

Faith of Our Fathers — 07/04/21

TEXT- Php 2:15 *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

John 17:15-18 *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

Php 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

INTRO – People came to America for different reasons. Some came for religious freedom. (The Pilgrims) Some came for adventure, some for prosperity, some for political freedom and others for various reasons. Puritans believed that the state was obligated to protect society from heresy, and it was empowered to use corporal punishment, banishment, and execution. New England magistrates did not investigate private views, but they did take action against public dissent from the religious establishment. Puritan sentiments were expressed by Nathaniel Ward in *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam*: "all Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and other Enthusiasts shall have free Liberty to keep away from us, and such as will come [shall have liberty] to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better."

I. Our Heritage For Our Country Has a Foundation in God

Did America's Founders intend to create a Christian nation? "The Founding Fathers" were a diverse group of individuals who held diverse views on many subjects – including religion.

- Generally, one cannot accurately make blanket statements beginning with "the Founding Fathers believed."
- Second, not everyone who lived during the Founding era was a "Founding Father"; so not all voices are equal as evidence.
- Third, the Puritans did not found America – they founded Massachusetts.
- Fourth, some of the more prominent Founders meant something different by the word "Christianity" than do 21st-century evangelical Christians.
- Fifth, like today, denominational labels were not very accurate of personal belief in 18th-century America.
- Finally, Christianity and deism were not the only two religious options available to 18th-century Americans.

A number of the key American Founders believed in a powerful, rational, and benevolent creator God who was present and active in human affairs. They believed that the main factor in serving God was living a good and moral life, that promoting morality was the central value and purpose of religion, and that religion was indispensable to society because it promoted morality.

A. We must be grateful for our heritage

In Holland, among those Pilgrims who had fled their native land of England, was a man named Thomas Helwys. With others in that Pilgrim group, who, reading the Bible, embraced the Baptist faith, he was baptized as a Baptist; and a little group around him were also baptized. For conscience sake, they felt that they ought to return to England, and Thomas Helwys, in 1612, wrote to the king:

Hear, O King, and despise not ye counsel of ye poor, and let their complaints come before thee. The king is a mortal man, and not God. Therefore he hath no power over ye immortal souls of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them, and to set spiritual lords over them. If the king have authority to make spiritual lords and laws, then he is an immortal god and not a mortal man. But our lord, the king, is but dust and ashes, as well as we. O king, be not seduced by deceivers thus to sin against God, whom thou oughtest to obey, nor against thy poor subjects. God save the king, —Thomas Helwys.

Thomas Helwys, was imprisoned, and died in the New Gate prison. But among his converts to soul-freedom was a young man by the name of Roger Williams, and Roger Williams came to America in 1631 and founded our Baptist state of Rhode Island: a free church in a free state.

B. We should build on the good aspects of our forefathers

The thirteen colonies gathered to write a constitution for our nation. Benjamin Franklin, acknowledged God's role in the writing of the destiny of the nations of the world, and now of our Constitution, and at a critical moment he made the following speech:

In the beginning of the Revolutionary War— when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for divine guidance and protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? And thereafter the Constitution was written, and a Christian America began its pilgrimage in the earth.

C. We should improve on their failures

For three hundred years the Bible was taught in the public schools, and the Christian literature and doctrine and faith were presented to the young people and the children who attended our public institutions.

D. We must have courage to stand up for what is right

Eph 6:13-14 *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

When you read the story of America and its Christian foundations, and look at the America of today, you can hardly recognize that we are in the same country and belong under the same government.

The pervading philosophy of modern America is **humanism, secularism.**

II. Our Faith In God Is Our Foundation**A. The basis of our lives is the Word of God**

1. Fully embrace the conviction every word of the Holy Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of God.

2. Fall in love with truth more than the pleasures and entertainment of the World.

3. Study the Word of God diligently and read it on a daily basis.

4. Choose to submit your will to God's Word, *before* you read and know what it is going to say.

5. Discipline your thoughts, opinions, and emotions to obey God's Word after you have read it, studied it, and know what it says.

6. Choose to live by the conviction, "I will obey God's Word with humility, love and grace, even if I am rejected by family and friends and considered to be an intolerant hate-monger by the world."

B. Let your light shine – Be a witness

Luke 11:33 *No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.*

C. Provide a Heritage

1. For your family

2. Through your ministry

What evidence will you leave behind that you served God?

D. Influence your community

1. Neighbors

2. People in need

3. Government leaders

4. Your church