitfield did or those kinds of guys? It's because of this. This is an important phenomenon. I just told you about the First Great Awakening and the impact it has upon the colonies. A few years later historians tell us there's a second one that's probably even more instrumental in the future direction of North America, especially the U.S. because it's a mixed bag. There's going to be good and bad things that come out of this revival, a lot of doctrines and convictions the church embraces right now. That can be traced back to this.

Some of them can be traced back to one man, if you want to give it to one person. There's always more than one, but there's one man you probably want to remember from this Second Great Awakening. His name is Charles Finney. Anybody heard of Charles Finney before? Okay. Yeah, some of you guys heard of him. He has a very scary picture; I tried to find a better picture, but that's the best I could get. He was a lawyer from New York, who grew up in an unbelieving family. But when the Second Great Awakening goes through there, he's emotionally convicted. So he heads out in the woods in his home to find God. A lot of people did that. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism did the same thing. It's a common thing, go out in nature to find God. And he told himself, "I give my heart to God, or I will never come down from this mountain." And after several hours, he returned to his lawyer's office, where he's so shaken up that he says that "the Holy Spirit seemed to go through me body and soul. I could feel the impression like a wave of electricity going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed to come in waves of liquid love, for I could not express it any other way." That's going to be very characteristic of the Second Great Awakening. A lot of people are going to be emotionally moved by this.

And as he's moved, Feeny begins to preach. Now, he doesn't preach in the old Puritan way, where there's training and theology and tutelage and preparation. Finney just preaches in the new American way of saying whatever pops into his head. I don't know if you guys have ever heard a preacher like this. We were on our honeymoon in the Blue Ridge Mountains in Georgia, and the preacher got up and he said, "I wasn't going to preach today. I was hoping someone else would, but since no one else is, I guess the Holy Spirit is telling me to do it." And he went on to ramble, the most incoherent sense of stuff for the next 20 minutes. My wife kept nudging me, "Go out there and preach." I said, "This guy's crazy." Finney did that, which is something churches would not have tolerated before the Pilgrims; would have nothing to do with that. But now that this revival is underway, they start loosening up.

And as he's preaching, Finney begins to convince everyone he can bring revival to your town. Now, before this, George Whitfield said you pray for revival, and you preach, and you bring the gospel. And Jonathan Edwards did the same and John Wesley did the same. All those guys in the First Great



Awakening did that. Charles Finney said, “I could schedule revival, and you just block off some time on the calendar and I will make it happen. And he developed a method whereby he would meet late at night and have the people sing for hours. And then he would give them a very emotional message that would work them up to a fever pitch, at which point he would invite people to come out of their chairs come forward to the front of the stage at a place he called “the anxious bench.” He didn't call it an altar call at this time, that word would come later, but he wanted them to come forward in front of everybody all eyes on them, where they would call out to God, be anxious for the salvation of their soul, and get it. And he would start to tabulate the numbers of conversions he would see. Does that sound familiar? There's probably Christian youth camps in British Columbia who did that this summer. That started here. And he would start to tell his supporters, “Well, I saw 4,000 people saved this year. And next year, I saw 10,000 saved, and so forth and so on.

And the significance to him is that his methods of evangelism would be picked up by pastors and ministers, and taken to the frontier, where they would have camp meetings that looked a little bit like this. This is a painting from someone at the time. These assemblies would start off as a community gathering where the pioneers would come together to buy and sell goods and swap stories and that type of stuff. But eventually, it turned into a religious event where they would invite someone to preach. And the way it worked is they would take logs and split them, make them into pews like you see here. And then they would build a stage that the pastor could preach from morning, noon and night. And remember, this is happening without the oversight of a local church. The Mormons would spring up from this type of stuff. This is the time the Mormons started. The Jehovah's Witnesses would come from this type of thing. So another group that's popular in the U.S. called the Church of Christ or the disciples of Christ. It's happening without the oversight of anybody; it's just taking place out there on the frontier. So it didn't take too long for things to get out of hand.

I can read you an eyewitness account of someone who lived through this, a man named Reverend James Finley and listen to what he said about what he saw on the frontier in a camp revival. He said,

“The noise was like the roar of the Niagara River. The vast sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by a storm. I counted 7 pastors, all preaching at one time, some on stumps, others in wagons, and one standing on a fallen log. Some of the people were singing, others were praying, some crying for mercy in the most piteous ways, while others were shouting incoherently.

While witnessing these things, a peculiarly strange sensation such as I had never felt before, came over me. And my heart beat, my knees trembled, my lip quivered and I felt as though I would fall to the ground. A strange supernatural power seemed to pervade me and I became so weak and powerless that I found it necessary to sit down. Soon after I left and went into the woods and there I strove to rally my energies and man up my courage for more.

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After some time I returned to the scene of excitement, the waves of which, if possible, had risen higher. The same awfulness of feeling came over me. I stepped up onto a log where I could have a better view of the surging sea of humanity. The scene that presented itself to my mind was indescribable. At one time, I saw at least 500 people knocked down in a moment as if the better of a thousand guns had been opened upon them and then immediately followed shrieks and shouts that rent the heavens. My hair rose up on my head, my whole frame trembled, the blood ran cold in my veins, and I fled to the woods a second time, and this time I wish I had staid at home.”

I can say that I cannot blame him for that. I would rather stay at home too. And I read all this to you. I'm giving you this background. You're wondering, what does this have to do with the government? Here's what it has to do with it. For the next 200 years from this point onwards, I would argue, this is what church and political life would be like in the United States. It would be some mixture of the reasoning and thinking and thoughtfulness of the First Great Awakening mixed with this. Because as the Second Great Awakening begins to permeate the culture, the American people as a whole are gonna go further and further from their Puritan roots. You mention the Puritans among the Americans, you know what a lot of them think of? They think of *The Scarlet Letter*. Nathaniel Hawthorne's book where he just demonizes the Puritans. That's what they think of; they don't know of anything else. They might think of Thanksgiving.

Just to bring this around full circle, this is the effects of the Second Great Awakening. The Puritans were very Calvinistic in their teaching, but after this, you're going to see this in church life, the Americans are going to be more Arminian in theology. The Puritans were also very reformed in their theological leanings, after this, the Americans are going to become almost anti reformed. I grew up in a system where people would openly mock certain doctrines like the doctrine of total depravity. They wouldn't disagree with it; they would make fun of it. Perseverance of the saints, same thing. Unconditional election. That was that was the mentality came from this. Puritans were also very educated; they put a high value on going to school. After this, many of the American clergy politicians would be the opposite of that. Davy Crockett came from Tennessee; he bragged on how little education he had. That's how he got elected. It's gonna carry over until the way government is done.

I've had people here in Canada tell me they say they love watching American politics because it's so crazy. It's like a soap opera watching the thing. I mean, the people yelling at each other calling names slinging mud. And they say, “Why pastor Jeremy?” Well it's because of this. At this time, before this time in history, American politicians sometimes would stand up, they would even do it a little bit after the 1800s, and give a well-reasoned speech for hours, hours. Now, they're just gonna get mad at each other. They see the politician, see their pastors yelling, they start yelling. They see the elders whooping and hollering and carrying on, they start carrying this thing into the halls of Washington, which has made things very messy in the States. I never realized how volatile the U.S. is until I moved to Canada. But you look back and see the riots, and that type of stuff, it traces itself back to this history.

At the same time, I would say The Second Great Awakening largely skipped over the nation of Canada. It made such a big impression in the U.S. it was it was largely passed by up here, which is why the two countries look so different, politically speaking. If you watch Canadian politics, I think it's much more reasonable to listen to. Some of you told me that's changing; maybe it is changing some. But I find it easier to follow; there's more dignity and respect. But at the same time, some of the good things that happened in The Second Great Awakening did not come to Canada either. There were a lot of people saved at the time. And there were a lot of conversions, but it stayed mostly in the south in the Americas.

I often wonder how different this wonderful nation here would be if the Second Great Awakening took place in Quebec. Imagine that. How different would the eastern side of the country be if the Roman Catholic Church was kicked out of that province 170 years ago? You wouldn't even recognize it. And what would happen if a man like George Whitfield went up to the Klondike Gold Rush? I mean, he would turn the thing upside down. What if a sermon like “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” was preached in Vancouver in the 1960s and 70s, when all the hippies were coming into there? If a man stood in the pulpit and told them that they would go to hell, if they did not repent, and trust in Christ for salvation. How many lives would be changed? How many souls would be brought into the kingdom? We don't know.

But I bring that up to say that this is the this is your history as a Christian living in North America, if you put this sermon together with last week's sermon. We can't talk about everything. It's just impossible. But this is a broad stroke of how our relationship with the government began. It began separatist and it ended separatist. It started with the apostles in the book of Acts, seeing the church and state as distinct and not the same, and it's finished that way with a lot of stuff in between. And we just covered 2,000 years of time; we only just made a scratch on it. And I would say if this part of the sermon teaches us anything, it is that history is His story. It all goes back to Him.

If you want to write this verse down, Daniel 2:12. Daniel being a politician, a man who works in the government says, “It is He who changes the times and the epics. He removes kings and establishes them.” Who removes kings? Votes? No. Politicians? No. Money? No. Power? No. Chance? No. Accidents? No. God does. Who put Caesar on the throne in the first century? God did. Who put Constantine there in the fourth century? God did. Who let the pope take over after that, and then the Reformation happened, and the pilgrims, and the Americans and Canadians? The answer is all the same, it traces it back to the Lord. You learn so much about the sovereignty and providence of God when you study history.

It's important to remember because next week, we're going to look at what the Bible says about the purpose of government. Because we are going to open the Bible, and we're going to see what He designed government to do. After spending some weeks laying some groundwork on where our ideas of government come from as English-speaking Christians. Now we're gonna say, “What do the Scriptures

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teach?” Your authority is not the history. Your authority is not the Puritans, Pilgrims, Founding Fathers as wonderful as they are. It's the Bible. And that's what we're going to talk about the next time we're together. So please come back and join us for that.

For this week, I just mentioned George Whitfield to you, but in my studies, I came across a story of the time he was thrown out of several churches in London, because they didn't want him to preach there. He was so controversial, so he went to a place called the Moorefields and began to speak to the poor. At which point someone asked him, “Why are you bothering with them?” And he said these words. He said, “Because the same God that created kings created them.” And he's right. Friends, God created everything. He's sovereign over it all. Even the king, even the nations, even this crazy messed up world that we're living in today. Do you believe that now? You should. You have every reason to and let me pray that you would. Let's pray.