

The Foundation of Freedom

As we prepare to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the day when our founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence...

...we should take some time to consider the Biblical basis for this semiquincentennial celebration.

You might not know this - but - - it was 250 years today - on July 1st - 1776...

...when the second continental congress initially voted on the Lee Resolution...

...which set the stage for the Declaration of Independence.

The first congressional vote failed - and the reason why was because...

...Pennsylvania and South Carolina voted no - while Delaware was deadlocked.

Not only that - but - the representatives of New York had orders to abstain from voting...

...until receiving further instructions from its leaders.

Then - on July 2nd, 1776, Congress reversed course - as they passed the Lee Resolution with a second vote.

And while New York continued to abstain from the vote - - Delaware - Pennsylvania - and South Carolina affirmed the resolution...

...as Congress prepared to declare their independence from Great Britain

Congress then debated the language of the Declaration of Independence...

...which was drafted by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman

And on July 4th - 1776 - the final version of the declaration - including it's famous Preamble...

...was approved by Congress - and sent to John Dunlap who proceeded to print about 200 copies.

Now - in order to understand the reason for the creation of this document - I should take a moment to remind you that...

...the 13 colonies were initially British territories - governed by the British Crown.

The - in 1760 AD - - King George the third became the King of Great Britain and Ireland.

And it didn't take long for the colonists to discover that King George III was a tyrant.

For example - he imposed Taxes on the colonies - without Consent or representation.

Not only that - but - he also cut off their Trade with all other parts of the world.

He also transported those who rebelled overseas - where they were tried - for fictional offenses

And - he plundered their seas - ravaged their Coasts - burnt their towns to the ground - and destroyed their lives.

And listen - this is just a scratch on the surface of the ways that King George III - engaged in tyranny.

After attempting - and failing to resolve their issues with the British monarchy...

...our second continental congress decided to declare their independence from Great Britain.

And it's for this reason that the Declaration of Independence includes a list of 27 grievances.

I should also point out that - the men who created the declaration of independence...

...decided to begin with a preamble - which was designed to remind King George III...

...about the unalienable rights that we've received from our Creator.

Let's consider how they put it - in this foundational document - where we read...

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Here in the beginning of this preamble - we find our founding fathers defending their decision to declare their independence...

...by appealing to the unalienable rights that our Creator has bestowed upon every individual.

And as we consider this incredible declaration which was created 250 years ago...

...we must not fail to understand how God was working through those men.

It was July 4th - 1837 - when John Quincy Adams - delivered an Independence Day Message - to the people living in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

Having served as our Nation's 6th President - Adams wanted to present the residents of Newburyport...

...with a presidential message which would properly honor the freedoms that were secured by our founding fathers.

And so - it was on the 61st Anniversary of our nation's Independence - when John Quincy Adams declared...

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.

In other words - the 6th President of America - was of the opinion that...

...the foundation of American Freedom - was based in the truth of the Christian faith.

And in order to understand why this was his point of view...

...we need look no further - than the faith of our founding Fathers.

You might not know this - but we find 56 signatures - on the Declaration of Independence.

It's also interesting to note that - out of the 56 signers - 51 of them declared themselves affiliated with a Protestant denomination.

And as we consider their point of view - it's no wonder why John Quincy Adams came to the conclusion that...

...the foundation of American Freedom - is based on the eternal truths of the Christian faith.

With this as our focus - I want to take some time tonight - to consider the faith of our founding Fathers...

...and especially the men - who were happy to sign the Declaration of Independence.

I'd like to begin - by considering the words of John Adams - - - who was not only a signer of the Declaration...

...but - he was also the second president of the United States - - as well as a signer of our Bill of rights - - - here's what he said...

The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.

According to John Adams - - he not only believed that the general principles of Christianity are eternally true...

...but - all of the founding fathers of our country were in agreement.

And these were the general principles on which the fathers achieved America's independence.

And I thank God for this fact - because - American coffee is way better than Earl Grey Tea.

We should also consider the words of Samuel Huntington - who was not only a only a signer of the Declaration...

...but - he also became the governor of Connecticut - and the president of congress - - Huntington once declared this...

It becomes a people publicly to acknowledge the over-ruling hand of Divine Providence and **their dependence** upon the Supreme Being as their Creator and Merciful Preserver . . . and with becoming humility and sincere repentance to supplicate the pardon that we may obtain forgiveness through the merits and mediation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Based on this - we can see that Samuel Huntington truly believed that...

...America's Independence from tyranny - - stems from our dependence upon the Mercy of God.

At the same time - it's also important for us to realize that...

...our Independence from God - - will result in a return to tyranny.

It's for this reason that - Huntington encouraged every American...

...to publicly to acknowledge the over-ruling hand of the Lord's Divine Providence.

And so we should.

And not only were the founding Father's encouraging a public profession of faith - - but - they also encouraged daily Bible study in our public schools.

This was precisely the point that Benjamin Rush was making when he declared...

The Bible should be read in our schools in preference to all other books because it contains the greatest portion of that kind of knowledge which is calculated to produce private and public happiness.

In other words - Benjamin Rush believed that the best book to be taught in our Public Schools - is the Bible.

And he perished the thought - that there were those who wanted it removed.

It's for this reason that he went on to declare...

The great enemy of the salvation of man, in my opinion, never invented a more effective means of limiting Christianity from the world than by persuading mankind that it was improper to read the Bible at schools.

Now as we consider what Benjamin Rush was saying - it's important to note that...

...Rush was not only a signer of the Declaration - - but - he is also known as the Father of Public Schools under the Constitution.

And so - the Father of our Public School System - believed that...

...our Public Schools should include daily Bible study.

Rush felt so strongly about this - that he even went on to insist that...

The only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government is the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible.

In other words - the only way for our nation to maintain the freedoms that we enjoy...

...is to raise our children to understand and embrace the truths of God's word.

What this also means is that - the further our nation gets - from the general principles of the Christian faith...

...is the closer we are - to the oppression of tyranny.

Think about it - - - if Jesus is the source of our Freedom...

...then - our nation's rejection of Jesus - can only result in the oppression of the enemy.

That being the case - the Christian who wants to maintain the freedoms of our great nation - should lead people to the Lord.

Let's consider how John Witherspoon put it - when he declared...

He is the best friend to American liberty who is the most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy of God, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country.

In other words - John Witherspoon - who was not only a signer of the Declaration - he also became the President of Princeton...

...he believed that the only way for us to maintain our freedom here in American...

...is to engage in the undefiled religion of the Christian faith.

Let's consider how Witherspoon explained it - when he declared...

If you are not reconciled to God through Jesus Christ – if you are not clothed with the spotless robe of His righteousness – you must forever perish.

Based on this - we can see that - John Witherspoon wasn't promoting all religions as a basis for American Liberty...

...no - instead - he was encouraging Americans to embrace the general principles of the Christian faith.

And so - according to his strong conviction - whoever makes themselves the enemy of the Lord Jesus...

...is simultaneously making themselves an enemy of America...

...and the reason why is because - they're opposing the One Who has made us free.

Another signer of the Declaration - named - Charles Carroll - confirmed this belief - that Jesus is the source of our Freedom - by declaring...

Grateful to Almighty God for the blessings which, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, He had conferred on my beloved country in her emancipation and on myself in permitting me, under circumstances of mercy, to live to the age of 89 years, and to survive the fiftieth year of independence, adopted by Congress on the 4th of July 1776, which I originally subscribed on the 2nd day of August of the same year and of which I am now the last surviving signer.

In light of this - we can see that - Charles Carroll went to his grave...

...believing that - the Lord Jesus was the One - Who liberated America - from the tyranny of Great Britain.

And not only that - but - Carroll also believed that - the Lord Jesus was the Savior...

...Who alone can free us from the punishment that we deserve.

Here's how Carroll put it...

On the mercy of my Redeemer I rely for salvation and on His merits, not on the works I have done in obedience to His precepts.

To sum it up - the majority of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence truly believed that...

...the foundation of our national - and eternal freedoms - are founded upon the merciful work of our Savior - Jesus.

And it's for this reason that - one of the signers - named Josiah Bartlett once called on the people of New Hampshire...

...to confess before God their aggravated transgressions and to implore His pardon and forgiveness through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ . . . that the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be made known to all nations, pure and undefiled religion universally prevail, and the earth be fill with the glory of the Lord.

In other words - Josiah Bartlett was hoping that America would become a country of Christian evangelists...

...who could spread the good news of Jesus Christ - to the rest of the World.

Another signer of the Declaration - named Samuel Adams - echoed this desire - when he declared...

I conceive we cannot better express ourselves than by humbly supplicating the Supreme Ruler of the world... that the confusions that are and have been among the nations may be overruled by the promoting and speedily bringing in the holy and happy period when the kingdoms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be everywhere established, and the people willingly bow to the scepter of Him who is the Prince of Peace.

That's right - Samuel Adams - - not to be confused with the beer that hijacked his name - - was an American founding father...

...who encouraged every American to pray for every other nation - so that they might hear the gospel message...

...and then submit to the infinite authority of Jesus Christ.

This was precisely the point that President George Washington was making when he spoke to the natives of the Delaware Nation - when he declared...

You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are.

In light of this - we can see how - our Nation's first President - - took the opportunity...

...to encourage the native Americans there in the area of Delaware - to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this way - we can see how - the European colonization of America...

...provided the Native Americans with the opportunity to hear the gospel message.

Now - I realize that - there are those who would have us to believe that...

...the European colonization of America - was entirely wrong.

And while it's true that - the European expansion resulted in many horrific atrocities for the natives who were here...

...it's also true that the Lord was using the European expansion - to bring the gospel to America.

Please understand that - the Native Americans were in bondage to their false gods.

And while the typical picture that's presented to us - of the indigenous people who were already here...

...would lead us to believe that - the natives were honorable - charitable - peaceful people - who were one with the land...

...the facts actually present us with an extremely different story.

For example - the Cahokians - who dwelt in the area of Illinois - openly engaged in human sacrifice.

According to one study - these sacrifices were part of some kind of theatrical, community-wide ceremony.

Archaeologists have unearthed as many as 53 young women beneath Cahokia's mounds.

And in some cases - victims were evidently clubbed to death on the edge of a burial pit - before falling into it.

There's also evidence to show that - -- the ruling caste of the Cahokians...

...had engaged in a tradition of ritualized killing and ceremonious burials - for 150 years.

And not only is there evidence of human sacrifice here in the ancient Americas - but - there's also evidence of cannibalism.

For example - archaeologists have unearthed a gruesome discovery - at an ancient Anasazi settlement near MesaVerde in Colorado.

They found the butchered human bones and stone cutting tools stained with human blood.

Not only that - but - they also found a ceramic cooking pot - with the residue of human tissue.

The most telling evidence was found in the human feces they found.

Biochemical tests revealed clear traces of digested human muscle proteins - in the fossilized feces.

There was also a tribe in southeast Texas - known as the Karankawa tribe...

...who also practiced ritual cannibalism on their conquered enemies

From this - we can see that the natives who were here - were fighting
- and conquering one another.

And it's sad to say that - they were killing each other - long before the
arrival of the Europeans.

What's even worse is that they were all living in spiritual bondage
as they set out to appease the false gods of their ancestors.

And while it's true that they were all in bondage to their
idols...

...it's also true that - the true and living God - decided to
use the European expansion...

...as a means for bringing the light and liberty of
the gospel message...

...to the indigenous people here in America.

I should also point out that - the Lord was also using the European
expansion - in order to judge the native Americans...

...who were engaging in idolatries - ritual sacrifices and cannibalism.

Thankfully - - there were many who heard the gospel message of
Jesus Christ...

...and as a result - they repented - and they received the
grace of God - by faith in Jesus.

In this way - many native Americans were set free
from the bondage of idolatry...

...as they came to faith in the Lord Jesus.

Sadly - there are many who would have us to believe that - the founding
fathers of our country...

...were all motivated by a desire to establish a White Heteronormative Patriarchy...

...which they designed - in order to oppress women and minorities.

Now - I'm sure we all realize that - the founding fathers of America - were flawed men who made many mistakes...

...and yet - we must also realize that - - they did in fact create a more perfect union...

...which has produced a freedom that was founded upon the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Remember - it was John Quincy Adams - our nation's 6th President - who summarized this truth by declaring...

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.

In light of this - it's important to understand that - the freedoms we enjoy here in America...

...have been founded upon the first precepts of Christianity.

Therefore - those who are attempting to separate our form of government - from the first precepts of Christianity...

...are actually destroying the foundation of American freedom.

In order to prove my point - - let's consider something Jesus said in John chapter 8 - beginning at verse 31 - Jesus declared...

Jhn 8:31 "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

Jhn 8:32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jhn 8:33 They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free’?”

Jhn 8:34 Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

Jhn 8:35 “And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

Jhn 8:36 “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Christian - listen - true freedom is first found in the doctrines of God’s word.

Therefore - every government that uses the word of God as a basis for legislating morality...

...will enjoy the freedoms that are enjoyed - as we live in the liberty of the Lord.

Conversely - the government that passes laws - which are in conflict with the word of God...

...will eventually find themselves on the receiving end of God’s judgment.

It’s for this reason that John Witherspoon declared...

He is the best friend to American liberty who is the most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy of God, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country.

Or in other words - those who oppose the God of the Bible - are also opposed to American liberty.

And while I realize that - there are many liberals - who want to increase our freedoms - all in the name of equality...

...the fact of the matter is that - they're actually attempting to create a culture which celebrates sinful depravity...

...which will only lead us down a path of tyranny - which will culminate in the judgment of God.

That being the case - we would do well to heed the words of our founding father - - John Jay - who once declared...

Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation, to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.

Please trust me when I tell you that - the unbeliever who is clueless about the first precepts of the Christian faith...

...cannot fully grasp the foundation of America's freedom.

Therefore - we would do well to elect leaders - who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...

...because - they will be leaders who realize that - - our freedom is founded upon the grace of God.

I think that the Psalmist summed it up with simplicity - - in the 33 Psalm - where he declared...

Psa 33:8 Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

Psa 33:9 For He spoke, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast.

Psa 33:10 The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.

Psa 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.

Psa 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

As we consider what the Psalmist was saying - I believe that - America has proven that...

...every nation - which will bow a knee before the Lord - will be established upon the foundation of freedom.

Trust me when I tell you that - the foundation of our Freedom isn't based on our military might...

...and the foundation of our freedom doesn't stem from the strength of our economy.

No - instead - our American freedom was founded upon the truth of God's word.

That being the case - we'll do well to align our lives to God's word...

...so that we can build our own lives - upon the foundation of true Freedom.