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Grace Bible Church, NY
July 4, 2021

LIBERTY, INDEPENDENCE & RESPONSIBILITY
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

245 years ago today, the General Congress formed by Representatives from the 13 Colonies voted to approve the Declaration of Independence which dissolved their allegiance to the British Crown and severed the political ties to the State of Great Britain. The celebrations held today commemorate not only the actions taken that day, but also the results of those actions including the Revolutionary War and its victory that established this new Republic as a nation and the eventual writing and passing of *The Constitution of the United States* upon which our system of Government is established. The Fourth of July is about celebrating the birth of this nation and the principles upon which it was founded which has given us liberty.

"Liberty," and "Freedom," are foundational words that represent the reason the nation was founded. They are in the Declaration of Independence, *"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."* *"We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States. . ."* Those words are also in the preamble of the Constitution - *"We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."*

The heralding of liberty and freedom are also in our national hymns: "America" - *"My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty . . . Let freedom ring."* "America, the Beautiful" - *"O beautiful for pilgrim feet, Whose stern, impassioned stress. A thoroughfare for freedom beat Across the wilderness."* "The Star-Spangled Banner" - *" . . . O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."*

Liberty arises from God and each of these songs has at least one stanza that directly points to and gives praise to God. This why they are national hymns and can be included in a Christian hymnal of worship. The fourth stanza of *America* is *"Our Father's God, to Thee, Author of liberty, To Thee we sing; Long may our land be bright With freedom's holy light; Protect us by Thy might, Great God, our King."* *America, the Beautiful* includes something in each stanza. *God shed His grace on Thee* occurs twice as well as the pleas, *"God mend thine every flaw"* and *"May God thy gold refine."* The second stanza of the *Star-Spangled Banner* includes, *"Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserved us a nation! Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just; And this be our motto; 'In God is our trust!'"* To this we can add *God Bless America* that became very popular at civic functions after 9/11.

I would dare say that the vast majority of people in the United States have not sung the additional verses of these songs in a long time if ever, and many in the younger generations are only familiar with the first stanza of the Star-spangled banner from sporting events. I have been told by those working in local public school districts that these are not sung in them. That does not surprise me since the historical ignorance of the millennial generation and those younger demonstrate that they have not been taught even basics of American history. Tragically, that also includes many private schools and even homeschoolers who neglect teaching history. Why would a school sing songs that have historical references of which kids are ignorant the educational elites do not want them to know and understand?

What do I mean by that? History used to be a normal and required subject in all grades and degree programs. Now we find that in many schools history is optional if offered at all. In classes that are

taught, revisionist histories such as Howard Zinn's polemic, *A People's History of the United States*, are used to replace historical fact with fabricated narratives. The *1619 Project* is the latest in this genera of fiction masquerading as history that is used to create a generation easily manipulated by the ruling class. That is the reason that groups such as Black Lives Matter and Antifa were able to form and ideas such as social justice, critical race theory and intersectionality gained traction if not dominance in some areas of society - such as education and government.

The desecration and destruction of monuments around the nation escalated radically last year, but removal of monuments has actually been going on for many decades. Why attack them? Because it gets rid of the reminders of our heritage which allows current propaganda to flourish without having to compete with the wisdom from the past. The latest attack is the declaration by a government task force of the National Archives that the murals in its rotunda are examples of "structural racism" because it depicts the men who were involved in the creation of our founding documents. Specifically, on one panel Thomas Jefferson is handing *The Declaration of Independence* to John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, and on the other panel James Madison is handing the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights to George Washington, president of the Constitutional Convention. Their reasoning? They were all men of European descent therefore it must be racist. How long will it be before the murals are removed? It is this combination of lack of knowledge and rejection of knowledge that enables such lies and ideas to exist and proliferate resulting in their evil actions.

The prophet Hosea (4:6) rebuked the people of Israel for their ignorance and rejection of knowledge for it resulted in increased sin and God's judgment against them. We should expect no less since sin is a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14:34). In rejecting its own heritage, America has become a nation with leaders in government, business, society and now the military that are characterized by the depraved minds described in Romans 1:28-32. The entertainment industry has pushed immorality for a long time and major businesses have joined them. With the change in the national administration, our government is once again putting pressure and seeking to influence other nations with its evil agenda. With changes already being made in our military to make it politically correct, how long before it is used against other nations or perhaps individual states?

A Brief History

America has an incredible history that demonstrates God's hand at work in forming and refining a nation that would become a powerhouse of good for the world because its moral foundation arose from a Biblical world view. From its founding, missionaries from America have gone out to proclaim the gospel. There was a dramatic increase in world missions efforts following WWII as Americans went to places they had been during the war to proclaim the gospel to people that had not yet heard it. Our military has fought multiple wars to free other nations invaded by oppressors and then established democracies in them and then left them independent instead of subjugating them into an empire.

Here are some basic facts of our national heritage that were once well known and embraced by a people that understood not only what liberty meant, but also the responsibilities that are part of that liberty.

Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492 with mixed reasons for his voyage of discovery including economic gain, fame, and expansion of Roman Catholicism. If a safe passage to the Indies could be found, there would fame for its discoverer, a huge opportunity for economic expansion bringing great wealth, and it would open a door for the extension of the church. Columbus was many things, including very religious.

Columbus' story is an interesting one for God's hand can be seen aiding or hindering him depending on what Columbus was striving to do. Unusual weather phenomena, precise timing of meetings and encounters, successes and failures all directly attributable to the providence of God.

God's providence also kept Spain's interests in Central and South America with little influence on what became the United States. Remember that Columbus' voyages were at the same time as the Spanish Inquisitions, so we were spared the legacy of their fanatical Roman Catholicism that has so hindered the countries to the south of us. The Conquistadors ended the bloody reign of the Aztecs and Mayans which practiced human sacrifice, but it left them in bondage to Spain and the Pope.

The first attempts to colonize America in the hope of economic gain were disasters. Sir Walter Raleigh's 1587 settlers on Roanoke Island, N. Carolina disappeared. Jamestown, Virginia, was founded in 1607 under charter by the London Company, but it did not become self-sufficient until 1624. Its death rate had averaged 66% over those years, with some years reaching 80 & 90%. Additional settlers continued to go to Virginia seeking economic gain, but politically it was an extension of England as a Royal Colony.

The Pilgrims arrived in the New World in November 1620. Though only 35 of the 102 people on the Mayflower were Pilgrims, they were the instigators of the expedition and the ones that gave direction to what would eventually happen. The Pilgrims were separatists who had given up on the Anglican Church as too far gone to salvage, so they had separated from the Church of England to form their own church in which they could worship God in all good conscience. They had been greatly persecuted in England and so fled to Holland in 1608, but after a decade there they felt they were losing their distinction as Englishmen and would never be able to fulfill the vision they had. They believed their answer was the New World.

By God's providence a storm put them off course and they arrived off the coast of Cape Cod rather than Virginia. After some exploring they decided to settle there instead of Virginia. Before going ashore they drew up the Mayflower Compact which had a direct influence on the system of government eventually established in this country. It includes these phrases: *"We whose names are underwritten . . . Having undertaken, for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and honor of our King and country . . . do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one another covenant and combine ourselves under into a civil body politic . . ."* This was the first colony that both in word and deed was truly interested in the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian Faith, and second, these ordinary men, for there was no nobility among them, formed their own government. This compact became the prototype of many similar covenants.

It is also by God's providence that Plymouth, the spot chosen to establish their settlement, was the only place along the New England coast where they could have settled and not been massacred by the Indians for two reasons. First, Massasoit, chief of the nearby Wampanoag tribe, was friendly to the settlers. Second, the Patuxet tribe that had lived there only four years earlier killed most white men that landed on their shores, but in 1614 a mysterious plague had killed all of them. The only Patuxet still alive was a man named Squanto who had been captured and taken to Europe years earlier. Eventually he attached himself to an Englishman and made his way back to New England with Captain Dermer only six months before the Pilgrims arrived. He became their tutor in how to survive here.

In 1630 an exodus of Puritans from England began as even these reformers gave up hope in seeing a purified Anglican church. They saw a chance for a fresh start in New England without the interference of the hierarchy of the Anglican Church. By 1640 10,000 had arrived and they changed the Massachusetts Bay Company from a commercial venture into a religious one. They learned much from the Pilgrims just a short distance down the coast, and a democracy, the forerunner of the New England Town Meeting, began. From the Pilgrims they learned to make the church separate from the state. That idea became the first part of the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights that established the freedom of religion without government interference in either establishing a religion or prohibiting its free exercise. It is freedom of religion, not freedom from religion contrary to some of the opinions rendered by the U.S. Supreme Court over the years due to their ignoring the historical context of the Bill of Rights.

Ideas of democracy were established in the Plymouth colony when under Governor John Winthrop adult male members of the church were granted voting rights as freemen. Rev. Thomas Hooker, who founded Hartford, Conn. expanded voting rights to non-church members as well. Voting rights of citizens became part of the American system of government.

History records many events that were clearly God's chastening when the people of the nation drifted from its Christian underpinnings. These include drought, flood, pestilence and even the early Indian uprising known as King Phillips War. Through each of these God not only sought to bring the people back to himself, but taught them in the responsibilities that accompany liberty.

The country consisted of thirteen separate colonies and God used the Great Awakening under Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield and others in the mid-1700's to move the colonies to a greater dependence on Himself and a unity with each other. The Revolutionary War could never have been successful without such dependence on God and unity.

It is significant that the American Revolution was not fought for monetary gain. Those who fought knew very well that even if they won they would suffer much hardship in the process and many would die in battle, and if they lost, the King would have executed them for treason. *The Declaration of Independence* states the reasons for their separation from the British Crown with 27 specific facts in support. Contrary to the ignorance of popular opinion, only two of them are directly related to economics - trade restrictions, and imposing taxes on them without their consent - and these are far down the list as the 16th & 17th facts stated. Most of the reasons cited are related to violations of their liberty which "*the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them,*" and the King's failure to fulfill his duty in protecting them and promoting their welfare. The King had become a tyrant who obstructed government, justice and any means to work to a settlement of the disputes, and he had carried out acts of war against them. The Declaration of Independence is not an act of rebellion. It is much more of a recognition of the reality that King George was treating them as foreign states instead of colonies of Englishmen. That is the heritage that has been passed down to us. It is a heritage of striving to work things out even as Scripture directs us to do, but it is also one of being willing to recognize reality and stand up for liberty whatever the cost might be. Liberty, independence and responsibility all go hand in hand.

Freedom, Liberty & Independence

On the Fourth of July the very words of liberty and freedom should make you think of Patriots in three cornered hats battling Redcoats on a New England Town Green; Of Washington crossing the Delaware River in a snow storm to capture Trenton from the Hessian mercenaries; Of the Continental Army in the snow at Valley Forge; Of the defeat of Cornwallis at Yorktown. The definition of liberty that applies here is "*freedom from arbitrary or despotic control and the positive enjoyment of various social, political or economic rights and privileges.*" The sacrifices made during the Revolutionary War were done in order to gain independence from the despotic rule of King George III. Once that was achieved, then there was liberty to set up a new government that would protect inalienable rights such as life, conscience, the pursuit of happiness and those detailed in the Bill of Rights including freedom of religion, of speech, of the press, of assembly, of petition, and to bear Arms, as well as security of person & private property from unreasonable searches and seizures, and the right to a fair judicial system including a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury. Independence from Great Britain also meant this new nation was responsible to set up a government that would enable its people to protect themselves from threats whether foreign or domestic, establish a system of justice, commerce and dealing with other nations. There would also have to be a political system developed for the nation and its government to perpetuate itself while adapting to changes in the will of the people. While the political system that developed was very different from that of England, the systems of justice and commerce were very similar tracing back to Biblical principles which were the foundation of English Common Law. Liberty, independence and responsibility must exist together or liberty and independence are soon lost.

The nation has enjoyed the fruits of liberty since the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, but liberty can only exist where the people are willing to defend it at their own sacrifice. Multitudes of Americans have done that throughout our history, but such sacrifice is an ongoing need which requires a set of absolute beliefs, for people will not sacrifice themselves for questionable beliefs and arbitrary standards. The rise of post-modern thought over the last score of years has been changing the nation and the willingness to sacrifice for liberty because there are no absolutes in post-modernism for it is a rejection of the God of the Bible and His commands. The reaction to the threat of COVID-19, the multitude of riots and now Big Tech censorship have demonstrated we are now a nation that values supposed safety over sacrifice. The common theme in the reactions to these things is to not put yourself at risk to stand against evil whether it is the rise of despotic rule, anarchy, or being canceled on popular social media. The Fourth of July should be a celebration of freedom, but not of license; of Liberty, but not of irresponsibility. Tragically, it is license and irresponsibility as a different definition of liberty has taken hold: "*the power to do as one pleases*" or "*freedom from physical restraint.*"

A Change in Direction

As the years unfolded after gaining independence from Great Britain, the United States went through many trials and tribulations from many causes including natural disasters and pestilence as well as domestic and foreign threats all of which put the nation to the test as all such things are designed by God to do. Will we as individuals and as a people seek God or our own way? In times past, heads of government or legislative bodies, whether state or national, would call for days of humiliation, fasting and prayer in seeking God's mercy in regards to some disaster or threat. President Bush was the last one that I can recall doing that after 9/11. If there were any calls by national leaders to set aside days for petitioning God as a response to the threat of COVID-19, it did not get much press because I did not hear about it. Churches and individuals have done that, but nationally and in the States it was more important to squash freedom and exercise totalitarian rule to shut everything down. The new social wish at departure became "be safe," but exercise of liberty is not safe because life is not safe, and it is my intention to go out and wisely take the risks necessary to live a full life. I hope that is true of you as well.

It is my own opinion that though there were many ups and downs, God was steadily refining this nation through its trials and tribulations throughout its history to make us a better people. The civil rights movement of the 1960's put racism into retreat in many areas allowing progress to be made toward fulfilling Martin Luther King's "*I have a Dream*" speech in which it would be content of character instead of color of skin that would matter. Hope continued to be on the horizon of a nation that would keep on examining itself to improve and live up to its ideals.

However, it was also in the 1960's that the effects of earlier theological heresy and aberration in the mainline churches began to have an affect on society and Christianity began to retreat, and along with that retreat, all sorts of immorality and evils began to rise. Political progressives eventually took control of what had been the civil rights movement and institutionalized new forms of racism so that in the present MLK's dream would be a nightmare to them, and to the "woke," melanin count and socialist ideology are essential considerations. The sexual revolution among the young in the late 1960's was the first sign that God was yielding the nation to its own pursuit of sin. That has only become worse since then to bring us to where we are today in "upside down world" in which sin is glorified and righteousness is denounced by people of depraved minds.

Political correctness has redefined liberty and independence and divorced them from responsibility. Freedom is now the right to pursue nearly any sinful thing desired. Added to this evil has been the rise of socialism and demands for the government to provide for the needs and desires of people free of cost - as if government can magically produce wealth for distribution. There is no free lunch for the price is paid by someone. In socialism, the government legally steals from those who work and save to give to the

lazy and unproductive. The recent government spending sprees and producing money without a basis in actual wealth / value are being paid for by inflation, higher taxes, and increasing debt load.

Replacing liberty and responsibility with licentiousness and irresponsibility results in increasing sin and all of its consequences. There are many things that are sinful that are listed in the Bible, but let's just consider those commonly referred to as the seven deadly sins.

The **lust** of sexual depravity and perversions of nearly every type are celebrated. High School kids will now lie and say they have been sexually active because they do not want to be considered abnormal. Gender confusion is rising as impressionable kids try to fit in with what they are being taught and peer pressure. It starts as a sin of the heart (Matthew 5:28) that wages war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). It is evidence of a love of the word that is passing away (1 John 2:16).

Gluttony was made worse last year with the government and fear induced lockdowns resulting in an average weight gain of 32 pounds. People sought food instead of God for comfort. While people are near starvation in many third world countries, in this country weight loss programs and diets are big business. It is an indicator of lack of self control and leads to poverty (Philippians 3:19; Proverbs 23:19-21).

Greed is an expression of the sin of coveting (Exodus 20:17). The flagrant greed of today makes the materialism complained about in the 1980's look amateur. Have you noticed how many storage facilities are built to hold all of people's stuff? It is a snare that leads man to foolish and harmful desires and destruction (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

The government is promoting **sloth** by paying people more to be on unemployment than they could earn working a job, and lacking personal integrity, they are happy to be on the dole. It leads to poverty (Proverbs 24:33-34) and should not be supported (2 Thess. 3:10).

As long as your issue is politically correct, government and media will support you in expressing your **wrath** to vandalize, steal, burn down building and assault people in "mostly peaceful protests." It exalts folly (Proverbs 14:29) and leads to evil doing (Psalm 37:8). It and its related actions and attitudes are never appropriate for a Christian (Colossians 3:8) for we are to leave vengeance in the hands of God (Romans 12:19).

Envy drives the new forms of racism expressed in "social justice" and the pursuit of "equity." Political progressives are flagrant bigots and racists declaring that depending on your melanin count you deserve to be given what other people work for because skin color determines whether you can succeed or not - unless of course you actually do work hard and succeed in which case you are declared to have "white privilege" no matter how dark your skin may be. Envy is a deed of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) and results in disorder and evil (James 3:14-16)

Pride is now something to be celebrated especially if it is related to something sinful. Hence June was "pride month" and specifically tied to LGBT+ perversions. God hates pride (Prov. 8:13) and opposes those who are proud (1 Peter 5:5). It leads to stumbling and destruction (Proverbs 16:18).

This nation has become twisted because it has rejected its heritage and turned its back on God, and God has yielded society to pursue its sinful desires. Ignorance prevails through both lack of knowledge and education that substitutes lies for truth so that greater education results in greater folly instead of wisdom. Ignorance of God increases sinfulness. Ignorance of history removes the wisdom gained by the experiences of previous generations. Ignorance of truth and its companion of a lack of understanding allows a people to be easily manipulated by those who are evil.

Getting Back on Track

The Fourth of July is not about having the freedom to do whatever you desire. True liberty and freedom come only when their associated responsibilities are taken seriously. Freedom demands self control or that very freedom will result in the worse bondage imaginable, because without restrictions, man will give himself over to his sinful nature and become addicted to the very things he demands freedom to do. As I put out on the church sign this week based on Romans 6:20-21, "freedom to sin

results in bondage and death.” Why? Because sin becomes your master. Whatever the particular sin may be, you become its slave. Those addicted to things such as drugs, alcohol, pornography, illicit or perverted sexual activity lose the freedom to pursue other things because they are driven to satisfy the craving of their addiction - which by the way is NOT a disease. The disease model for addictions is an excuse to justify the sin and remove the responsibility and just consequences of it. Society also pays a high price in crime, medical care costs and non productive workers.

Even what can be good can become enslaving if self control is not practiced. That includes entertainment, sports, computers, eating, fashion, work, etc. No wonder the writer of Hebrews tells us in 12:1 to not only set aside the sin which so easily entangles us, but also "*every encumbrance.*"

The cure for all these evils are the virtues of godliness beginning with humility for God gives grace to the humble (1 Peter. 5:5), and salvation and forgiveness of sin comes by God’s grace through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9). The Holy Spirit then starts developing in you qualities of virtue such as kindness, temperance, love, chastity, diligence, patience and many more which are the opposite of sin and worldliness. In becoming a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free (John 8:32). Without the Lord Jesus Christ in your life, you are doomed to bondage to sin, and you will never know true freedom and liberty.

Those who advocate freedom to do whatever you please have forgotten that man is utterly depraved by nature. They may believe that man is innately good, but that belief is a lie. It is the sinful nature that is inherent in man and not his environment that causes him to be depraved and abuse liberty. God’s word clearly states that man is naturally sinful (Genesis 3; Psalm 14:3; Isa 53:6; Rom 3:23; 5:12-19; Ephesians 2:1, etc.). Unrestricted and irresponsible liberty only allows the full expression of the wickedness that is in the human heart. In fact, sin is all that man can do because even if he does a good thing, it will always be from the wrong motivation. Jesus came to break that bondage so that we would have the freedom to not sin and have liberty to do righteousness. Paul put it this way in Romans 8:1,2 - "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.*" In Christ Jesus there is freedom from the law of sin and its effects. That does not mean that you will not sin again in this life, but the bondage of sin is broken and you can now choose to do right. You did not have that liberty before.

Paul has a detailed discussion of this in Romans 6:12-23. You will be a slave to either sin or righteousness. The question is who is your master and whom will you obey? Only the Christian is under grace to be enslaved to God and righteousness, but even the Christian has to quit listening to the voice of the old master, sin, and instead heed the voice of the new master, righteousness. Only in Christ is there liberty to be righteous, but that liberty brings responsibility to follow Him and not return to your former sinful pattern of life. Paul concludes Romans 5:23, "*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" He adds in Galatians 5:1, "*It was for freedom that Christ has set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*"

Jesus said in John 8:31-32, "*If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" The truth is that real freedom only comes through Jesus Christ and obedience to His word. To disobey Him is to be enslaved to sin. The question that remains is who is your master? If it is sin, are you ready to change masters? If it is Christ, are you obeying Him?

Conclusions

Today is the Fourth of July. Sadly, man on the street interviews consistently show that many people do not even know why there is a national celebration today. But since you do know, you can celebrate America's heritage, the liberties that we have and thank God for His hand upon us in the past. History is *His Story*, so commemorate what God did in bringing about the formation of this nation as well as His mercy and grace that has continued to sustain us to the present.

Our freedoms did not come cheap, so remember and remind others of the high price paid by earlier generations to both establish this nation with the liberties it offers and maintain those freedoms. Then resolve to follow in their footsteps to fight for those liberties and restore those already lost due to despotic governmental leaders. Be willing to speak up in private conversations and public forums though that has become dangerous due to “cancel culture.” Evil rises when good men do nothing, and at present those of depraved minds attack righteousness with near impunity. Are you willing to see the destruction of this nation and our God given liberties without at least a fight for them? All of our liberties are at stake including the freedom to worship as we are doing today. At minimum, be an informed registered voter so that you can help elect those that will uphold what our founding fathers sacrificed to give us.

Finally, pray that God in His mercy would grant revival to our people, for only with His intervention is there hope for the future.

Sermon Notes - July 4, 2021
LIBERTY, INDEPENDENCE & RESPONSIBILITY- Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Liberty & freedom are _____ terms included in the Declaration of Independence & U.S. Constitution
Our national _____ sing of liberty, freedom - and God's hand in it
Most Americans are now either historically ignorant or have been taught revisionist _____ instead of history
Destruction of monuments (of all types) is an effort to remove the reminders of our _____
Ignorance and rejection of _____ lead to increased sin & God's judgment (Hosea 4:6)

A Brief History

The history of America demonstrates _____ hand at work in forming & refining a nation
Columbus' voyage of discovery had _____ motivations - fame, fortune & expansion of Roman Catholicism
Columbus' history shows God's _____ aiding or hindering him depending on what he was doing
God's providence kept Spain's interest in Central & S. America allowing greeter _____ to N. America
The first attempts to colonize N. America in hope of an economic gain were _____
The Pilgrims set up a new colony with a true interest in the glory of _____ as foundational
By God's providence, Plymouth was the only place the Pilgrims would not have been _____
The Pilgrims established the prototype of _____ for New England & eventually the United States
American history records the troubles & trials God used to _____ a people that desired to follow Him
Without the Great _____, the later American Revolution could not have occurred
The Declaration of Independence cites _____ facts supporting their cause - only two are related to economics
The Declaration of Independence was much more of a recognition of _____ than an act of willful rebellion

Freedom, Liberty & Independence

Liberty: *freedom from _____ control & positive enjoyment of social, political & economic rights*
Success of the war allowed for the establishment of a new nation to protect _____ rights
Liberty can only exist where it will be _____ - it retreats where "safety" is valued over sacrifice for good

A Change in Direction

In previous times government leaders called for days of humility, fasting & _____ when facing a crisis
In current times most government leaders _____ God while issuing draconian dictates for "safety"
National improvement continued into the 1960's with the _____ rights movement
The 1960's also brought the sexual revolution, the fruit of theological _____, & the seed of worse to come
Political correctness has redefined liberty & independence and divorced them from _____
Licentiousness and irresponsibility result in increasing _____ and all of its consequences
Lust - sexual _____ and perversion have become normal (1 Peter 2:11)

Gluttony - people sought _____ for comfort instead of God. An indicator of a lack of self-control (Phil. 3:19)
Greed - and expression of _____ (Exod. 20:17) that leads to foolish & harmful desires (1 Tim. 6:9-10)
Sloth - lacking personal integrity, people prefer _____ to working (Prov. 24:33-34; 1 Thess. 3:10)
Wrath - now supported if politically correct - it exalts _____ (Prov. 14:29) & leads to evil doing (Psalm 37:8)
Envy - the fuel of “social justice” and the pursuit of “equity.” An evil deed of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21)
Pride - not something to celebrate, for it is hated and _____ by God (Prov. 8:13; 1 Pet. 5:5)
Rejecting its heritage & turning its back on God, He is _____ society to its sinful desires

Getting Back on Track

Freedom to sin results in _____ and death (Rom. 6:20-21). Freedom from sin results in life (Rom. 8:2)
Even good things can become _____ without self-control - lay aside even the encumbrances (Heb. 12:1)
The cure for these evils are the _____ of godliness that come with salvation from in by faith in Jesus Christ
Man is sinful by nature and freedom to sin only allows greater _____ of it
Jesus breaks the _____ of sin so that you can choose to do right - a liberty you did not have before
_____ either a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness (Romans 6:12-23)
John 8:31-32 - abiding in Christ makes you His disciple which brings _____ which sets you free

Conclusions

History is His Story, so celebrate God’s _____ in the formation and sustaining of this nation
The cost of freedom is _____ - remember & remind others of the sacrifices made for liberty
Resolve to _____ the people and policies that seek to trample on our God given freedoms
Pray that God in His mercy will grant _____ - that is our only true hope.

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God’s Word to your children’s lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – count how many times “liberty” and “freedom” are mentioned. Talk to about what those terms mean and why we celebrate the Fourth of July

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. Read the *Declaration of Independence* and summarize why colonies broke away from England. How do national hymns magnify liberty, freedom and God? Why are so many Americans ignorant of the history of their own nation? Why are monuments attacked and removed? What is the danger for a people that are ignorant and reject knowledge? Why did Columbus “sail the ocean blue”? What events in history can you identify as actions of God’s providence in protecting North American for the eventual establishment of the United States? What made the Plymouth colony by the Pilgrims different from other colonies? How were the Pilgrims a prototype of what became American democracy? Is the Declaration of Independence an act of willful rebellion? Explain. What responsibilities accompanied liberty and independence from England? Why must liberty be vigilantly defended? How did God use trials & tribulations in the past to improve the United States? Why was there a sexual revolution in the 1960’s. What did it indicate about God’s actions toward the U.S.? What additional evil seeds were sown during that time? What are the “seven deadly sins”? How have you seen those expressed in our society? Why does freedom demand self control? What is the cure for the evils rampant in our nation? Are you as slave to sin or slave of righteousness (Romans 6:12-32)? How can you honor God in celebrating the Fourth of July? What can you do personally to help defend our God given liberties in this land?