

We hear the truth is marching on. Sometimes I worry it just marches right on by Washington. You know sometimes. Mark Twain said, "Supposed I were a congressman and suppose I were a fool. But I repeat myself." um. Anyway. Everybody's always anxious to introduce or to criticize congressman and you know it's easy to do we're easy targets. But remember the old saying, "Never criticize anybody till you've walked a mile in their shoes. That way when you criticize them, you're mile away and you got their shoes." so something good to keep in mind.

Well listen, I wanted to talk to you for little bit about our godly heritage. It's so often written off and Jo Parks was saying between the services, "Man I wish I'd learned more history when I was in school." and one of the things that breaks my heart is many of the things I want to tell you today are not taught were not taught in the 20th century are not being taught in history classes now. David Barton with WallBuilders and other groups are doing a great job of trying to remind people of our godly heritage, because it's there. Regardless of where we are now, it's a part of our past. And so to kind of introduce you to that and walk you through, I'd just like to go to our capitol.

There is one verse that is the theme for today, and it's really a prayer and that is psalm 16:1. "Preserve me, o lord for in thee do I put my trust." let me just say as I see the verse displayed here, y'all would not believe how good our audiovisual staff is in this place. Man, I was sending them pictures. This morning at 7:30 I had three more pictures that I'd gotten last night and they were able to work them in. So I kind of mess them up but they're doing an amazing job. I'm just so impressed with everybody here. Almost make me look okay, you know, just amazing.

But to start our tour, were going to go to the capitol. Every state in the capitol gets two full full-length statues. And ours was selected before the civil war, so if you figure before 1860 who that might be? Well a lot of people figure, "Well Sam Houston," and that's right. You know our first president led the war that won our independence. First governor, senator. And also, person we were taught in school was called the father of our state, sometimes country, and anyway, do y'all just an aside: I was surprised. I didn't know why Puerto Rico was voted down a number of times asking to become a state. And I found out was in congress it's narrowly lost, because if they become a state, all of their citizens have to start paying income tax. I didn't know. I'm thinking when I heard that I'm thinking, "I wonder if we could go back to being a territory, you know? Whoo!" all the benefits and no income tax; that'd be all right.

But anyway, I've got a picture of a couple of statues that are standing guard it looks like over the entrance into this vast rotunda. On the left, you see Stephen F. Austin. On the right you see peter Muhlenberg. Peter Muhlenberg was an Anglican minister. He was and he's one of the two statues from Pennsylvania. Well, what did Muhlenberg do? Well, like I say he was a minister, and in January of 1776, they'd already started raising an army. Well he was preaching that day from ecclesiasts, the third chapter, and he gets over to the eighth verse and you know that's the part where "There's a time to every purpose under heaven." and when he got over here to verse eight and he said, "there is a time for war and a time for peace," he took off his black ministerial robe and he had on a revolutionary war uniform of a colonel. Because Washington had asked him to be a colonel when he volunteered. He was wearing a saber. You see a saber at his side there. That's Muhlenberg. Not only did he start out as a colonel; Washington promoted him to

general. He led 800 men. And in that sermon he said, “Not only is this a time for war but you need to join me in this effort.”

Now some people say we’ve got a have the separation of church and state. That’s not the constitution. It came from a letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote to Danbury Baptist in Massachusetts. But you look at Muhlenberg, he led an army. His brother, Frederick Muhlenberg, he was from another town. He was a Lutheran minister. Did you know that Lutheran minister was the first speaker of the house of representatives of the United States? Well, can you imagine if we had lots and lots of ministers who were seeking God’s will every day in congress? Might be all right, huh? I know one that’d be good I’d vote for him. Only thing is I don’t want to switch places, I don’t think I could do this every Sunday.

Well, let’s look at rotunda. It is gorgeous. You know the huge dome inside is just beautiful. See the top of the dome? And at the top about 189 or 90 feet up is coarse Washington when the hated it, it’s called the apotheosis of George Washington, the making of divine. That was the last thing he ever wanted. In fact, he’s the only commander on I know that issued an order during his during the revolutionary war making it a military crime if you took

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Let me mention this about the rotunda before I go to the next painting too. In 1814 the British flooded into Washington. They took it over. They burned every federal building except one, a marine barracks. They set the white house on fire that last day, they set the capitol, they went into the house of representatives first, set it on fire, went to the rotunda, set it on fire, went to the senate and set it on fire. And if you’ve seen drawings of the capital after the fire, you see the main thing that’s gone it just doesn’t have a rotunda. It was all wooden: had wooden floor, wooden beams, wooden dome with copper over it. It burned. The reason the rest of the capitol didn’t have too bad of a damage and it didn’t just collapse like most buildings in an intense fire is a huge rainstorm came that night and put out the fire. It left some of the white house. They ended up having to paint it white to cover up some of the stuff and later years later came to be called the white house. Well it was white because they had to cover up some of the scars from the fire. The day

I was a history major. I always assumed the American forces rallied and drove the British out of Washington, DC. the day after the rainstorm, this huge wind came up. Some say it was a tornado wind. Others maintain it was a flatline wind. It was powerful enough even under the most secular

accounts, the wind is given credit for killing 30 British soldiers, for blowing their cannons off of their mounts. Buildings and things were being destroyed and nobody's quite sure what happened, but their big gunpowder supply blew up. The British soldiers, believing that somehow god was involved in this, fled Washington and never came back to Washington, DC. Now, if you're with an insurance company, you might call those "acts of Cod." so what I. that's why what we had of the capitol was left: the rain and the wind—acts of God.

Well, looking back at the portraits, let's look at the pilgrims. They were having a prayer meeting before they crossed the Atlantic to come to America. This is a big huge painting there in the capitol rotunda. And if you look close up at the book that's being held in the middle -- and I had to take the picture upside down so it would look right side up to you. What does it say? The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Folks, that's right there in the middle of the capitol! The New Testament, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Then we have Columbus discovering America. He didn't realize what he a discovery discovered, but as was normally done back then, he didn't just proclaim it for the king and queen, as you notice in a close-up what has he got right behind him? They're carrying across. That's what they did, because he proclaimed things for his lord and savior Jesus Christ. And if... I never got this in school and folks there's a blue insert and the church was so wonderful to put it...I would encourage you to put this in your bible. Pull it out when you have a chance and if you don't see so good, use a magnifying glass and or have somebody read it. It'll bless your heart. And I had to cut down so many of the quotes that we wanted to put in here, just hit some bare basics. Have you ever heard this? Christopher Columbus wrote this, "it was the lord who put into my mind, I could feel his hand upon me, the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the holy spirit, because he comforted me with they rays of marvelous inspiration from the holy scriptures." unfortunately, you don't get that much in school anymore, that he was guided by the holy spirit. Now I can tell you, Columbus had happen when I've had happen in my life: sometimes you chart off on a course, think you're following a calling and lo and behold it is a calling, but it was calling you out here so you could get over here and Columbus thought he was coming to the indies and ended up discovering this new world.

Another portrait in their is a de Soto finding the Mississippi. There he is on his horse finding the Mississippi. And it was such an incredible body of water, they wanted to commemorate it. So as they often did -- you look at a close-up of the bottom right-hand corner -- what you see there, they dug a hole and they're putting a cross in there, because that's how they wanted remember important events: put that cross there to proclaim it for the lord and savior Jesus Christ.

Now we also have a painting of the continental convention. 56 guys were there and as David said, they got stuck and they had to have a prayer session and after the prayer session, some say it went on four hours. One guy wrote his wife that it was so moving that even the surly old Quakers had tears running down their cheeks. And they got the job done. Now, 56 guys -- over a third of these guys were ordained Christian ministers. One of them even wrote his own translation of the bible that you can still buy today. Most of them were very devout Christians. The hand of god was there.

And look down I've got to mention, my dad and my stepmother are here and I'm really proud to have them. They're sitting here with my wife Kathy. If you would help me welcome my dad and my stepmom. Yeah, I was so blessed growing up. My mother died in '91 from a brain tumor. She came up this week when Mike Pence from Indiana, we were on the floor and he was saying, "I really need to go to a funeral. I don't know, it's going to be tough." and I said, "well I can just tell you what my late mother used to say. She said, 'You gotta go to people's funerals, 'cause if you don't go to other people's funerals, they're not going to come to yours.'" my dad cracked up and he said, "well it's obvious that an acorn didn't fall far from her tree." but I don't know.

But those guys in the continental congress pledged their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor. They knew if this didn't work out they were dead men. They would not live nor with their families. And that would be merciful if they were caught just be killed and not tortured.

Washington wasn't there but there is a painting of Washington, he's in one painting of the surrender of Yorktown since Cornwallis wasn't gut the...didn't have enough guts to come up and surrender himself. He had a subordinate. So Washington sat back on horseback and let somebody else come forward. But in this, you see the resignation of George Washington after the revolutionary war. And I see people walk past that, "oh isn't that nice." walk past. I think it's the most important scene depicted in the entire capitol. Why? Because you know let's look at who Washington was. One of the few guys over 6 foot tall, some say 6 foot 2. He was measured after death at 6 foot 3-1/2. That's a big guy now -- it was a huge, huge guy back then. And he was a brave guy. In his early twenties, some of y'all remember I mentioned a couple of years ago that in the French and Indian war, George Washington was leading a hundred militiamen, Americans, along with 1,300 British, who were guided by 81 officers on horseback, the 1,300 British 'course their red coats heading up to Fort Duquesne. They went through a long wooded area, they went through a wide ravine -- and the French and Indians were lying in wait for them to ambush them and two hours later after the ambush started, all the firing went on, there were over 700 British killed, George Washington was the only one out of the 82 officers that was still on horseback, had not been shot off his horse and some of you may remember 15 years later when he was back in those woods, he was with a friend named Dr. Craig. Fifteen years later he was he was known as a hero. Two hours, he's up there leading and fighting and whatnot and people knew the story. It was in history books on up into the early 1900s -- it's not anymore -- that Washington wrote his mother and brother and said, "When we got to a safe place I shook out, took off my hat, shook off my hair and bullet fragments flew everywhere. But I didn't have a scratch on my head. I took off my vest and I had four bullet holes through and through but not a scratch on me -- surely god was with me." fifteen years later when he and Dr. Craig got up to those woods, word had spread this great hero George Washington, he was in his early 20s when he did that, but he was coming to the area. Indians met him there and Indian chief at a council fire he wanted to have with Washington said, "We were in these woods together 15 years ago. I was in command of the Indians. I told them we could see you coming from afar and you were so powerful looking, riding your horse. I knew if we could kill you, your men would flee and we could take care of the British." he said, "I told all the braves, 'fire at that guy first.' I personally shot at you 17 times. I wanted to come all this way today to see the man that god would not let die." it used to be in our history books until about a hundred years ago. God has been in our heritage and he's been in our history.

So, you know July 4, a lot of guys enlisted at that point for six months, that was going to be coming up in January. Most of that six months they were retreating. There was a little victory in Boston, but most of the time they had to retreat in front of vastly superior forces. In some, and Washington took a lot of ribbing, but he knew, kind of like Sam Houston, where he had to take his stand, and they didn't have it. December 24, remember the story: Christmas eve, you've seen a picture, Washington crossing the Delaware. On Christmas Eve, surprised the Hessians, the most feared mercenaries, well-organized, well-equipped, surprised them, captured thousands. It was a huge deal. The guys that had enlisted for six months were getting out shortly; they were going, "What a great way to go out! We'll go out on top with a win and let somebody else take it from here." the continental congress got scared, because they knew if they didn't reenlist, they were all dead men, so they passed a law three days later that said Washington had all the power, anything he needed to do to win the revolutionary war, they gave him the power. Can you imagine today can you think of somebody that you would, willing basically to make king? I love George Bush, I thank God he's president. But there's not anybody in this country I can think of that I want to be king. They gave him that kind of power, and the cover letter that came with the bill said, "we give you all this power, in effect, knowing that no man's liberty is at risk and when you have no further need of it you'll give it back." well, that's all well and good, but nobody would have done it to that point in history. You know, lead a revolution and then resign and give up the power? I mean, you lead a revolution and win against a force like the most powerful military's navy at that time, you can be whatever you want to be: czar, pharaoh, emperor, generalissimo, dictator, whatever you want to be called, you're it! So for Washington, after he had won the day to come in and resign, he says, "here's all the power back." do you know the kind of humility it took to do that? How God prepared this man for that day? King George said, "he won't do that. If he were to do that, he would be the greatest man in the world!" maybe he was. He was the man for the time.

Now, there are books out that tell you George Washington was not a Christian, he was a deist. And they seize on some comments, including from his niece, had written a letter that he didn't partake of communion in Philadelphia and New York and he was often there. When she found out they were using it to say he wasn't a Christian, because he didn't stay for communion, she was furious because she said, "I've seen him take communion at other places," and frankly, in Philadelphia, their services apparently went on for two or three hours and he usually had nieces or nephews or other children with him that he took to church and after two or three hours service, they take a break, come back in about 30 minutes and have communion. Guess what? He left. The preacher in Philadelphia often took potshots at him. You're sitting there for two or three hours, somebody taking potshots at you, are you going to hang around with a bunch of kids to come back? Anyway, he didn't, but he took communion. But there are some great quotes in his own handwriting that he wrote in his daily prayer journal. And I won't read a lot of these, but just this one from Washington. Read another one, too, but this one, "oh most glorious God in Jesus Christ. I acknowledge and confess my faults. In the weak and imperfect performance of the duties of this day, I've called on thee for pardon and forgiveness of sins, but so coldly and carelessly that my prayers are come, my sin and stand in need of pardon. I've heard thy holy word, with such deadness of spirit that I've been an unprofitable and forgetful hearer. Let me live according to those holy rules, which thou hast this day prescribed in thy holy word. Direct me to the true object, Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life. Bless O Lord, all the people of this land." do you think a non-Christian wrote that in his own handwriting in his prayer book? His

niece said, "Anybody that could see his writings and see what he did and know what he did, and the prayers he had, and would say he was not a Christian, didn't know what they were talking about."

Well in the house chamber today we got you got the view here of what the president has as he walks forward to deliver the state of the union address. But if you zoom in just above the flag there, in the marble: in god we trust. When I was getting sworn in, I did not notice. I'd been in the chamber during orientation, we all 435 raised our right hand and took the oath and as Hastrup was giving it, I looked above and saw those words and got so choked up I nearly didn't get out that I would but anyway. I do, I would, I did. but anyway. But such powerful words.

We also, you don't you wouldn't know this necessarily, we got a prayer chapel. It's a it's a very small facility but it is a wonderful facility. The atmosphere is so good. A gorgeous stained glass window and at the center, see how pretty that is? At the center is Washington praying, surrounded by psalm 16:1. That prayer, "preserve me, o god, for in thee do I put my trust." we have been blessed as a nation and that's the reason.

Now we also have statuary hall is what it's called now. You see there, this is from the perspective of the speaker of the house had all through the 1800s. I didn't know this: all through the 1800s, every Sunday, except when they were fixing up the house of representatives' chamber after the fire in 1814, they had a nondenominational Christian church service right there as you see right there in that room. Jefferson was stopped one day when he was president-and people know he was a deist, he had a big bible under his arm, and they told this story that right after it happened and for years and years afterward. And he was confronted by one of his friends and he said, "where you going?" he said, "I'm going to church, house of representatives." and he said, "But you don't believe all that they do." and he said, "sir, I am the highest elected official in this land. It is critical that I set a good example." well. What I think about my uncle getting a little new testament at the entry of World War II, you open it up and it said it. Basically encouraged you to read this, "It's been a source of comfort and strength throughout the ages, signed by the Commander-in-chief Franklin D. Roosevelt." gee, I wonder if we give those out? We don't anymore apparently. But in statuary hall, the church service, Madison, that wrote the first amendment that's so quoted so often, as standing for separation of church and state, the separation of church and state he understood, allowed him to go to Christian nondenominational church every Sunday that he was in Washington in statuary hall. Thomas Jefferson had coined the phrase "separation of church and state," every Sunday he was in Washington, he did go to the church services there too. So they had a little different idea of the separation of church and state.

One of the most famous spots, and they have a brass plate where someone who served in the House of Representatives is also president where their desk was. The most famous is John Quincy Adams. Some say John Quincy Adams probably had the highest IQ of any president. Some point to the fact that he was a member late in life of the Unitarian church. Say, see he was a Unitarian, he didn't really believe in Christ. Read the things he wrote. In fact, they had a little different approach back then for Unitarian church. In fact, at one Sunday day brought a man that preached against there being a holy trinity, and Quincy Adams afterwards said he was quote "crazy" unquote, that there was no way you could read the new testament and come away thinking there is no holy trinity. So he had a little different idea. There is a quote from John

Quincy Adams in here. Okay I'll share one. "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of the civil government with the principles of Christianity." you think what god wasn't in our formation? Now, Adams though, he ran for congress after he had been president. Can you imagine? He said he was prouder of getting elected to congress after being president then he was getting elected president. Think about it. It means after he was president his neighbors still liked him! I mean that's a big deal, right? So, he ran in 1830, well, he had corresponded with a guy in England name William Wilberforce. Some of you saw the movie "amazing grace" if you haven't, get the DVD when it comes out. Powerful. But he felt god was calling him to do what Wilberforce did in England: bring an end to slavery. That it was an abomination and god would judge America harshly if we didn't get rid of it. He felt like that's why he was being called. So for years he would come in and every week he would introduce a bill, "Mr. Speaker, I have a bill at the desk," it was a bill to end slavery. And every time he'd get recognized, he'd preach a sermon on the evils of slavery. They got so sick of hearing his sermons, they passed a rule that you couldn't bring a bill to end slavery so they kept him from doing it for awhile, but some years later, he finally got that rule repealed and he could go back to preaching against the evils of slavery, trying to end it. But sitting at his desk, that spot where you saw the little brass plate there, right up close, just to the speaker's left, he was sitting in 1848, and had a stroke. They carried him to the back of the chamber and into a little suite of offices, you see the arrow there, that was the speaker's chamber back then. They put him on a couch, he died a couple of days later. He said he was at peace, but he knew he had not accomplished what he felt god had called him to do. It's interesting the way god calls us sometimes. We think, "Well maybe I misunderstood god's will. Maybe I didn't get it." I've had people ask me if they heard me say, "You know, I felt like this was a calling," and they'd go "did you hear voices?" man, would I, I wish I heard voices y'all. It would make it so much easier, you wouldn't have to pray or read the bible or anything, just wait for god to speak in you know, "oh gotcha there, okay, yeah I understand that." it's not that easy. But Adams, what he did not know, was the last year or so he was there preaching his sermons against the evils of slavery, there was a young gangly tall, kinda goofy looking freshman in the back, served two years there, who 13 years later as president, said the most important thing he got out of those two short years in congress was listening to that dear Christian man preach his sermons on the evils of slavery; that it had a tremendous effect on him. Adams didn't end slavery, god did. When men's hearts got right, he used people that would be used. A lot of people don't know our history. When I first got to Washington 2 1/2 years ago, I started dating official correspondence "in the year of our lord." Well, you see there, that's a copy of the constitution. I get the head of franking, which is the official mail, tells my chief of staff that I cannot use the official mail system if I'm going to date my correspondence "in the year of our lord." and I said, "tell him that if he wants to take me to court and prevent me from dating my correspondence 'in the year of our lord 2007,' because it's dated like the constitution itself is dated, tell him to bring it on. I look forward to defending that in court!" Folks, it's how the constitution is dated. You saw right there. That's the way it is in the constitution. So anyway, it may surprise you, I never heard another word about it. But well in conclusion, I want to relate to you a story about Ross McGinnis, 19 years old in the United States Army. There's a picture of him. Don't you love that good-looking smile of his? He is from Knox, Pennsylvania. Had lunch Friday with his parents. Good discussion with them. I'd met them before. But Ross I said, "What would you like people to know most about Ross?" surprise me. They said, "There are a lot of people talking about Ross, but they always talk about what a great young man and what a fine young man, how great he did in school and that's not true. He

struggled in high school. Didn't really like it much. He got caught with marijuana and when they searched his locker after that they found the knife, knives, and one of them was over 4 inches long. And they were gonna kick him out of school. They had a "no tolerance" policy. He was gonna be kicked out of school. He begged and pleaded... Enough people did that they allowed him to stay in. They gave him a second chance. And with his second chance he joined after he graduated from high school, he joined the army and became a gunner. You see the pictures in basic training? There's a picture. He's the one smiling. And in picture after picture that I saw they had of Ross from Iraq or basic training, he's the one smiling. He'd found his niche. He loved it. He enjoyed it. And the drill sergeants in basic and his platoon sergeant was from Longview and they said, "You know he just could really lift the spirits up of the whole platoon, any guys he was around." last December, Ross was the rear gunner on a Humvee. Had four guys traveling inside the hole there and a grenade was thrown from a rooftop into the vehicle were the four were. He yelled, "Grenade!" in his elevated position, he was the only one that coulda gotten out, but instead, he jumped down into the vehicle and covered the grenade with his body. He sacrificed his life for those four guys, one of whom was his platoon sergeant. I went to the funeral at Arlington national cemetery. There is a picture of it. That's his father with a beard. He works at an auto parts store in Pennsylvania. His mother has taught before. Obvious he has two sisters that are sitting there. The chaplain did a wonderful job at the funeral. And afterwards as you know, they had a 21-gun salute, followed by taps. People were moved but not near so much is after the family stood and everyone prepared to walk away, his platoon sergeant, sergeant Cedric Thomas, came up and knelt before the stand that held the square urn that held his cremated remains. With his hand on the urn, he was followed by two of the other guys who were in the vehicle. One couldn't make the funeral, he was still in Iraq. They knelt with their hands on the urn containing his remains. "Thank god for Ross McGinnis, and thank Ross for his sacrifice that they could live." ladies and gentlemen, that's what we do on Memorial Day, independence day, veterans day. We thank god for his undeserved love. There was nothing we did before we were born that entitled us to the freedoms we have, but we did inherit freedom, like every every person in the world does, but as with any inheritance, if the child is not willing to claim it and not willing to defend it against all foes, foreign, domestic, they want to take that inheritance and you don't have it. That's what we should be doing today. That's what this church does. Thank god for his love, thank god for those he provided who fought and secured our inheritance and yes, also thank those who sacrificed much, some all, to get us our inheritance, or freedom. May god continue to bless you and to bless America. Thank y'all very much.

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David O. Dykes
Pastor, Green Acres Baptist Church
Tyler, Texas

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Pastor David Dykes