

## INTRODUCTION

I borrowed the title of this message from an old hymn written in 1845 by Fredrick Faber. The chorus says, “Faith of our fathers; holy faith! We will be true to thee till death.” But I really want to talk about the Faith of our Founding Fathers.

America is still the greatest nation on earth, and I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else. But our nation is sick. Morally and spiritually, we are on life support. Did you hear about the schoolteacher who saw three of her boys on their knees in the back of the classroom? She ran back there and said, “What are you doing? Rolling dice? O good, for a minute I thought you were praying.” That would be funny if it wasn’t so sad.

President Ronald Reagan said, “America is great because it is good. If America ever ceases to be good, it will cease to be great.”

When I think of the attacks on the moral fiber of our nation, I’m reminded of the words of scripture that the choir just sang from Psalm 3:1-4: “Lord, how my foes increase! There are many who attack me. Many say about me, ‘There is no help for him in God.’ Selah. But You, Lord, are a shield around me; my glory, and the One who lifts up my head. I cry aloud to the Lord, and He answers me from His holy mountain. Selah” (HCSB)

(“Selah” appears 71 times in the Psalms and it means “stop and consider”)

A growing number of Americans are claiming that God doesn’t even exist, and millions of Americans live as if there are no consequences for their sins. But our God is a shield around us, and it’s time for us to cry out to Him. He is the only hope for America.

Our beloved nation will turn 237 years old on July 4. Compared to some of the ancient cultures in Asia and Europe, America is still a toddler. As we prepare to celebrate our nation’s birthday again, I want to remind you what made America great and how can remain blessed by God.

### 1. OUR NATION WAS FOUNDED ON THE DREAM OF FREEDOM

Thousands of people flocked to the shores of the New World because they were seeking freedom. They sought freedom from tyranny, and freedom of religion.

In England, it was illegal to be a member of any church other than the Church of England. There were thousands of believers who wanted to practice their faith according to the Bible. They wanted to purify the church, so they were called Puritans. They were persecuted and arrested in England.

A group of 102 of these Puritans boarded a small ship and sailed 66 days to reach the New World. They came for one reason: Freedom. They risked their lives and their fortunes to come to a place where they could practice their faith without persecution. The Puritans are the spiritual grandparents of those of us who call ourselves evangelical Christians today.

The original thirteen colonies were English settlements, but they were disenfranchised. They paid heavy taxes to King George, but they had no representatives in the government. So they came together to declare their freedom from English tyranny. They believed they could govern themselves without the interference of England.

Our forefathers were seeking freedom from King George, because they believed freedom is a gift from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. They expressed this powerfully in our nation's birth certificate called 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 inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

They were making a radical theological statement. They claimed all men are equal—there aren't any kings and lords and commoners. And they claimed that our rights do not come from a king or a government, they come from God. What a revolutionary idea. That's why it was called the Revolutionary War.

We need to be reminded that our rights do not come from our government. They come from God. The original purpose of our government was to secure these rights. Now, I love the song "Proud to be an American" by Lee Greenwood. And I clap for it and sing it with gusto. But we all need to know he made a tiny mistake in the lyrics. He sang, "And I'm proud to be an American; Where at least I know I'm free; and I won't forget the men who died; who gave that right to me." I'll still stand up next to you, Lee, and defend her still today, but I need to remind you that as much as we honor the men and women who died for America. They did not give us our rights. Only God has given us our freedom and our rights and Americans.

Of course, today, many history books have been written to attempt to sanitize any spiritual or religious basis for our government. But there is too much evidence to ignore. Our forefathers were replacing a human king, George, for a heavenly King, Jesus.

Samuel Adams was a great American Patriot. He didn't brew beer, by the way. He was more into tea. He led the Boston Tea Party to throw those crates of tea into the harbor, because they refused to pay the exorbitant taxes for them. He was signer of the Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson once wrote that Samuel Adams was the most influential member of the Continental Congress. He later served as governor of Massachusetts.

Less than one month after he signed the Declaration of Independence, he commented on what happened on July 4, 1776: "We have this day restored the Sovereign to whom all alone men ought to be obedient. He reigns in Heaven, and with a propitious eye beholds his subjects assuming that freedom of thought, and dignity of self-direction which He bestowed on them. From the rising to the setting sun, may His kingdom come." (Speech given in the State House of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, August 1, 1776)

That leads to the second truth about America.

## **2. OUR FOUNDING FATHERS WERE MEN OF GREAT FAITH IN GOD**

Historical revisionists tried to claim that our Founding Fathers weren't very religious. Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, do you know how many were members of a local church? All fifty-six. A few were Deists. Deists believed in a clock-maker God. Like a clock-maker, God created the world, then He wound it up and set it in motion, but then has no other interaction with His creation.

But it is certain that the vast majority of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were committed followers of Jesus Christ and believed the Bible was the Word of God.

George Washington kept a personal journal, and there are several entries that state he spent a full day in prayer and fasting. And his journal entries make it clear He believed in Jesus. Here's just one example of a prayer he wrote: "I have sinned and done very wickedly, be merciful to me, O God, and pardon me for Jesus Christ' sake...Be our God and guide this day and for ever for His sake, who lay down in the grave and arose again for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

Washington was raised as an Episcopalian, and thus was christened as a baby. But later in life, as he read the Bible, he expressed a desire to be scripturally baptized. One of his friends, and his personal chaplain in the Continental Army was a Baptist Pastor by the name of John Gano. According to eyewitness accounts, Gano baptized George Washington in the Potomac River. And you can find the original of this painting in the John Gano Memorial Chapel at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri.

Military experts agree that there should have been no way the British Army should have lost our War of Independence. England had the largest army and navy in the world. The colonies didn't even have an army: These were farmers and merchants who fought for freedom. The best way I know how to describe it would if Puerto Rico, which is a territory of the U.S., decided to declare their independence and they went to war against us. So we send troops down to Puerto Rico to squash the revolution. How long would that war last? Could you imagine the Puerto Rican army of volunteers conquering our special forces troops? That's what happened in our War of Independence.

On one of my visits to Washington D.C., Congressman Gohmert gave us a tour of the State Department. This is like a museum, because there is furniture and other mementos from American History. In one of the rooms, we saw the original copy of the Treaty of Paris from 1783. This was the treaty that officially ended the Revolutionary War. There's even an unfinished painting of the signing of the treaty. The American delegates were Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay. The reason the painting is unfinished is because the British delegates refused to sit for it. Sore losers, I guess.

I had known about the treaty since college, but we were both amazed to read the very first words: "In the name of the most holy and undivided Trinity. It having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose the hearts..." So, the very first peace treaty signed for nation was done so in the name of the most holy, most undivided Trinity—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You can't get much more Christian than that!

So, were our Founding Fathers godly men? At least some of them were. Let's read some of their own words. John Adams, a cousin of Samuel Adams, became our second President. Later in life as he reflected back on the founding of America he wrote: "The Holy Ghost carries on the whole Christian system in this earth. Not a baptism, not a marriage, not a sacrament can be administered but by the Holy Ghost...There is no authority, civil or religious—there can be no legitimate government but what is administered by this Holy Ghost." (Letter to Benjamin Rush, Dec. 21, 1809)

And John Adam's son, John Quincy Adams, was our sixth President. In a Fourth of July speech he gave eight years after leaving office he 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." (July 4, 1837, An Oration delivered to the residents of Newburyport, MA, on the 61<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence)

### **3. IF AMERICA IS TO SURVIVE, WE MUST RECLAIM THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS**

Our parents had more freedom than we have. They could sell on the street corner without a business license. With each generation, it seems that the government gets more and more intrusive in our lives.

Would the Founding Fathers of our nation even recognize America today? If we could summon the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence, and have them look at America today, how would they react? What would they say about prayer and Bible reading banned from public schools? Would they condone killing babies in the womb? Would they sanction same-sex marriage? Would they blush in shame at some of the movies and television shows we produce?

What would George Washington say if you told him he couldn't hunt or fish unless he paid the government a fee for a license first?

How would John Adams respond if you told him he couldn't ride his horse unless he paid the government an annual fee to hang a tag on his horse's tail?

What would Benjamin Franklin say if you told him that the government is going to hire 100,000 people to collect taxes and they were going to take 35% of the money he made in his printing business?

Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "That government is best which governs least." How would he react if you told him that one day the federal government would be the largest employer in the nation, with two million employees?

What kind of America are we leaving for our children and grandchildren? At the current rate of moral decline, I shudder to think about what our country will be like in 30 years.

General Douglas McArthur was an astute observer of our nation's trend. Not long before he died

he said: “History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster.”

We need to pray for America and we need to corporately confess our national sins. And we need to vote. Last fall, President Obama beat Mitt Romney by about three million popular votes. And there were 24 million evangelical Christians who didn't vote. But don't vote for a political party, vote for a person of character and a position of morality. I refuse to be identified with a political label. I agree with Dr. Benjamin Rush, one of the Founding Fathers who said, “I have alternately been called an Aristocrat and a Democrat. I am neither. I am a Christocrat.”

We sometimes make the mistake of thinking our government is the highest authority. Just this past week the Supreme Court ruled on same sex marriage. Even though the gay rights crowd celebrated, it was only a victory for them in California. The court maintained that each state still has the right to define marriage. But those nine judges in black robes aren't the final authority. Don't ever forget that the Bible says God has given Jesus a name that is above every name. And that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess, and that includes all the judges and politicians in this land, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Our national anthem is the Star Spangled Banner, but many nations around the world think the song, “America the Beautiful” is our national anthem. Fifteen years ago, our choir was singing to 3,500 Russians in a packed opera house in Yalta. As we started singing, “America the Beautiful” the crowd stood to their feet to honor a nation that cherishes freedom. Our choir and orchestra are going to sing that song in a moment. But there is one verse they won't sing that I want you to consider. Katherine Ann Bates wrote this song in 1893 while after witnessing the beauty of Pike's Peak in Colorado. America is a great nation, but we are flawed. May this be our prayer as we challenge our citizens to turn back to God: “America! America! God mend thine ev'ry flaw, Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law.”

America needs revival for survival. God has given us His recipe for revival in 2 Chronicles 7:14. He said, “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

## OUTLINE

1. OUR NATION WAS FOUNDED ON THE DREAM OF FREEDOM
2. OUR FOUNDING FATHERS WERE MEN OF GREAT FAITH IN GOD
3. IF AMERICA IS TO SURVIVE, WE MUST RECLAIM THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes