

Well, Wednesday is July 4th and the celebration of this nation's 242 year of Independence. Now, I don't often pull away from a sermon series to preach a topical message, but today, I've felt led to do so because I want to talk to you today about what is True Independence.

Over the past 2 years, we've been studying Matthew's Gospel on Sundays and we've seen Matthew make the case that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will one-day be the King of the Earth during His Millennial Reign and we also know that one day, every knee will bow before Him and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. In other words, Jesus Christ is going to be above any President who has ever lived...any Prime Minister who has ever lived...any Emperor, Potentate or King who has ever lived. He will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Yet, as we have studied Matthew's Gospel, the spiritual leaders of the nation of Israel could never understand this. They were constantly telling Jesus that because their "Father was Abraham, they would get into heaven." In other words, because they were from the nation of Israel, God's chosen people, they get in. Yet Jesus said, "No you don't." You don't get into heaven because you are a citizen of a nation-you get into heaven if you are citizens of My Kingdom and you are born again. The Apostle John will show us this as he recorded Jesus' words...

John 8:31-38

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ³³ They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸ I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

John 8:58-59

⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." ⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

As we begin, I want you to ponder this question: What has been the greatest Empire or nation in the history of world? Would you answer: The Dynasty's of China or the Romans or the Huns? Perhaps the Empire of Napoleon or perhaps...the United States of America? Well, I'm not here to argue that question, other than to say, "Based of the Word of God, none of these nations or Empires were or are the greatest... The Greatest empire that will ever be known to this earth is the one to come where Jesus Christ is seated in power in His Millennial Kingdom and that Kingdom will continue on into eternity as He rules and reigns from a New Jerusalem on a New Earth with New Heavens.

You see, as we look forward to Wednesday and the celebration of our country's freedom, might we be reminded to be like those who are listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11 as they looked to their citizenship in that heavenly country of Christ.

Hebrews 11:13-16

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had

been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Our ultimate citizenship is in Heaven. Never forget that! As wonderful as America is...it's better to be a citizen of heaven than any earthly nation. Think with me about the nations and empires over time.

Under what national power did Jesus die? Rome? How about the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter? Rome. **Rome was totally pagan and hated the things of God**...and yet, the Apostle Paul in Romans 13 and Peter in 1 Peter 2 tells us that we are to submit to the governing authorities, because God is the one who created government. We are told to pray for our government leaders. Paul told Timothy to do this...

1 Timothy 2:1-4

¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Did you catch all of that? We are to pray for our leaders so that all people might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. What is the truth? Well, it's not a what...it's a WHO! Jesus Christ. Listen, I am convinced one of the reasons the United States of America has been such a great nation and has survived as long as we have, is because this country was founded by men and women, who by and large, loved the Lord Jesus Christ and escaped to this country so they could worship Him freely and without persecution, and furthermore, because I believe we have done more to take the Gospel to the world than arguably any other nation on the face of the earth in human history. God has blessed America and shed His grace on Thee, because we have chosen to be a Gospel-disseminating nation.

Psalm 147:11

But the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Psalm 33:12 says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." I love what John Quincy Adams, our nation's sixth President said:

"In the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior. The Declaration of Independence laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity." John Quincy Adams, 6th President of the United States

Patrick Henry, the patriot who said, "Give me liberty or give me death," said:

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists but by Christians, not on religions but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Patrick Henry, Patriot, & Governor of Virginia

William Penn, the founder of the state of Pennsylvania said this:

"Those people who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants." William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania

James Madison, our country's 4th president and considered the "Father of our Constitution" said this:

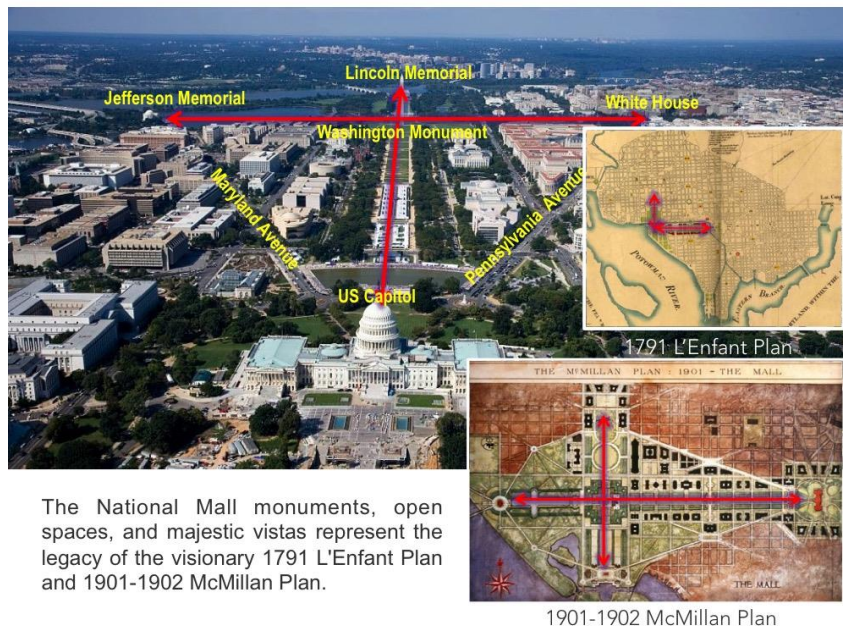
“We have staked the whole of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.” James Madison, “Father of the Constitution,” 4th President of the United States

The 10 Commandments found in the Bible, not the Koran, not the Book of Mormon, not the teachings of Hindu or the writings of Confucius...but the 10 Commandments. Now think with me...where do you find the 10 commandments? Not in churches. You find them in government buildings all across this nation. You find them etched in courthouse walls and legislatures of every state in this country. You find them carved in the chambers where the US Supreme Court justices meet in Washington, DC.



Why do they hang in government buildings? Because even from a secular point of view of history the 10 Commandments formed the basis of our civil law in the US and even that of the entire Western world over the last 600 years. After all, that’s where we get our civil prohibitions and laws against murder, theft, perjury, etc. The 10 Commandments are the foundations not only for our religious heritage, but our civil heritage in America as well. That’s unarguable.

Now speaking of Washington, D.C. do you know in what shape the layout of the National Mall is?



The National Mall monuments, open spaces, and majestic vistas represent the legacy of the visionary 1791 L'Enfant Plan and 1901-1902 McMillan Plan.

The shape of a cross. The designers were believers.

But, church family, I want you to understand something...this Christian heritage, under which our nation was founded is being destroyed. The history books..are being re-written by progressive liberals who want to remove ever vestige of our Christian heritage from of our country.

Psalm 11:3

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

You see, the things I'm telling you are not being taught in schools and universities any more and you sure aren't going to hear these things from the mainstream media.

But you see, the truth is, on July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia...



our Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence declaring our freedom and independence from the tyranny of those who would enslave the minds, the souls and the lives of men, women, boys and girls. Truly, what many Americans don't realize is that with the signing of that document, we not only declared our *independence* from the tyranny of Great Britain, we just as strongly declared our *dependence* upon Almighty God.

You see, the Declaration of Independence begins by proclaiming that we are subject only to the "laws of nature and nature's God." And do you remember how it ends? It ends with these words:

"With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." Declaration of Independence

Do you know what the word *reliance* means? It means "dependence." The signers of the Declaration were staking everything on God watching over them and seeing them through in their struggle for freedom.

Now dear people please hear this next statement well: Our Founding Fathers did not believe in the separation of God from government. In all the arguments and debates during the writing of our constitution, not one of the 90 men that are considered our "Founding Fathers" every mentioned "separation of church and state." James Madison on August 15, 1789 said, "What we want here is what we did not have in Great Britain. We don't want government to make us all one denomination. Not one denomination, not all Catholic, not all Anglicans...we want to choose our own denominations."

You see, Madison and the Founding Fathers wanted to make sure no single denomination would control, and yet, the liberal courts have said that students can't mention the name of Jesus in a prayer, and prayers can't be said before football games, or prayers asking God to protect our ballplayers and cheerleaders as offered by a coach, because of the separation of church and state...and yet, all of that is built on a colossal misunderstanding of history.

Listen carefully, especially our young people, I want you to hear the truth here because you are not going to hear it in the schools and universities...our Founding Fathers, by and large, believed that this nation was founded by God, protected by God, preserved by God, and prospered by God. It all depended on God! The founding documents state as much, and based on that belief, they were

willing to pledge their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to God and to one another. Did you know of the fifty-six men who signed the Declaration of Independence



...nine died of wounds or hardships during the war. Five were captured and imprisoned, and in each case subjected to torture. Several lost wives, children or entire families. One lost his thirteen children. Two wives were brutalized by the British. All were at one time or another victims of manhunts and driven from their homes. Twelve signers had their homes completely burned. Seventeen lost everything they owned. And yet, these men not only pledged their lives, but gave their lives, and their fortunes, and their trust in God. 52 of the 56 signers were members of orthodox, Bible teaching churches.

Yes, I would tell you on this Sunday before July 4th...because of the blessing of God, this nation has arguably become the greatest nation on earth and the envy of the world, and is still intact today for us to enjoy even after 242 years of many trials and struggles, because of God's hand on us.

Oh yes, there were massive struggles even in the beginning for our country. Let me tell you something you might not know about our country and the Lord's hand upon us. On May 25, 1787...



at the beginning of the Convention of the Continental Congress, the first several weeks were frustrating, as the delegates deadlocked over issues such as representation. Over one month later on June 28, at the height of the impasse, Benjamin Franklin made an appeal for prayer in the Convention, telling the other delegates:

“In this situation of this Assembly, groping, as it were, in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, sirs, that we have not

hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understanding?... We have been assured, sirs, in the Sacred Writings, that 'except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel... I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to further business." Benjamin Franklin, 1787 Speech to the Continental Congress)

Now church family, let me ask you something. Who was Benjamin Franklin imploring his fellow delegates in 1787 to pray to? Buddha? Allah? Confucius? That's ridiculous. They prayed to God, and, in fact, the delegates took three days off, and George Washington (president of the Constitutional Convention) recorded that they attended church.

It is reported that the delegates, after this time of church attendance, sermon, and special prayer, came back together and the tone of the debates in the Convention changed drastically. Over the succeeding weeks, many positive compromises were reached and the Constitution was finally approved on September 17, 1787 and sent to the states for ratification. The first US Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton said this,

"For my own part, I sincerely esteem [the Constitution] a system, which without the finger of God, never could have been suggested and agreed upon by such a diversity of interests."
Alexander Hamilton, first US Secretary of the Treasury

But, our country has changed dramatically in the last 242 years...particularly the last 50 years. For instance in Dallas, TX, you can use billboards to advertise adult shops, but First Baptist Dallas can't run a billboard advertising their July sermon series that said:

"America is a Christian Nation?"

But that question was considered by the mayor of Dallas, Mike Rawlings, as offensive and bigoted to other religions. He said that reminding people of "America's Christian roots" is quote: "not the Dallas I want to be." In fact, the Dallas Morning News chimed in and said that the title was, "anger-provoking" rather than "thought provoking." Are you serious?

Listen, we need to understand what is happening in this country. The elites of this nation in the media and academia and politics have been so indoctrinated with false history and with a progressive liberal, Marxist ideology that we now have situations like what happened at West Point this spring. Graduate, Spenser Rapone, whose graduation picture went viral...

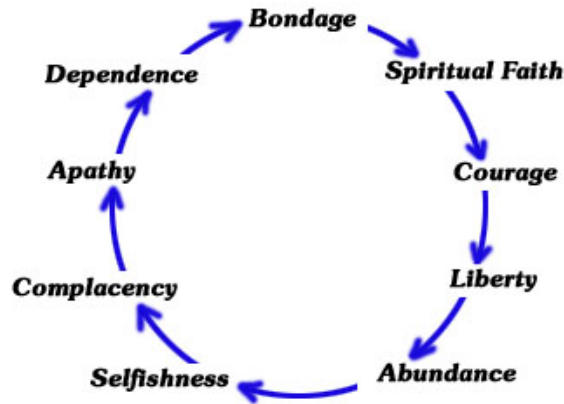


...said, "Communism will win" under his military-issued cap and he was subsequently discharged from the military! Way to go West Point! You do understand that you and I (with our taxpayer dollars) funded this guy's education and just so you know...this guy is a member of "Veterans for Kaepernick"

and the “Democratic Socialists of America.” If you ask me, they ought to make this guy repay every single taxpayer penny we spent on his education.

You see, Church family, we’re seeing a groundswell today in this country that pushes the idea that everything should be given to everyone. And I’ll tell you what this will lead to: **DEPENDENCE**. Let me show you where I believe we are as a nation by way of Historian Alexander Tytler:

The Tytler Cycle in History



“A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship.” Scottish Historian, Alexander Tytler

What is the DESTINY of America? Will we crumble as other world powers like the Babylonians, the Persians, the Romans? Without question, America is the wealthiest empire ever to exist. Yet, world powers and empires through time, can crumble.

You see, there are those who say today that we should have free everything! Free college education. Free food. Free insurance. Free everything! The problem is...there is nothing “Free” in this world. Somebody has to pay for it. And what people don’t understand, is that all the “free stuff” comes by way of higher taxation, to the point that you go back into bondage!!

Listen carefully, our nation needs a spiritual awakening, not free stuff. Did you hear me? That’s our only hope as a Country. We’ve got to go back on that cycle

The Tytler Cycle in History



to Spiritual Faith that leads to Courage that leads to Liberty! We must return to Jesus, because if we don't, we'll be back in bondage in a matter of years, not decades. Never forget...this nation belongs to us...the people. Remember, there is no title on the US Constitution except, "We the People."



Listen, let me tell you what will turn this country around. It won't be the people in the State House, or the Court House, or the White House...no, the future of America depends on the people in the Church House...it rests on you and on me.

2 Chronicles 7:14

14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Oh church family, we've got to humble ourselves and seek God's face. We've got to turn from our sin and return to Biblical righteousness and we've got to pray like the future of the nation depends on it, because it does.

Oh...thanks be to God that we'll be celebrating our freedom as a people on Wed. But, just how free are we? What is true freedom? What is true independence? Think about it... Are Christians free in China? See these people worshipping in China in an underground room, packed in like sardines...



Are they free? No...not economically, or physically, perhaps...but, oh...they are free! Free indeed... Because Jesus said, "Who the Son sets free is free indeed."

See this picture? I show it to you often... That's the Apostle Paul and Silas in a prison in Philippi, under godless, pagan, Roman rule...



Where they free? No...not physically! But oh yeah they were free in their spirits because they served the One who died...yes...



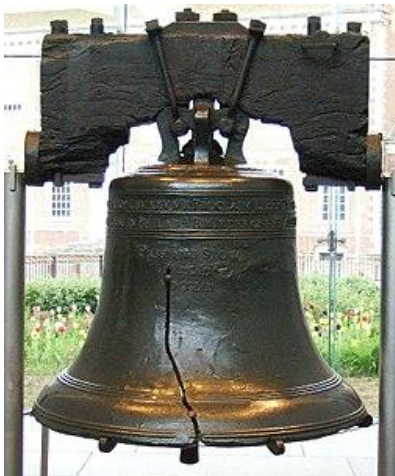
at the hands of the Romans... Oh church family, do you realize how blessed we are as a people to live in this country for such a time as this? Do you realize the position we hold as a people during the course of time in world history? Of all the times we could have been born? In Nazi Germany or in Saudi Arabia. But, we were born here...now. Oh...it's so easy to take for granted the privileges of the freedoms we have in America. We can take for granted that we'll always be free to worship, like we are today. But, understand this...if we sit idly by and allow these freedoms to be eroded, because of the false history and the progressive liberal narrative of our day, we could easily be back in bondage. God forbid!

But listen...even if we do...even if Christians have to worship in an underground church in America, like the Chinese one day...even if the progressive liberals take over the country and put Christians on the watch-list, they can never take away our true independence in Christ! We are free in Christ!

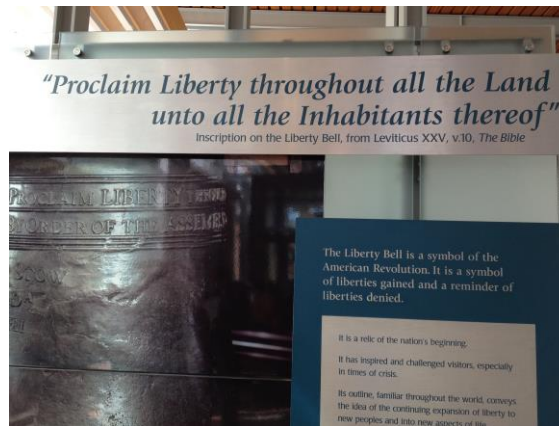
Listen and we're done... After our Founding Fathers...



unanimously approved the Declaration of Independence, there was a call to celebrate –to fire cannons, to fill the sky with fireworks, and to ring the church bells in celebration! And the very first bell they rang was in the belfry of the very hall where they approved the Declaration of Independence. What is that bell called?



the “Liberty Bell.” Where did it get its name? From the Bible. The name comes from the Scripture that is imprinted on the bell...



Leviticus 25:10 says: “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof!” And that is the mission of every believer, to go and tell the world about Jesus and the freedom we have in Him. That is the foundation of our nation. So, may we go from this place proclaiming liberty throughout the land...true liberty, true independence, true freedom in Christ, as the blessed people we are! On this Sunday before July 4th, Let Freedom Ring!
